

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF LONDON
ACADEMIES TRUST

Thursday, 27 February 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of the City of London Academies Trust held at the Guildhall EC2 at 9.00 am

Present

Members:

Peter Bennett (Chairman)

Edward Benzecry

Dawn Elliott (via conference call)

Andrew McMurtrie

Mark Emmerson (Chief Executive Officer –
for finance matters only)

Officers:

Claire Hersey

Kerry Nicholls

Smith Umoren

- Chief Financial Officer

- Clerk

- Director of Estates and Facilities Management

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Deputy Clare James.

2. DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

With regard to Minute 4: Audit Strategy and Annual Internal Audit Plan, the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the findings of the review of asset management would be reported to the next meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee on 1 July 2020.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2019 be approved as a correct record.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

Trustees considered a report of the Chief Executive Officer presenting the Strategic Plan Review and the following points were made:

- Work was underway to review the City of London Academies Trust Strategic Plan 2016-20 and develop a new plan for the 2020-24 period, with the aim of presenting the final proposed Strategic Plan to the meeting of the Board of Trustees on 9 July 2020 for approval.
- In considering Objective 3: Outstanding Resource Management of the draft Strategic Plan, the Chairman requested that Task 3.4 be expanded to, 'Outstanding Estates and Facilities Management' and that a Proposed Next Step Action be included on annual contracts

management. The Chairman further emphasised that it was critical that there was a good understanding across the Trust of the roles and responsibilities within contracts management.

- A Trustee noted how the Trust had benefitted from its close working relationship with the City of London Corporation, particularly in accessing central services such as legal services as well as office space. The Trustee suggested that an action on continuing to work alongside the City of London Corporation be reflected in the Strategic Plan.
- With regard to Objective 4: Outstanding Leadership of CoLAT Expansion, the Chief Executive Officer observed that the Trust was likely to have expanded to ten academies by September 2020, and that there was a need to review the Trust's ambitions for further expansion under Task 4.1: Examining Expansion Opportunities. If it was decided to pursue further expansion beyond the current agreed scope of 12 academies in the longer term, it might also be necessary to review whether the CoLAT Central Team should relocate to a school premises and the financial, resource and risk implications of this.
- In response to a question from a Trustee, the Chief Executive Officer clarified that the existing ambition of twelve academies did not include the planned alternative provision model which was being developed as a shared resource for the Trust; however, there remained issues around where the alternative provision offer could be located and consideration was being given to whether this could be accommodated within the Trust's existing estate.

The Chief Executive Officer requested Trustees provide any further comments on the Strategic Plan to the CoLAT Central Team as they were identified.

RESOLVED, that:

- The agreed timeline and approach be noted; and,
- The draft plan be amended in line with Trustee's comments.

5. SCHOOL CONDITION ALLOCATION 2019-20

Trustees considered a report of the Chief Financial Officer outlining the School Condition Allocation 2019-20 and the following points were made:

- Multi-Academy Trusts with at least five academies and more than 3000 pupils received an annual allocation of School Condition funding to support schools to maintain and improve their school estates and resolve building compliance, health and safety and energy efficiency issues. School Condition Allocation funding enabled the Trust to plan future programmes of works and, as it was calculated on a per pupil basis, would increase as the Trust expanded.

- The City of London Academy Trust had been allocated a School Condition Allocation of £573,886 for 2019-20 with every academy being given the opportunity to bid for funds. Bids totalling £482,500, including a 5% contingency, had been received from the City of London Highgate Hill, Newham Collegiate Sixth Form, Redriff Primary City of London Academy and the City of London Academy Southwark which the Committee was requested to approve. It was proposed the remaining £91,386 of School Condition Allocation funding be retained until 31 August 2020 to fund any emergency works that might arise.
- The remaining academies within the Trust had not submitted bids as Galleywall Primary City of London Academy school estate was newly refurbished, the City of London Academy Highbury Grove's school estate was part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and the City of London Academies Islington and Shoreditch Park were based in temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED, that:

- The use of the 2019-20 School Condition Allocation funding to support projects totalling £482,500, including a 5% contingency be approved; and,
- The remaining School Condition Allocation funding totalling £91,386 be retained until 31 August 2020 to fund any emergency works arising in Trust schools.

6. QUESTIONS

In response to a question from a Trustee, the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that per pupil spending and Post-16 funding was expected to increase as a result of increased Government funding for education. Additional funding had already started to feed through with Newham Collegiate Sixth Form receiving a significant increase to its funding allocation for the 2019-20 academic year.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

8. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the public be excluded and that Trustees move into private session.

9. NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the non-public minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

10. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Trustees considered a report of the Clerk regarding outstanding actions arising from previous meetings.

11. TRUSTEE TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Trustee training requirements were considered.

12. **BENEFITS AND RISKS OF THE CITY ACADEMY, HACKNEY AND CITY OF LONDON ACADEMY ISLINGTON JOINING THE TRUST**

Trustees considered a report of the Chief Executive Officer on the benefits and risks of the City Academy Hackney and City of London Academy Islington joining the City of London Academies Trust.

13. **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S UPDATE**

Trustees considered an update report of the Chief Financial Officer.

14. **SCHOOL CONDITION ALLOCATION 2019-20 - APPENDIX 1**

Trustees considered a non-public appendix for Item 5: School Condition Allocation 2019-20.

15. **TRUST STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

Trustees considered a report of the Chief Financial Officer regarding the Strategic Risk Register for the Trust.

16. **INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE**

Trustees considered a report of the Chief Financial Officer providing an internal audit update and requesting the Committee review and approve the Annual Internal Audit Plan.

17. **HEALTH AND SAFETY MONITORING IN TRUST SCHOOLS**

Trustees considered a report of the Director of Estates and Facilities management regarding health and safety monitoring in City of London Academies Trust schools.

18. **ESTATES AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Trustees considered an update report of the Director of Estates and Facilities Management.

19. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no questions.

20. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND THE COMMITTEE AGREES CAN BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED.**

There was no other business.

21. **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2020 be approved as a correct record.

22. **HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAFFING UPDATE**

Trustees considered a confidential update report of the Human Resources Director regarding Human Resources and Staffing.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am

Chairman

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