

**OLICAT Directors Meeting**  
**17<sup>th</sup> December 2025**  
**Minutes**



Agenda

Attendees: Christopher Donnellan, Bill Nelson, Joe Burns, Ilona Bond, Catherine Leong

OLICAT Representatives: Catherine Burnham, Andrew Waterhouse, Jo Brake-Oakes (left 6.20), Asha Morjaria

Other: Tracey Richardson (Azzets), Jamie Bray (dialled in for item 4)

Prayer: Catherine Burnham

Agenda item	
1. Declaration of pecuniary interest/conflict of interest arising from agenda None declared.	
2. Minutes & Matters arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Minutes               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Board meeting 22.10.2025 Accepted as a fair record</li> <li>II. EGM 17.11.2025 Accepted as a fair record</li> <li>III. EGM 24.11.2025 Accepted as a fair record</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Matters Arising</li> </ul> <p>22.10.25 minutes referred to process of fast approval in the Chairs update. STG are now getting 100k of panels, battery and 3 EV chargers.</p> <p>Update on site sale and LA progress was given. Directors noted that The Cube has increased its offer again to 2.5 million (LA agreed sale is 1.8 million). Directors noted that whilst an attractive offer the potential risks and liabilities of a protracted land dispute from selling to someone other than the LA remain and are of such significance as to make such a sale non viable.</p> <p>Following policies were approved outside committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Pay policy – teaching staff</li> <li>• Pay policy – support staff</li> <li>• Health and Safety f. Finance Handbook</li> <li>• Directors and Governors expenses</li> <li>• Fraud policy</li> <li>• Gifts and Hospitality</li> <li>• Attendance (template) k. Safeguarding (template)</li> </ul>	

3. Audit

Three documents circulated:

- Full statutory accounts requiring formal approval
- Audit findings report – not public but goes to the DFE
- Audit discussion document – purely internal and summarises for the board

Key points noted:

- Plan in future is for a more controlled and consistently structured school report as we are aware AI combs through for search returns.
- P15 the financial position and key point of trust being a going concern is a director responsibility. Auditor supports this view.
- This is a clean unqualified audit report with no modifications .
- Assurance report on regularity didn't find any evidence of anything improper.
- P29 I&E for the year.shows net movement in funds of 1.5 million. This includes various funds – revenue, capital I&E, depreciation charge (marking down of assets), valuation of LGPS.
- Audit finding report shows a reconciliation of how we reached the 1.5 million figure.
- 2 million adjustment on pension liability.
- P31 balance sheet shows just shy of 4 million held and breakdown. Tangible asset (depreciates over time). Defined pension benefit liability – deficit last year of 1.9 now included as nil. Local government annual actuarial assessment identifies our share of liability. Historically a big liability bur now an asset.
- 3.3 million is available cash – some revenue and some capital (split shown).
- DFE good practice guide for reserves is if holding <5% concerned and >20% concerned. Sitting at lower end of acceptable range. Noted p49 shows the 3 schools not in surplus.
- Audit findings. Very low severity items and easy fixes.

Directors accepted and agreed audit findings and report as presented. Report signed as required at the meeting and returned with Azzets for submission.

**Action: check and confirm CD attendance.**

4. IT Strategy

SJ gave an overview of IT audit and strategy work to date.

The IT audit work has identified that a number of elements across our network are now out of date and present a risk moving forward. A significant amount of work needs to be carried out to bring our infrastructure up to an acceptable level over the next few years.

Easy PC have put forward a high level proposal to address but it is missing a lot of detail, and we need to drill down. It is prudent to get some external validation and do our due diligence. One item we want to look at is bringing some external expertise – another MAT or organisation that has been through this process.

