



An Daras Trust  
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

Central Office  
Unit 4 Tamar Business Park  
Pennygillam Way  
Pennygillam Industrial Estate  
Launceston  
PL15 7ED  
01566 777503  
Email: [governance@andaras.org](mailto:governance@andaras.org)

CEO: W. T. Hermon

11/3/2020

## Minutes

### Audit Committee Spring 2020

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

**Note that actions are highlighted in bold and red, and will be carried forward to the next meeting and questions or challenges during the meeting are highlighted in bold and blue**

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

**Present:** Bex Couch, Carol Green, Peter Hague, Trudy Rudge, Steve Tavener, Will Hermon

**In Attendance:** Governance Officer (Jo Callow sent apologies)

#### 2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda

No changes to annual declaration and none declared for this agenda.

#### 3. Confirm Minutes of previous Audit meeting Autumn (25<sup>th</sup> November 2019) & Matters Arising

- Add School Resource Self Assessment Tool to RSS & FSD agendas (TM). *Done, although it has subsequently been decided that twice a year is sufficient.*
- Obtain 3 quotes for external auditor services in the Spring term to be discussed at Audit committee on 11 March 2020. After further consideration, final bids to be presented to Audit committee in Summer term (29<sup>th</sup> Jun 2020) for decision on recommendation that will be run past full Board on 8<sup>th</sup> July and then decision made on appointing the external auditor by Members on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (WH, TM). *Unlikely that 3 quotes can be obtained as only 2 companies provide the service in this area. Quotes will be obtained from Bishop Fleming and Francis Clark. There has been an issue with unknown costs recently. ST agreed to look at the quotes prior to the next Audit committee and the committee were keen to ensure that fresh eyes should be considered from an external auditor and not just the cost implications.*

WH updated the committee on the confidential staffing matter. **A director challenged on the progress on the property condition survey and what will happen with this information** and WH updated the committee. **A director also challenged the outcome of the noted differences between forecast and actual highlighted by the external auditors at the last minutes**, and **WH agreed to provide an email update on this matter to the committee.**

Committee agreed to the minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

#### 4. Confidential Agenda Items

None.

## 5. Action from Full Autumn Board

WH gave some background on the MAT Improvement Capacity Framework for the benefit of the new Directors.

### 5a Quality Assurance and Accountability – Knowing Schools Quantitatively

The committee discussed the frequency of data collection in schools and agreed that data should continue to be looked at from a school level and discussed the use of KPIs, and the importance of keeping data to a manageable level so that analysis doesn't get too tricky. The committee agreed that it is the 'so what' from the data that is more important. **A director challenged how the staff are coping with data collection with reference to their work-life balance** and this was discussed. The performance management process was discussed in great detail. **A director challenged that if standards are not being met, how it is differentiated between a problem with the children or a problem with the standard of teaching**, and WH explained. Q1 to Q9 – Green; Q2 – it was agreed that the LGBs should also be consulted on this; Q10 – Amber/Green – development required (see item 7b).

### 5b Quality Assurance and Accountability - Knowing Schools Well Qualitatively

Improvement plans in place, although they do need to keep being driven. Parental feedback is generally good. Pupil feedback taken regularly and the committee discussed peer review, sharing best practice across the schools and utilising the expertise of senior and middle leaders across the MAT. Q1 to Q6 assessed as Green.

## 6. Launceston Pre School Application

WH explained the application and the issues with being on a separate site; full application is required and results of the consultation was shared with the committee. WH also explained the issues with the building and how this is managed by a different trust. **A director challenged the maintenance figures and the forecast of pupil numbers so that it remains a going concern.** WH confirmed a forecast will be given and will confirm the premises and maintenance costs.

**Action: Confirm premises and maintenance costs (WH)**

## 7. Risk Management

### a. Ensure DPA & GDPR Compliance

GDPR policies are up to date and all privacy notices issued. All sites audited. GDPR training arranged for the end of the March for staff, leaders and governors. All personal data across MAT has been reviewed and the reason for holding it is known. Committee were assured that MAT & Schools have effective process to respond to a suspected data breach in timely and correct manner. WH confirmed that all staff have received training and have sufficient resources to ensure GDPR compliance. He also confirmed that central staff practices are reviewed regularly and that relevant policies are effectively implemented.

### b. Annual Governance Review

Serial 5B of improvement plan this year is considering effectiveness of LGBs ensuring they have the resources and are empowered to do their monitoring well.

## 8. Finance

### a. Receive Finance Director's Report

The committee considered the Finance Director's report and a few matters were discussed across various schools, including staffing costs. The committee agreed that expenditure is now more in control compared to a few years ago. The Finance Director is thanked for his report.

b. **Review Debt Report**

The committee reviewed the debt report and questions were taken. Debt levels vary across all schools and fluctuates; SSCA seems to have made good progress and the committee were keen that whatever SSCA is doing to reduce debt could perhaps be shared with the other schools. It was also highlighted that the Launceston pre-school debt and fee charging should be ascertained to make sure that this is known and manageable.

c. **Manage Conflicts of Interest**

Pecuniary interest policy in place, annual declarations are made and an item placed on every agenda to allow interests to be declared. Committee assured that all purchases made by the MAT and contracts entered in to are afforded the appropriate level of scrutiny with regard to interests of any MAT employees.

9. **Internal Audit**

a. **Investigate Areas Highlighted by full Board**

None reported.

b. **Receive Audit Checklist**

Completed by Governance Officer, committee content with feedback.

c. **Receive Assurance that Public Funds Have been Used as Intended**

Yes and no issues reported by external auditors or ESFA.

10. **External Audit**

a. **Review External Auditors Findings**

WH discussed the "Key Items for Discussion" document provided by the external auditor. Rates relief process is ongoing; Issues with PSF ongoing but have made headway; Fixed asset register is now up to date and will be kept up to date termly; Invoices posted to PSF is ongoing; St Catherine's historical bank account closure is in hand; Financial scheme of delegation has been addressed and Head's expenses are now countersigned.

b. **Check Information for Submission to DfE**

Nothing requested by DfE.

11. **Policy Review**

a. **Pecuniary Interests**

Approved.

b. **Business Continuity**

One part of the critical incident planning with regard to continuity, including the consideration for corona virus measures. Central staff have the ability to work remotely. The schools can use class dojo for home schooling. **A director challenged whether all parents have access to class dojo so that no child is disadvantaged.** WH confirmed that this is the case for the majority and school leaders will be assessing this to ensure every child is covered in the event of a school closure. Approved.

c. **Freedom of Information & Publication Scheme**

Previously 2 policies, now merged on advice of DPO. The terminology "public authority" was questioned and confirmed as standard terminology on advice of DPO. Approved.

d. **Investments**

Approved

12. **AOB**

The committee was issued with a PE impact report from Arena.

13. **DONM**

Summer term meeting is Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at 9.30am at the central office.

Meeting closed at 11.25am.

TJH Martin

Governance Officer

**Distribution List:**

W. Hermon – CEO / Director B. Couch – Director (Chair) P. Hague – Director (Vice Chair) T. Rudge - Director S. Tavener – Director	C. Green – Director (will move to TLA in summer term) E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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