



The Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

On Tuesday 8th March 2022 @ 12:00

Remote Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Mr Andrew Bent (ABe)

Trustee (Chair)

Dr Martin Hanbury (MHa)

CEO Chatsworth Multi-Academy Trust

Mr Paul Willoughby (PWi)

Trustee

In Attendance:

Ms Vicky McRae (VMc)

Trust Finance Manager [part meeting]

Mrs Emma Taylor (ETa)

Clerk, Just A Sec

Absent:

There were no absences.

The meeting met its quorum

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

ABe welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies were received and accepted from Louise Hutchinson, Trustee.

2. Declarations of Non/Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of non/pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (8th February 2022)

Trustees were referred to the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting on 8th February 2022, which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting, were approved as a correct and accurate record.

Approved: the minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting on 8th February 2022, were approved as a correct and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

It was noted that the following Matters Arising from the Meeting on 8th February 2022 had been completed or would be addressed as agenda items:-



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

- **MHa to raise the risks identified with CE and the steps taken to mitigate this risk at the meeting of Trustees on 29th November 2021 to ensure that Trustees fully understood the position.**
- **VM to email CMAT Budget overview 2021-2022, together with a summary of changes to the FAR Committee on 8th February 2022.**
- **PWi to review the updated Risk Register [Spring 2022] in readiness for approval at the meeting on 8th March 2022.**
- **LHu and MHa to review Performance Management progression outside of meeting.**

The following Matters Arising were discussed and updated as outlined below:-

- **PWi to scan correspondence from Companies House to MHa to confirm the detail and clarify with Jackson Stephen Accountants if required.**

MHa confirmed that the correspondence had been considered and represented a standard notification of appointment. No further action was required.

- **MHa to prepare different options/timings in respect of the proposed Trustee Vision Day and circulate to the FAR Committee for consideration.**

MHa had considered proposals further with Cole Andrew, Chair of Trustees, and a proposal had been forwarded to Trustees for consideration:-

- Step one was an half day Trustee strategy meeting, which would involve different exercises reviewing the Trust strategy and how this aligned with the core values of the Trust. The strategy meeting would take place at 12:00 on 28th March 2022 and be followed by the Trustee meeting at 16:00.
- Step two would take place on 5th May 2022 and would include consultation work, possibly within focus groups, further outlining the Trust vision. Finalised Trust strategy statements would be available by the middle of May 2022 and launched with staff members as part of the inset day on 6th September 2022. MHa awaited responses from Trustees regarding the proposal.

- **MHa/HBi/VMc to review sickness and maternity insurance policies and alternative means of covering staff absences and report the findings at the meeting on 25th January 2022.**

VMc confirmed that the review remained ongoing and the quotes and information received to date required further consideration.

The Trust would require insurance cover for long-term sickness absence. Short-term sickness insurance was not currently in place and consideration would be given to whether greater value would be achieved by allocating the cost of sickness insurance to fund the employment of cover supervisors instead. MHa added that cover supervisors would receive core training which would allow greater flexibility of working than was achieved via recruitment of agency staff.

The maternity insurance provision required updating. The availability of wellbeing packages would be reviewed alongside this in readiness for the current provision



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

as part of the Salford HR SLA ending at the end of March 2022. This action would be carried over to the next meeting.

- ***MHa to commission a report from Carolyn Eyre on 7th March 2022 in regard to safeguarding Audit actions which had been completed to date.***

This item would be addressed at agenda item 11.

- ***MHa to present Trustees with an update in regard to steps taken to update the Trust website at the meeting on 8th March 2022.***

MHa confirmed that review with Rachel Hill had concluded that updating of the Trust website would take place following the Trustee vision day and would include refreshed imagery and marketing which aligned with the Trust strategy. In the meantime, a website compliance checklist had been prepared and MHa would ensure that the current website remained compliant. This action would be carried over to the next meeting.

