



Truro and Penwith Academy Trust

FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance, Employment and Audit Committee held on 7 February 2017 at Truro College.

Directors: Mr D Allison, Mrs S Dickinson, Dr J Blunden (Chief Executive), Prof A Livingston (left after 17/06), Mrs S Roby and Mr P Wroe (Chair)

Also Present: Mrs J Brinson (Business Manager) and Mrs A Winter (Company Secretary)

Apologies: Mrs E Winser

Item	Decision	Action
17/01	Declarations of Interest The Chair notified the Committee of his links to a Free School proposal submitted by the Atlantic Centre of Excellence Trust (ACE) and the Eden Project.	AW to update register of interests
17/02	Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2016 were APPROVED and signed as a correct record, subject to a correction to the list of those present.	AW to amend minutes
17/03	Matters Arising 03.01 Business Continuity Plans (Minute 16/36.05) The Committee requested confirmation that all schools had a continuity plan in place. The Company Secretary agreed to check with Kennall Vale which had joined the Trust on 1 January 2017. All other schools had approved a Plan. 03.02 Financial Report 2015/16 (Minute 16/37) The Business Manager confirmed that the annual financial report had been finalised by the end of December. However, problems with the SFA software meant that the deadline for submission had been extended to 28 February 2017. 03.03 Management Accounts (Minute 16/39) Members noted that the Board had considered the suggestion and agreed in principle, to utilise TPAT reserves to support a school deficit where essential maintenance/improvements were needed and a school demonstrated good financial management. Criteria and procedures for supporting schools would be drafted.	AW to check with Kennall Vale

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17/07	<p>HR Report</p> <p>The Chief Executive presented an overview of autumn staff recruitment, absences and capability/disciplinary cases within the Trust and highlighted any significant HR issues.</p> <p>Absences during the period from 1 September – 31 December 2016 has fallen compared to 1 January – 30 April 2016. Staff absence rates and costs were continuing to be scrutinised. Alternative HR data packages were being assessed to improve monitoring and reporting. Directors suggested that in future it would be useful to include data on staffing numbers and turnover.</p> <p>Directors noted the headline data which provided a useful indicator of staff morale and wellbeing.</p>	JB to note
17/08	<p>Draft Policies for Approval</p> <p>08.01 Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct</p> <p>The Committee considered the draft Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct which set out expectations for the conduct of parents/visitors in relation to members of the school community.</p> <p>Subject to a number of minor amendments, the Committee RECOMMENDED approval by the Board.</p>	JB to amend policy Recommendation to the Board
	<p>08.02 Complaints Policy</p> <p>The Committee considered the draft Complaints Policy and discussed the stages in the procedure, the timescales and actions.</p> <p>Directors noted that where a complaint concerned a member of the TPAT central team, an individual Director or a decision by the TPAT Board the matter could be referred to stage 4 (the final internal stage). A Complaints Review Panel, comprising at least two LGB members and at least one Director, (who would normally chair the Panel), would meet to hear the complaint.</p> <p>Subject to a number of changes, the Committee RECOMMENDED approval by the Board.</p> <p>08.03 Equality and Diversity Policy</p> <p>The Committee considered the draft Equality and Diversity Policy which related to employers' duties concerning staff as well as responsibilities related to pupils. The intention was that each school would adopt the policy and implement the accompanying action plan.</p> <p>Subject to a number of minor amendments, the Committee RECOMMENDED approval by the Board.</p>	<p>JB to amend policy Recommendation to the Board</p> <p>JB to amend policy Recommendation to the Board</p>

Item	Decision	Action
17/09	<p>Budget for New School for 2016/17</p> <p>The Committee received a draft budget for 2016/17 for Kennall Vale School which had joined the Trust on 1 January 2017. The LGB had scrutinised the budget in detail before approval. Although a significant operating deficit was expected this year, the school had reserves that would cover the deficit.</p> <p>The Committee reiterated its view that reliance on reserves was not sustainable and that the Trust would not normally expect to approve a negative budget. Directors requested the LGB to work on in-year savings and suggested a target £10k reduction in the projected operating deficit. The Committee also recommended that the LGB to begin working on the budget for next year at an early stage in order to produce a balanced budget for 2017/18.</p> <p>Following consideration, the Committee agreed to RECOMMEND approval of the 2016/17 budget by the Board.</p>	<p>Business Manager/AW to convey decision from Committee to the LGB</p> <p>Recommendation to Board</p>
17/10	<p>Contract Approval</p> <p>The contract with Chartwells to provide school meals at a number of schools was due to end on 31 July 2017. Information about a group tendering process (co-ordinated by Litmus Catering Consultancy) had been provided to relevant schools. For a fee of £750 Litmus would manage the tendering process and contractual framework. The Committee considered this was good value and directed relevant schools to take part in this process rather than undertake independent negotiations with potential suppliers.</p>	<p>Business Manager to inform relevant schools</p>
17/11	<p>Purchases over £25,000</p> <p>The Business Manager reported on two contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Ives School ski trip (£42k) - costs to be covered by students taking part • Perranporth School outdoor play area (£38k) – part funded by lottery grant of £30k and balance funded by the Friends of Perranporth School (parent/teacher charity) <p>The Committee noted that in each case the full costs would be covered from external income.</p>	
17/12	<p>Due Diligence Process for New Schools</p> <p>The Committee noted that decision making about new schools joining the Trust had been delegated by the Board of Directors to the TPAT Chair, College Principal and TPAT Chief Executive on the basis of a financial review and due diligence process and that the due diligence framework template provided with the papers for the meeting was a useful tool.</p>	

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	<p>Directors recognised that preliminary discussions with a prospective school usually took place over an extended period and during this time the Business Manager and Chief Executive were able to gain an understanding of the school, the leadership team, potential risks and challenges. It was also accepted that strategic and political issues played a part in judgements about whether it was appropriate for a school to join TPAT.</p> <p>Directors concluded that generally the presumption was that a school would be permitted to join the Trust and RECOMMENDED that to ensure a robust process:</p> <p>(a) The due diligence should result in a brief documented Executive Summary which informs the approvers decision. This should highlight key risks/concerns and financial viability using the due diligence framework template included in the papers for the meeting. This document should be presented to the board to inform all Directors of the decision taken and the information on which it was made.</p> <p>(b) The due diligence should include a review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school premises H&S statutory compliance register • existing contracts and leases • financial projections for the next 2/3 years. 	<p>Recommendations to Board</p>
17/13	<p>Internal Auditor Appointment</p> <p>The Business Manager reported that TIAA Ltd had been engaged by the Trust to provide internal audit services for 2016/17. TIAA had provided a satisfactory service and continued to remain the most cost effective option on the basis of market testing.</p> <p>The Committee RECOMMENDED the reappointment of TIAA Ltd for a further two years, until 31 August 2019.</p>	<p>Recommendation to Board</p>
17/14	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The Committee would meet at 5.00pm on Tuesday 27 June 2017.</p>	<p>ALL to note</p>