



Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust Finance Committee

Terms of Reference

Purposes of the Committee

The over-arching purpose of the ODST and (by delegation) all of its committees, is to deliver our vision; the belief in educational excellence. We aim to serve our pupils, staff, parents and their local community by providing academies with the highest levels of academic rigour and pastoral care. Through this purpose, the Board/Committee(s) will enable ODST's academies to be places where children and young people develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally and spiritually.

The specific purpose of this committee is to monitor the work of the academy trust in terms of its financial control.

Membership

- Membership and terms of reference will be reviewed annually by the Board (see below).
- The Committee will be comprised of four Trustees (including the Chair of the Committee) and up to four members appointed by the Board. The Chief Financial Officer, will attend in an advisory capacity.

Quorum

The quorum shall be three members of the Committee of whom two must be Trustees. (It is the responsibility of officers to alert the clerk in the event of known non-attendance of meeting).

Meetings

The Committee will meet as necessary and at least four times per year. The Committee shall elect a Chair annually who will be responsible for ensuring the agendas are produced, minutes of the meeting are taken and a report presented to the subsequent Board of Trustees meeting.

Terms of Reference

- To produce a Financial Manual of guidance incorporating all the finance policies and Schemes of Delegation which will apply to the Trust and all Academies within it. The manual should be recommended to the full Board of Trustees for approval and be reviewed annually.
- The Chief Financial Officer will report to the Committee on an assessment of the budget position and financial management of each school wishing to join the Trust, which the Committee will consider as part of the conditions for acceptance.
- To review with the Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer the projected income of both the central Trust and the schools compared to the estimated expenditure for at least three years (or for the period of the individual Academy's Improvement Plans), and where there are any potential budget issues take such actions as may be appropriate or refer to the Board of Trustees.
- To recommend to the Board financial sections for the Trust's Strategic Plan and oversee the financial section of any school development and improvement plan.
- To consider and agree the annual formula budgets prepared by the local Headteachers or LGBs and by the Chief Financial Officer in respect of central functions and reviewed by the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer, on behalf of the Trustees. Agree those budgets with the individual Academies and submit to the EFA.
- To consider and explore all means of external finance available to the academy trust.
- To consider and ratify where appropriate, all expenditures, contracts, asset disposals or virements exceeding

values, durations or terms specified in the Academy Trust Handbook or Schemes of Delegation as beyond the authority of Officers, Heads and Chairs of LGBs. To collectively report such decisions to the Board as part of the regular reporting by the committee or to refer such decisions to the Board (with a recommendation) where the Finance Committee considers there may be a strategic impact on ODST financial viability.

- To consider regular budget monitoring reports and periodic strategic financial projections prepared by the Chief Financial Officer and submit reports to the Board of Trustees on the budget position, together with any proposed corrective action to address significant variances between expenditure and budget.
- To approve financial analysis and projections for the Trust's Strategic Plan.
- In consultation with the Pay & Personnel Committee, consider the effect on the budget of changes in pay structure and of any new appointments or changes in existing employees' salaries; reserve the right to review pay and salaries of individual schools' Headteachers.
- To ensure that the academy trust's formal financial procedures (as set out in the Financial Manual and individual schemes of delegation) at both Trustee and school levels are reviewed at least annually paying particular attention to any recommendations made by internal or external audit.
- Where financial benchmarking is available, use it to compare expenditure with similar schools/academies and to review the value for money statement and efficiency and financial effectiveness throughout the academy trust.
- To maintain a register of pecuniary interests for academy trustees and ensure that a register is maintained at a local level for LGB governors.
- To review annually all insurance arrangements for the academy trust's Education Quality, Standards & Impact, Pay & Personnel and Ethos & Governance committees and from the Chief Executive and/or any other committee or working party of the academy trust.
- To receive reports from the Internal/External auditor following each monitoring visit. To act on any recommendations made by the Audit Committee after its consideration of such report.
- To review the financial aspects of the Critical Incident Management Plan on at least an annual basis (having a specific responsibility for the oversight of financial section).
- To review the financial aspects of the Risk Register on at least an annual basis, (having a specific responsibility for oversight of financial risk(s) as identified in the Trust Risk Register).
- To agree and prepare the Annual Report and Accounts (in accordance with DfE/EFA, Companies Act and Charity Commission requirements) for approval by the Board.

Powers of the Committee

The Committee shall have the power to require explanations, documents or analysis from any Member or employee of the Trust and to make recommendations to officers, committees and Board of the Trust: in the event of those recommendations not being accepted, the must be referred for consideration to the Board.

Recording and reporting of meeting

A clerk is appointed to the Committee, who will produce minutes of all meetings to be circulated before the full ODST Trustees' meeting following the Committee meeting.

Review of terms of reference and membership

This will be undertaken annually, by the full Board of ODST.

Date of last review: 29th September 2023