- ***ABe to provide an Omega Trust strategy session agenda for consideration.***

This action had been superseded by the Trustee Vision Day and would be closed.

- ***MHa to raise the Pastoral Manager role salary with the CF LGB.***

This action would be completed as an agenda item at the meeting of the Chatsworth Futures [CF] LGB on 17th March 2022.

- ***VMc to present recommendations in regard to the provision of HR Consultancy Services to the FAR Committee meeting on 8th March 2022.***

VMc confirmed that work had taken place at a strategic level to review the potential gaps in the current provision when the Salford HR SLA ended at the end of March 2022. This review had been assisted by the Schools People and would require completion. MHa agreed to forward proposals to the Finance, Audit and Risk [FAR] Committee outside of the meeting.

Action: MHa to forward recommendations in regard to the provision of HR Consultancy Services to the FAR Committee for progression outside of the meeting.

- ***Review of the three year audit plan to be progressed and an update presented to the meeting on 25th January 2022.***

MHa reminded Trustees that historically audits had been completed by external providers. It had been recognised that the plans had not been sufficiently bespoke to the requirements of the Trust and the Trust therefore decided to coordinate its own audit process. This had commenced with the Safeguarding Audit completed by Carolyn Eyre, which had been very positive, and the remaining steps would now



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

be implemented. ABe noted that the Omega Trust had recently put this process out to tender and details of the companies who had tendered would be provided. MHa and ABe would progress this further outside of the meeting.

Action: MHa to forward recommendations in regard to the progression of the three year audit plan to the FAR Committee for consideration by Trustees outside of the meeting.

- ***VMc to provide email update to the FAR Committee in regard to resolution of pay increases for support staff and whether there would be an impact upon the budget.***

VMc confirmed that the dispute concerning the pay increases for support staff had been resolved nationally. The agreement would lead to a requirement for the payment of backpay, which would incorporate the planned increase in National Insurance contributions. The agreement had been included within the budget process and would not impact the current budget.

TQ: Had the agreement been ratified by the Trust Board.

MHa confirmed that the agreement had not been ratified by the Trust and this would be considered at agenda item 10.

VMc advised Trustees that the issue in regard to final pensions for teachers also remained outstanding. Pay increases had been frozen in September 2021 for some teachers, which may impact final salary pension schemes. It had been proposed that the Trust may wish to make a payment of one pound to satisfy the criteria which would ensure that the final salary pension schemes were not impacted as a consequence of the pay increases being frozen.

Action: VMc to circulate teaching staff final pension recommendations to the FAR Committee for progression outside of the meeting.

- ***VMc and MHa to review Purchase Orders in the context of internal control actions and provide an update at the meeting on 8th March 2022.***

MHa assured Trustees that the new purchasing system mitigated against issues arising in regard to Purchase Orders [POs]. It was acknowledged however, that circumstances may potentially arise within which the purchasing system could potentially be bypassed. Scenarios would include staff members purchasing items from an existing supplier directly without firstly raising a PO.

MHa and VMc did not consider that this represented an area of concern however, it was agreed that there would be merit in communicating to members of staff the importance of following the financial procedures which were in place.

Action: MHa to remind all staff members that failure to ensure that POs were raised and correctly filed for all transactions was a serious issue and would lead to an informal disciplinary meeting, with the possibility of disciplinary action.



5. Items for Any Other Business

There were no items of Any Other Business.

6. Budget Update Report a) Proposal for resetting budget

Trustees were referred to the 2021 – 2022 Budget Comparison for Trustees, which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

VMc explained that the formatting had been updated to reflect the formatting of the new finance system.

TQ: The surplus of £29,850 and £50,643 did not add up to £775,948 within the original budget. What was the reason for this?

VMc confirmed that this was an error within the original budget however, the new budget surplus calculations in the sum of £89,763 were correct.

Trustees noted that the income and expenditure reserves were forecast as £509,198, which represented a comfortable reserve level.

