






# FAR Minutes

## 15.3.24 - Richard Crosse or virtual Google meet option - 8.00am

<b>Documents circulated prior to the meeting</b>	<p>Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> TSSMAT - Period 5 2023-24 Summary</li> </ul> <p>Minutes from previous FAR meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> REWORK Final copy of FAR meeting minutes 24.11.23</li> </ul> <p>Benchmarking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Benchmarking 2021 2022 conducted 2024.docx</li> </ul> <p>SRMSAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> 2324 SRMSAT.xlsx</li> </ul> <p>CEO FAR report / document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> FAR notes 15.2.24</li> </ul>
<b>Attendees (as per invite)</b>	<p>Charlene Gethin - CEO, Jacqui Bowman - Trust Business Manager, Shannie Cole, - Trust Finance Manager, Peter Halifax - Director, Charles Bradshaw Smith - Director, Angela Burns - Director, Nicola Saint - Clerk</p>

	<b>Agenda Item Title</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
1	<b>Prayer</b>	CEO led the prayer. All welcomed to join.
2	<b>Apologies</b>	-Round the room given, CG, PH, JB, CBS, AB, SCo (virtually) NS (virtually) -No apologies given.
3	<b>Pecuniary Interest, Statements of Assurance</b>	-JB confirmed she has updated new LGC members and confirmed they have the link. -Update register complete.
4	<b>Minutes from previous meeting</b>	-Chair asked Directors if the previous minutes were agreed to be true, accurate and fair and all agreed to this of the previous minutes. -Previous minutes signed and approved. -Any actions from the previous meeting (discussed and rated at end of meeting.) -Chair requested that any points which are found to be confidential are to be highlighted as so in discussion and minuted in accordance by the clerk.
5	<b>Audit, Finance and Risk Includes Finances, Audits, Estates, facilities and infrastructure (Inc. IT)</b>	-Finance management account update - SC. P5 accounts shared, P6 being worked on currently. End of Jan (P5) surplus discussed and ahead of budget. Details per school financial breakdown given. Expected financial year end discussed and reasoning behind this given. SEN funding discussed and the backdating of this, recouping the costs on extra support / staffing costs where these were incurred. Most notable significant vs budget differences discussed in detail were the staffing costs, support staff costs and TA costs also. Also discussed premises costs that are unexpected (not included in the budget in reserves.)

*CBS questioned over spend on premises, tracking the over spend for a better case built to apply for funding, month on month, would this be a better way to tell the story of the premises pattern that needs addressing?*

SC confirmed detail is already there as for the 4 schools, not sure if any other avenues of funding are available, CIF funding discussed and threshold vs value, can track as suggested but not sure any other avenues apart from the urgent funding, any reserves have to be used for premises (expected to use this funding first.)

Support staff SEN probed and queried and then signed off / approved.

Cash flow healthy, ongoing setting up of the new savings accounts, timescales and detail given, discussed detail on temporary savings account set up and the interest made in the interim.

Budget update - confirmed funding statement 24/25, looking at the detail of this to support for use in the business plan, to be delivered April 10th.

Modelled different scenarios per school, up to 9 models per school in some cases.

All schools will be able to make the funding budget balance.

CG discussed time lines, 20th March deadline for business plan, detail discussed about reserves being built up, dates of meetings given and what each school has to decide on before a set date.

*CBS questioned if representation is consistent per school, and from a Union perspective, CG confirmed this is the case.*

*AB questioned decisions per school and detail, Directors would like oversight on this, CG will share documents with Directors, JB also gave detail on the changes per school and further detail on some of the curriculum outsourced / buy in costs.*

CBS / PH questioned further around costs of outsourced curriculum and contracts held for service provided, relationship / contracts how did they start? CG / JB give detail in response to this and detail discussed of a possible way to move forward with this and ensure a similar provision for the children is delivered.

CG asked SC if a cost for provision for outsourced curriculum activity can be worked up. SC confirmed as part of the business case this could be.

*CBS questioned the details of how much it would cost to re-deploy, JB / CG gave details around this.*

CG confirmed the need to get answers swiftly re IR35 staff with CH (PHrP) for further detail and a separate meeting would be needed. *CBS / PH probed further around back pay and also ongoing / future pay, please bear in mind.*

Discussion continued and detail around dates given.

*All Directors discussed and agree legally to question the implied contract and what is fair based on the implied contract is what is needed, to be confirmed but to ensure this is fair.*

*AB questioned for the Directors own understanding is it that SC budgets / scenarios worked up are non negotiable? Head Teachers can opt for their own scenario along with this or not? SC confirmed. CG to share business case after Wednesday 20th March, action to note April 10th.*

CG confirmed changes are being done now and take from this the positive impact taking these changes now as needed will have on the Trust financially..

