



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

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Registered in England No 8709542. Registered Office 53, New Street Chelmsford CM1 1AT

Finance and Audit Committee Meeting Minutes

DATE AND TIME: Friday, 12th May, 2017 at 10.00am

VENUE: Chelmsford Diocesan Offices

MEMBERSHIP:

GF	Gavin Flynn*	Director
BL	Bryan Lester*	Director, Company Secretary, Finance Director
PP	Philip Preston+	Director
TR	Tim Rose*	Director
TW	Terri Wood*	Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

JCr	John Crane*	CEO
BI	Brendon Ince*	COO, Trust Lead
SP	Sharon Porter*	VT Finance Manager
	Jill Haines*	Clerk

* indicates attendance
+ indicates absence

VINE TRUST SCHOOLS:

BUL *Bulphan CE Primary School, Bulphan*
BEL *Belchamp St Paul CE Primary School*
GRE *Great Clacton CE Junior School, Clacton*
HOW *Howbridge CE Junior School, Witham*
JCO *St James CE Primary School, Colchester*
LAT *Latchingdon CE Primary School, Latchingdon*
MBG *St Margaret's, Bowers Gifford*
MIS *Mistley Norman CE Primary School, Manningtree*
RID *Ridgewell CE Primary School*
ORS *Orsett CE Primary School*
ROL *Rolph CE Primary School, Thorpe le Soken*
SAA *St Andrews CE Primary School, Weeley*
SJH *St James CE Primary School, Harlow*
SMI *Southminster CE Primary School*
STC *St Cedd's CE Primary School, Bradwell*

34/17 **WELCOME AND PRAYER**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and JCr committed the agenda discussions in prayer.

35/17 **APPOINT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

- i. Gavin Flynn was appointed as Committee Chair.
- ii. Tim Rose was elected Vice-Chair.

36/17 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies to report.

37/17 **NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

i. The meeting discussed the rationale for the substantial volume of information that is prepared and circulated to Committee members. After discussion it was clear that the Leadership Team should be trusted to provide a revised and simpler reporting structure in lesser detail.

Action point 1:

It was agreed that the Chair/VC will work with the COO to draw up principles of working.

ii. There are three further matters of AOB (*item 47/17*):

Pre-Schools
Caretaker housing
Network security

38/17 **DECLARATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS/CONFLICT OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no new Business Interests to record.

39/17 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 31.3.17 were agreed and signed as a true record.

40/17 **MATTERS ARISING**

i. It was agreed to defer *item 37/17 future of tuck shops* to Autumn 1.

41/17 **UPDATE FROM CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER including:
RISK MANAGEMENT, HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN, BUDGET UPDATES: TRUST AND
SCHOOLS, BUILDING TRUST AND SCHOOL REERVES, CAPACITY AND TRAINING**

The COO Report had been circulated and the following matters were highlighted:

RISK MANAGEMENT

Responsible Officer Visits (Spring 17)

Risk management information had been circulated.

The CEO and COO are continuing to raise awareness of scrutiny and challenge to improve risk management in schools and the difference between Risk Register (strategic) and Risk Management procedures (operational). There was a discussion about the Committee's awareness of risk across the Trust and it was agreed to clearly identify the areas targeted for scrutiny using an appropriate level of information for Directors which will report on changes and trends rather than each high risk.

Meetings with COO and HTs should raise awareness of compliance issues. There is currently a cadence of meetings with SLTs but it continues to be a struggle to hold meetings with strategic staff.

Action point 2:

It was therefore agreed that Performance Management meetings for all Headteachers will include Health & Safety mandatory goals.

Action point 3:

Any reportable incidents should be brought to this meeting and procedures implemented.

1.1.12 (Strategic) Consolidated Dashboard Summer 2017 *failure of the Trust to have adequate capacity to meet growth objectives, support existing educational establishments and convert new ones*: this needs to be better explained to include the need for improved management capacity and systems in place to increase to 20 schools.

Action point 4:

Review and Refine the SP accordingly and update the RR.

Health & Safety Plan

The Every Business Management overdue activities report (4.5.17) is still in data transition period which is generally making identification of exposure challenging at the present time. As previously reported there continues to be a generally slow adoption of the system.

Control of asbestos:

Academies have been directed to upload their management plans and set up monitoring procedures within Every by 31.5.17 and good progress is being made in this respect.

Budget updates

Budget Forecast Return – Outturn 2016

The COO reported that since the last meeting the ESFA have introduced revised procedures for submitting consolidated 2017 Budget Forecast information. The previously agreed timetable circulated to schools has therefore been revised. Unlike previous years an additional return BFRO has been introduced which revisits previous year's financial information, seeks current year actual data for the period ending 31.3.17 with a deadline for completion by 19.5.17.

Whilst the Trust has been working with PSF in an effort to produce a centrally generated report to meet the new requirements, remapping of income and expenditure by the ESFA has delayed progress. Griffin Chapman have been commissioned to prepare the 2016/16 data. Overall, the exercise highlights some significant concerns around accuracy of information, consistency and general understanding by FOs across the Trust.

Action point 5:

The Trust has re-engaged with schools to have 17/18 budgets ready for the end of June in preparation for the July Board meeting and this will be recommended to the Board.

Budget updates

The submission of 2017/18 budget forecasts has been deferred in light of the BFRO but some early drafts have been received and were circulated for information before the meeting.

Capacity and Training

The efficiency of the Finance Team Trust wide will be under closer scrutiny.

The COO reported on budgetary issues and concerns for all schools across the Trust. .

External Audit

The Vine Trust AGM (31.3.17) have approved Griffin Chapman as the Trusts external auditors for a further period of 3 years (1.9.16 to 31.8.18). Griffin Chapman remain commercially competitive and provide *best value* against both their local and national peers.

42/17 **COMPANY SECRETARY UPDATE AND REPORT to include any allegations of fraud/maladministration**

BL advised the meeting:

- i. There are no fraudulent matters to report.
- ii. All SIF bids made by the Trust (around £1.5 million) had been successful for over 50% of applications. BL commended the preparatory work undertaken for each bid. There was discussion about future bids once the Trust reaches a threshold of 3000 pupils which is when bid outcomes will be more uncertain.

43/17 **UPDATE ON CONVERSIONS**

The proposed conversion of Bulphan CE Primary School **BUL** is now timetabled for 1st July 2017 although this date may be changed in view of government election purdah.

Orsett CE Primary School **ORS** are aiming to join the Vine on 1st July 2017.

Ridgewell CE Primary School **RID** has received approval to become an academy as part of the Vine from the HT Board. **RID** and Belchamp St Paul CE Primary School **BEL** have a scheduled conversion date of 1.8.17.

44/17 **UPDATE ON GRANT APPLICATIONS** (Premises related) and **GRANT REQUESTS FROM ACADEMIES**

There had been no applications for grants even though funds were available.

Action point 6:

After discussion it was decided to recommend to the Board that revised application forms will be circulated to Headteachers to encourage a better engagement with the application process.

45/17 **UPDATE ON BIDS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY THE EFA**

There was nothing further to report.

47/17 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

FUTURE MEETINGS to be held on Fridays at 10.00am:

2016/17

Summer 2 14th July

2017/18

Autumn 1 22nd September

Autumn 2 1st December** **amended date**

Spring 1 9th February

Spring 2 16th March** **amended date**

Summer 1 11th May

Summer 2 13th July

2018/19

Autumn 1 21st September

The meeting closed at 12.06pm with a prayer of thanks for the ongoing work and development of the Trust.