VMc confirmed that the expenditure from reserves included:-

- The release of approximately £205,000 to support the Assistant Headteacher role at Chatsworth High School and Community College [CHSCC].
- Spend of £40,000 Covid Catch up funding and Year 7 Catch Up Fund, which remained unspent from the previous financial year.
- Increased agency supply budgets.
- The release of £70,000 for CF to fund the additional Pastoral Manager role and increased supply budget.
- £20,000 capital expenditure upon IT infrastructure.

TQ: Were there two separate items of £70,000 in respect of the roles at CF and CHSCC.

VMc confirmed that these were separate items.

Trustees noted the significant upheaval attributable to the pandemic and the justifications for changes to the budget which represented exceptional items.

Approved: Trustees approved the new 2021 – 2022 Budget, which would be implemented.

b) Supplementary report provided

MHa referred Trustees to the report entitled Supplementary Information Regarding Budget 2021-2022, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting via



GovernorHub. The report outlined the details behind the proposed changes required in response to the unprecedented pressures created by the pandemic.

MHa understood that there had been an allocation of approximately £2,000,000 in respect of High Needs Funding Arrangements within Salford Local Authority [LA], which may indicate the availability of supplementary funding. It was not clear how the funding would be allocated within the sector and MHa awaited a response from the LA. Advice from the School Commissioners Office would be sought if required.

Trustees noted the content of the Supplementary Information Regarding Budget 2021/2022.

7. Covid Catch-Up for noting verbal update

MHa confirmed that there was no further information to bring to the attention of Trustees in regard to Covid Catch-Up.

8. Risk Register

Trustees were referred to the updated Risk Register [Spring 2022], which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting for scrutiny.

MHa confirmed that the risks associated with CF in regard to Ofsted had been removed further to the most recent inspection and this remained as a closed risk.

The Risk Register was shared on screen and PWi led discussions concerning the following risks:-

Risk 5: Inexperience of senior leaders

- The original likelihood score had been assessed as 2. MHa proposed that this should be escalated to 3.
- MHa explained that the Vice Principal at CF was on maternity leave. MHa would spend additional time supporting CF however, the experience of the Vice Principal would be missed. Whilst the staff members in place at CF were very capable, they were less experienced leaders and it would be necessary to continue to develop and nurture their leadership skills.
- Trustees reflected that the risk may be that strategic development would be impacted.
- A further risk may be that inexperience resulted in issues which impacted the development of the Trust, the learners and their education, which could be categorised as high risk.
- Trustees challenged whether strategic issues had arisen as a consequence of leader inexperience and MHa confirmed that this had not been the case.



- The risk level was proposed as extreme. However, following review of the controls and actions which were in place to manage the risk, which included the provision of support from MHa to the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team [SLT], Trustees agreed that the likelihood was not probable because of the controls which were already in place. The likelihood was more likely to be probable with a view to targeting the likelihood of impact as improbable upon completion of development and training. The period over which the likelihood of impact could be reduced to improbable would be reviewed as the development progressed.

Risk 2: Quality of Education

- The risk that the current Quality of Education did not meet the required standards identified in the Autumn term Self Assessment was described with a likelihood of probable and a risk level of extreme.
- The mitigating actions were considered, which included the provision of intensive staff training and input from the SLT. MHa confirmed that curriculum development training and curriculum development workshops remained ongoing led by Sue Woodgate, Trustee. The Quality Assurance cycle was established and in full operation.
- Trustees challenged whether it would be appropriate to reduce the likelihood from probable to reflect the ongoing mitigating actions which addressed this risk.
- MHa agreed that the likelihood would be reduced to possible and the mitigating actions and timescale for action would be updated. There remained the risk of embedding the curriculum development which had been delivered and ensuring clear pathways for learners would require continued proactivity. The likelihood would be reduced to very improbable once the curriculum development was fully embedded.