*CBS questioned whether now that the Trust is growing should we look at a pick and mix option for the Trust plan going forward? JB confirmed differences of on boarding with new schools, CG confirmed time scales behind decisions and impacts.*

Further detail given around budgets and to *minute reports have been read and thanks to Shannie.*

		<p><i>CBS probed further on figures and staffing costs and SC / CG replied with detail and how the business case supports positive change in relation to these costs.</i></p> <p><u>-IT Update (PH and JB)</u>  PH led the IT update and shared the details of the meeting with StaffsTech that had taken place. Explanation given of the work that is needed and how they will set about doing so, meetings probed microsoft costs and google costs and a decision made to move to chrome based on the all information. To note that the donated tablets at The Howard unfortunately can not run chrome, <i>AB suggest conversation needed to discuss the tablets and where they could be really useful and used, discuss options and take the conversation offline and approach the donor with much thanks and an explanation of where these will be used.</i>  StaffsTech start to move over systems during the Easter holiday to chrome, trouble shoot through issues.  JB gave further detail on set up and usage (StaffsTech fixing free of charge issues that were formed upon installation)  <i>AB suggested an IT champion through the process of the change over. CG commented the changeover was given as detail around 24 months ago. PH confirmed wi fi final decision can be made based on experience now.</i>  Confirmed the Trust is waiting on further detail to be presented on a back up / contingency, so functionality is always available.  JB confirmed the start of term in September 2024 all will be using / switched to chrome, also savings costs will be had. PH gave all further detail regarding the IT update and all the <i>Director's followed on to comment and to minute what an amazing job has been done, thankyou!</i>  <i>CBS questioned around onboarding new schools and a plan for when schools join the Trust, PH confirmed strategy to be looked at once this switch over has been done, learn from experience and use in any plans going forward.</i>  <i>Action corporate memory of what has been done well.</i>  Action StaffsTech, to review and decide due diligence contracts.  Action contracts and when they are ending and options.  <i>PH commented on costs possibly later on down the line and to add to the risk register / review.</i>  CG confirmed TH wi fi was slow (during Ofsted visit,) PH confirmed the detail behind connectivity / layers.  <i>CBS questioned at what stage do we start to look at more than one IT supplier as the Trust grows, effectiveness vs costs. PH confirmed action of a yearly review needed. All confirm add to risk register as a regular / annual action.</i>  CG confirmed when IT is all sorted and running correctly it could be easier to manage just as day to day queries.</p> <p>-JB confirmed detail on the external penetration test which has been booked to take place during the Easter holidays and then a visit on site and a thorough check and inside the network / devices.  CG confirmed cyber security as a business continuity plan needs to be reviewed and a plan put in place, look into options, it is a priority to do this.</p> <p>-SRMSAT updated on the detail for Directors and confirmed, needs approving, PH confirmed he corrected and saved the document, approved.</p>
6	<b>Risk Management Internal assurance</b>	Risk register points as above.

7	<b>Estates, facilities and infrastructure (Inc. IT) Environmental impact and decarbonisation plans</b>	<p>-SRMSAT as discussed above.</p> <p>-Asbestos inspection all confirmed they had read the report shared, CG confirmed the costs per hour associated and confirmed the detail and links to the CIF bid.  CBS questioned around going forward and next steps, SC gave detailed response from the authority, AB confirmed asbestos only if disturbed is an actual threat as it will be contained, intrusive work report is done before any work needed to be done. <i>Directors would like to push forward complaints or a letter to be written and keep an audit trail action CEO / Directors, learnings to be taken forward.</i></p> <p>-Benchmarking discussed as point above (document shared prior to meeting.)</p> <p>-GAG pooling as discussed and highlighted in the CEO FAR write up notes.</p> <p>-Dishwashers discussion around costs efficiency, review again in 12 months all agreed.</p> <p>-Decarbonisation (links with CBS)  Decarbonisation companies, CG has connected with Charles, more detail given behind this, a few companies could support and off set of costs discussed, CBS is happy to team up and work on this, next step is video conference CBS to drive this forward with his knowledge.</p> <p>-RC windows CG led discussion and detail given behind this project in relation to the CIF bid, time scales given in relation to the CIF bid, decision needed and all agreed, to minute, to wait until CIF bid decision has been shared before moving forward.  Message to Jenny / Emma to check the windows daily as D notice. Confirmed the steps already have been put in place to secure the area / membrane in the window added in also.  Actions above, to ensure risk assessment is updated with windows information.</p>
8	<b>Health and Safety</b>	<p>As points discussed above.</p>
9	<b>People Development and Management Includes: Human Resources, Recruitment and Retention, CPD, Capacity and Succession planning, Wellbeing, Partnerships</b>	<p>-Absence reviewed and discussed as above.  -Business case review and discussed above.</p> <p>Detail given on price reduction possible options of companies and savings per school and total across the Trust, detail of ordering and how this can be reduced on overspend per kitchen as one example. Approval needed from Directors, yes approval given, detail given around The Mease and equipment needed and ordering, menus for parents and tasting sessions confirmed to all.</p>