JBr has been involved in the Easy PC meetings and discussed with CB. Jbr raised key elements to consider:

- Some items are a short term issue. Using a cruise ship analogy, it will take time to get where you are going but your lifeboats need fixing now (servers). Internally you don't have your own IT risk register so we're relying on Easy PC.
- Compare this process to safeguarding – some things need immediate attention, some take time to address
- Procurement – having preferred partners might make it difficult
- The work that is needed (whoever does it) is too much for one person to manage. Bring someone in – data or IT support.
- Look for a MAT that has done this and use them. Consider bringing someone in if you're growing rather than buying in.
- We don't have a long term roadmap or an IT risk register.
- Quantify and qualify what it is you need to do.
- Risk is a hundred of thousands of pounds blip if you knee jerk response. Proposal put forward is not detailed enough.

JBr recommended as a priority to bring in the right support and put a risk register together. Look at at short term spend vs big spend. Put together a technical roadmap and costs. Investing now in expertise can save you hundreds of thousands later.

Directors agreed the approach is to fill the short term holes, seek external validation and develop risk register and roadmap.

#### 5. Finance

AM shared the August report for information. Key points to note:

- Granular detail for year end. There is a small surplus but cash still depletes. 260k surplus has to be maintained.
- Budgets for this year are very tight. Recommendation is a discussion on the TBCS position and look at a repayment plan. Not just coming in at balanced, but repaying the deficit that is limiting other schools. At 100k a year its still 10 years. They did manage 85k this year but with an adjustment from the diocese. Directors agree – suggest 150k as opening negotiating figure. CB will have that initial conversation with LAC chair.
- EGM with STMS in summer led to balanced last year. Budget for 25/6 a 65k deficit but looking better. We're in a considerably better place working with the school.
- Catering contract is in place at STMS with a little teething to work through, (long term absence etc) so initial costs will be higher due to this. Cashless is going in in January with some resistance to biometrics. May be a higher cost in year one.
- Cleaning procurement has been very resource intensive. Opening meeting became immediately apparent they were not capable of delivery. Existing providers agreed to step back in. As a result we have secured a better price.
- LGPS – covered within audit item.
- SFOA debt write off of 11k factored into accounts. Historic lunch and wraparound care. LAC has seen.
- OLW lease. When part of historic trust the central team paid for use of an office. Trust used to pay even once transitioned to OLICAT. Stopped

<p>Aug23. TB had made decision we could not pay any more due to budget decision. Have asked for a signed lease or paperwork to evidence.</p>	
<p>6. HR Papers circulated for staff increments for teaching and support staff. Process this year has been more structured a more complete submission is in place. Points to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One late submission for MPS6 to UPS1. LAC chair has seen and supports.</li> <li>• MPS increments are automatic. UPS increments are an application process.</li> <li>• LACs have reviewed and recommend all submitted.</li> </ul> <p>CD queried if we can we afford it. AM confirmed budget setting has planned for this level of increase.</p> <p>IB queried a recruitment and retention for a deputy head. JBO confirmed this is year 3. AM noted school has moved size banding and if this is this taken into account? JBO confirmed it will be looked at and reviewed in July.</p> <p>Directors agreed increments as submitted.</p>	<p><b>Action: DHT retention and school rebanding will be looked at in July.</b></p>
<p>7. Governance</p> <p>Noted one of the HT reports has little too much detail on safeguarding in report. Followed up .</p> <p>CB observed safeguarding action plans not always followed up. Highlighted with chairs to ensure on LAC agendas. It is also clear we are desperately short of governors, and chairs and heads are being challenged to recruit.</p>	
<p>8. Safeguarding</p> <p>The child leaving site at STMP has had notification from the DFE they are satisfied with action taken. DFE have flagged in their eyes a pattern with St Marys and parent gaining access, and are looking for assurance that sites are safe. LACs to have on their radar for safeguarding/H&amp;S.</p> <p>A member of long term supply staff suspended at one primary has been mentioned (but not connected with the school) in relation to drink driving.</p>	
<p>9. AOB</p> <p>CD flagged</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solar contract, site survey is done. Diocese have delegated for us to sign.</li> <li>- Training from NORES on HR and OFSTED</li> <li>- CEOs PDR done.</li> </ul> <p>IB to discuss Judicium and clerking at next meeting</p>	
<p>10. Confidential Item Withheld</p>	