Risk 3: Accommodation

- The accommodation risk reflected the position whereby existing accommodation would no longer be suitable as pupil numbers were set to increase to 170.
- The likelihood had been assessed with the likelihood of probable with an overall risk level of high.
- Whilst discussions with the LA and DfE in regard to new premises remained within the discussion phase, MHa did not consider that it was appropriate to reduce the likelihood to improbable. Trustees endorsed this view and it was agreed that MHa would update the mitigating actions and extend the timescale for action as and when there were further developments.



Risk 9: Business function disrupted

- The risk of compromised efficiency as a consequence of operating across three sites and the loss of two established Senior Business Officers had been assessed as high risk.
- The mitigating actions included the deployment of site based Business Officers to focus upon local site needs and the recruitment of a CFO to support efficiency.
- Trustees agreed that the risk would be reviewed upon appointment of the CFO and the timescale for action would be updated to reflect the anticipated recruitment in May 2022.

Risk 7: Covid-19

- The risk level had been categorised as extreme and Trustees challenged whether this remained accurate.
- MHa confirmed that whilst restrictions had been reduced, staff attendance continued to remain significantly impacted and this should therefore continue to be assessed as an high risk. Trustees agreed with this assessment.
- VMc noted that in the previous financial year it had been possible to partially reclaim the increased staffing costs, however, this would not be the case in the current financial year because the Trust reserve figure did not facilitate this.

Risk 4: Trustee recruitment

- The risk was that governance became ineffective and the risk level had been categorised as high.
- The recruitment of PWi and Sue Woodgate had been detailed within the Risk Register.
- Trustees reflected the expectations of the DfE / NGA that eight or nine Trustees would be in place. The current number of Trustees was therefore low in comparison.
- Trustees observed the significant levels of progression which had been driven by the current governance. This included the creation of the Risk Register, further strengthening of financial controls, the implementation of Safeguarding Audits and the planning of the Trustee vision day. The collective governance remained strong and Trustees proposed that the risk level should be reduced to medium.
- MHa's experience was that the Trust was very well supported. PWi had provided excellent support and challenge with the Risk Register, Sue Woodgate led the Quality of Education Committee and Cole Andrew provided expertise in regard to the Trust vision.
- MHa was also mindful of the requirement to approach recruitment in a manner which ensured the continued high quality of candidates.
- Trustees challenged whether the impact of the risk was intolerable, such that it could result in disaster or undesirable.
- Trustees agreed that whilst reduced Trustee support could significantly impact the Trust, the effectiveness and expertise of the current Trustees, would support the



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

reduction of the likelihood to possible. The aim would be to reduce this to improbable by strengthening governance further by additional recruitment.

TQ: What was the current recruitment strategy.

This would be considered further within the Trustee vision day, with a focus upon the key skills which were required to strengthen the Board.

Risk 6: Isolation from other organisations

- The risk that the organisation became isolated and inward looking due to it being a specialist provision under the current restrictions had been assessed with a risk level of high.
- MHa advised that current controls remained ongoing and a new link had been developed with the Brentwood school in Trafford, which had been very positive. CF were linking with other organisations and this process would be developed within CHSCC, particularly within the area of classroom practice.
- Trustees agreed that risk 6 would not be changed currently.

Trustees commended the format of the Risk Register and the input provided by PWi and MHa. The Risk Register provided an excellent format within which to discuss risks.

Action: PWi and MHa to update the Risk Register and circulate this to the FAR Committee for approval.

9. Annual Budget 22-23

a) Discussion of budget setting process for 2022-2023

MHa proposed that discussion of the budget setting process be deferred until the appointment of the new CFO. VMc would continue to progress financial planning in the interim. Trustees approved the proposed deferment.

Action: ETa to include discussion of budget setting process 2022-2023 as an agenda item for the meeting of the FAR Committee on 28th June 2022.