10	<b>Reflection - What have we achieved in this meeting that will improve outcomes for the staff and learners in our Trust?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Business case detail and further probing.</li> <li>-Financial model detail and staff plans discussed.</li> <li>-Benchmarking.</li> <li>-Impacts of scaling up and business as usual.</li> <li>-IT probing and detailed conversation/ update.</li> <li>-Cyber security / penetration test.</li> <li>-Health and Safety discussed.</li> <li>-Asbestos and windows.</li> <li>-Safe environments.</li> </ul>
11	<b>Any other business</b>	<p>Confirm date of next meeting.  Confirmed FAR date set for 5th July 8.00AM RC (all confirmed.)  Confirmed Directors meeting set for Friday 19th April 8.00AM RC (all confirmed.)  Action - NS add previous actions to the relevant matters / minutes arising agenda point, to check from the previous meeting.</p>

Signed..... Date .....

**Actions arising from 24.11.23 All rated and signed off (apart from 2 to carry forward)**

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
<b>5a. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	<b>Action</b> - Audit needs additional bank statements (SC is aware) and PH (Peter's) details for money laundering checks and purposes.	Audit, SC, PH	As soon as able  <b>Complete</b>
<b>5b. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	<b>Action</b> - Audit to send all documents to CG ahead of Director meeting 1.12.23, for signing.	Audit, CG, Directors	1.12.23  <b>Complete</b>
<b>5c. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	<b>Action</b> - continue to review bank accounts / 85k security, and whether this applies to business and personal.	SC	As soon as able  <b>Complete</b>

<b>5d. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	KPI <b>action</b> rag rating to be discussed at Directors meeting with management accounts.	CG, Directors	1.12.23 <b>Ongoing</b>
<b>5e. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	Data protection - <i>Director questions around shaded areas in the report / data and what this represents, action</i> JB identity / note at the Directors meeting the shading and what this indicates.	JB	1.12.23 <b>Complete</b>
<b>6. Risk Management internal assurance</b>	Penetration tests, discussed briefly and agreed for <b>Action</b> - Peter to take action of final decision next week at Directors meeting.	PH	1.12.23 <b>Complete</b>
<b>7. Estates, facilities and infrastructure</b>	<i>Director questions around management accounts ending.</i> <b>Action</b> - Shanie to check management account ending and confirm to Directors.	SC	1.12.23 <b>Complete</b>
<b>10. Reflection</b>	<i>Director questions around growth, financial support / role needed going forward realistically.</i> <b>Action</b> - SC work out costs for ½ day each a week, contingency buffer of how much time needed across the time needed and what up to worst case costs.	SC	As soon as able <b>Complete</b>
<b>10. Reflection</b>	<b>Action</b> - CG to add the financial audit comments and results highlights to the new joining pack as a positive.	CG	As soon as able <b>To do and on going</b>

**NEW Actions arising from 15.3.24**

Item	Action to be taken	Action by whom	Action by when
<b>5d. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>  (carried forward from 24.11.23)	KPI <b>action</b> rag rating to be discussed at Directors meeting with management accounts.	CG, Directors	<b>Ongoing</b>

<b>10. Reflection</b>  (carried forward from 24.11.23)	<b>Action</b> - CG to add the financial audit comments and results highlights to the new joining pack as a positive.	CG	To do and on going
<b>5. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	Finance / Business case AB questioned for the Directors own understanding is it that SC budgets / scenarios worked up are non negotiable? Head Teachers can opt for their own scenario along with this, after Weds 10th April, business case to be sent to Directors, action.	CG	20th March
<b>5. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	IT Action corporate memory of what has been done well, capture. Action StaffsTech / Switchshop, to review and decide due diligence contracts. Action contracts and when they are ending and options going forward.	PH/ JB / IT contractors	Once completion has happened
<b>5. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	IT PH confirmed action of a yearly review needed. All confirm add to risk register as a regular / annual action	All	Once completion has happened
<b>5. Audit, Finance and Risk</b>	Cyber security, as a business continuity plan needs to be reviewed and a plan put in place, look into options, it is a priority to do this.	Central / all	Once completion of penetration test has happened
<b>7. Estates, facilities and infrastructure</b>	Asbestos Directors - complaint or a letter to be written and to keep an audit trail, action for the CG / Directors, learnings to be taken forward.	CG / Directors	As soon as able
<b>7. Estates, facilities and infrastructure</b>	RC windows, to ensure risk assessment is updated with windows information (around having to hold off on starting work on the D notice windows due to CIF funding, and that health and safety steps have been put in place.)	RC school	As soon as able
<b>11. AOB</b>	NS to add actions to relevant points arising from previous meeting	NS	Next Far meeting