10. Scheme of Delegation [SoD] and Scheme of Financial Delegation [SoFD]

Trustees were referred to the SoD and SoFD, which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

Trustees noted the historical agreement of the Trust that national agreements would always be honoured. Whilst this agreement would be maintained, the current SoD and SoFD did not provide MHa as CEO with the delegated authority to process national agreements.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Trust Board approval would be required in regard to retrospective approval of the pay award to reflect the national agreement. In addition, Trustee Board approval would be required to amendments to the SoD and SoFD to enable MHa to process national agreements.

SoFD

MHa proposed the addition of section 1.4 to section *D. Financial Powers and Duties Delegated to the Chief Executive Officer*, which would apply retrospectively.

Trustees noted that it was not necessary for the SoFD to be displayed on the website.

SoD

Items 6 (k) and (r) would be amended to address authority in regard to *applying pay awards to reflect national agreements, scales and grades*.

Action: MHa to forward amended SoFD, SoD and Pay Policy/or standalone Policy to reflect delegated authority for the CEO to process nationally agreed pay awards, for circulation via GovernorHub.

Action: ETa to include approval of amended SoD and SoFD to the Trust Board agenda for the meeting on 28th March 2022.

Action: ETa to include Trustee approval of implementation of the national agreement on support staff pay awards to the Trust Board agenda for the meeting on 28th March 2022.

11. Review of Internal Control Actions

MHa reminded Trustees that within the FAR meeting on 8th February 2022 he had inadvertently advised that Carolyn Eyre had not produced a report following her Audit in November 2021 when in fact she had produced a RAG report, which had been very detailed and contained a clear action plan.

Following agreement with Trustees, MHa had shared the Safeguarding Audit [November 2021] and this had also been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting. An updated Safeguarding Audit dated February 2022 had been shared via GovernorHub which incorporated the actions taken by Gayle Myers, Deputy Headteacher CHSCC, and MHa between November 2021 and February 2022.

Carolyn Eyre completed a further visit on Monday 7th March 2022. The forensic input and forward thinking knowledge imparted by Carolyn Eyre represented a significant asset to safeguarding processes within the Trust.

MHa referred Trustees to the following areas which had been highlighted for discussion:-



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Designated Governor, Board Member: Item 41

- Question:-
Is the safeguarding / CP policy compliant with Charity Commission safeguarding guidance 2019 and is there clear information on when / how a serious incident notification should be made?
- Whilst the current policies were compliant with the requirements of Ofsted, reference to the Charity Commission and serious incident notifications would be included within the relevant policies.
- MHa had considered this point with Gayle Myers yesterday and awaited confirmation of whether this had been rectified by reference to the Charity Commission.

Action: MHa to confirm at the next meeting of the FAR Committee that the action in regard to Designated Governor, Board Member: Item 41 had been completed.

Policies and Procedures: Item 53

- Question:
Is there a low level concerns policy in place for the school / college?
- MHa explained that the low level concerns policy did not relate to concerns in regard to a learner, which would require a full strategy meeting. The policy would address concerns regarding a member of staff, which were not at the level which indicated referral to the LA or the designated safeguarding officer. The policy would address the manner in which this behaviour would be recorded and addressed and this was now in place.

Safer Recruitment: Item 59

- Question:-
How well do procedures for safer recruitment and vetting of staff take account of the most recent DfE guidance? How do you monitor this?
- The Trust would use Greater Manchester Jobs Online. Review had established that the Policy and the application form was outdated however, this had now been rectified.

MHa proposed that Carolyn Eyre be instructed to review the outcome of her visit on 7th March 2022 and to prepare a report detailing the process which had been followed and any outstanding actions for review.

TQ: What would be the cost of an updated report from Carolyn Eyre. MHa confirmed that the total cost would be £1500.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Carolyn Eyre had been retained to deliver bespoke safeguarding training on 5th September 2022. This would encourage staff members to critically analyse their roles and to incorporate a process of self reflection as part of the safeguarding culture. A further Safeguarding Audit would be commissioned at the same time next year, which would provide an opportunity to appraise the impact of the training in September 2022. The goal of the Trust was to provide exemplary pastoral care for learners and to progress towards becoming national leaders in this area.

Trustees commented that the Safeguarding Audit provided an opportunity to review areas for improvement and to receive credit for the work which had been completed. Trustees endorsed the benefit of commissioning Safeguarding Audits on an annual basis, which would provide Trustees with assurance that safeguarding actions identified by Carolyn Eyre had been completed.

Approved: MHa to commission an updated Safeguarding Audit from Carolyn Eyre on an annual basis until further notice.

12. Finance Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference

Trustees agreed that this item would be carried over to the next meeting.

Action: ETa to add FAR Committee Terms of Reference as an agenda item to the next meeting.

13. CFO Recruitment

MHa provided Trustees with a verbal update. Satis Education had been engaged to support the recruitment of the CFO. Initial contact with Satis and the planning which had resulted from this had been excellent. The advert had been posted during the week commencing 7th March 2022 and it was anticipated that interviews would be shortlisted during the first week of the Easter holidays but would confirm.

ABe and PWi offered to support the shortlisting and interview process and ABe anticipated that the CFO of the Omega Trust may assist in an advisory category. [PWi would be unavailable between 12th – 19th April 2022].

Action: MHa to liaise with ABe and PWi in regard to supporting the CFO Recruitment process.

Trustees noted the verbal update in regard to CFO Recruitment.

14. Any Other Business

There were no items of Any Other Business.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Trustees noted the date and time of the next meeting on 26th April 2022 at 12:00. The meeting arrangements would be agreed nearer to the date of the meeting. In person meetings would be required to take place at the commencement or conclusion of the business day to accommodate the availability of Trustees.

The meeting concluded at 13.53.

Signed Dated
Mr Andrew Bent (Chair)

Summary of actions

Item	Action	Owner
4	MHa/HBi/VMc to review sickness and maternity insurance policies and alternative means of covering staff absences and report the findings at the meeting on 25 th January 2022.	MHa, HBi, VMc
4	MHa to present Trustees with an update in regard to steps taken to update the Trust website at the meeting on 8 th March 2022.	MHa



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

4	MHa to forward recommendations in regard to the provision of HR Consultancy Services to the FAR Committee for progression outside of the meeting.	MHa
4	MHa to forward recommendations in regard to the progression of the three year audit plan to the FAR Committee for consideration by Trustees outside of the meeting.	MHa
4	VMc to circulate teaching staff final pension recommendations to the FAR Committee for progression outside of the meeting.	MHa
4	MHa to remind all staff members that failure to ensure that POs were raised and correctly filed for all transactions was a serious issue and would lead to an informal disciplinary meeting, with the possibility of disciplinary action.	MHa
8	PWi and MHa to update the Risk Register and circulate this to the FAR Committee for approval.	PWi/MHa
9	ETa to include discussion of budget setting process 2022-2023 as an agenda item for the meeting of the FAR Committee on 28 th June 2022.	ETa
10	MHa to forward amended SoFD, SoD and Pay Policy/or standalone Policy to reflect delegated authority for the CEO to process nationally agreed pay awards, for circulation via GovernorHub.	MHa
10	ETa to include approval of amended SoD and SoFD to the Trust Board agenda for the meeting on 28 th March 2022.	ETa
10	ETa to include Trustee approval of implementation of the national agreement on support staff pay awards to the Trust Board agenda for the meeting on 28 th March 2022.	ETa
11	MHa to confirm at the next meeting of the FAR Committee that the action in regard to Designated Governor, Board Member: Item 41 had been completed.	MHa
12	ETa to add FAR Committee Terms of Reference as an agenda item to the next meeting.	ETa



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

13	MHa to liaise with ABe and PWi in regard to supporting the CFO Recruitment process.	MHa/ABe/PWi
----	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------