



Terms of Reference for Finance, Audit & Risk Committee 2026-2027

Finance Audit & Risk Committee

Membership: To consist of no fewer than three PCLC trustees. Membership may include persons who are not trustees, but the majority of members must be trustees. The Chief Executive Officer/ Accounting Officer and Chief Financial Officer shall attend committee meetings in an advisory capacity, and other members of the finance team will attend as appropriate.

Quorum: A minimum of three PCLC trustees/governors. The number of PCLC trustees must be at least equal to the number of other PCLC governors in attendance.

Meetings: Five times a year October / December / March / May / June. Business can only be conducted when quorate.

Clerk: The meetings of the FA&R Committee will be clerked by the clerk to the Trust Board.

Finance:

The Committee has responsibility delegated by the Trust Board to:

1. review an annual budget, ensuring resources are allocated in line with the trust's strategic priorities and curriculum plans
2. present the annual balanced budget to the Trust Board for approval
3. review and approve a realistic three-year financial plan, taking into account the trust's vision, known risks and opportunities
4. receive the trust's management accounts in order to monitor the trust's cash position and income and expenditure against the approved budget
5. review pupil number estimates (that underpin revenue projections) termly
6. report back to each meeting of the Trust Board, alerting them to potential problems and significant variations to the approved budget at the earliest opportunity
7. ensure that the Trust Board's approach to pay and benefits is transparent, proportionate and justifiable
8. develop a framework for the pay of the senior executive leader and the leadership team
9. comply with statutory requirements to publish trust staff rates of pay and benefits.
10. ensure that sufficient funds are allocated for staff pay increments
11. review and approve any adjustments to the trust's approved budget
12. approve expenditure in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation (see Finance Regulations)
13. undertake detailed scrutiny and recommend approval of the school resource management self-assessment checklist annually
14. ensure that the trust's financial procedures are complied with
15. review and act upon any issues identified by benchmarking against similar trusts, internal or external scrutiny
16. ensure that the trust follows basic procurement rules and achieves best value for money when acquiring goods and services

17.review, adopt and monitor all policies delegated by the Trust Board.

Audit & Risk:

- 18.oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny
- 19.support development and review of the trust's risk management policy, setting out the framework the trust has adopted for risk management.
- 20.ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny
- 21.evaluate the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks and report this to the Trust Board
- 22.assess whether procedures are designed effectively and efficiently, and check whether agreed procedures have been followed
- 23.review the external auditor's plan each year
- 24.review the annual report and accounts
- 25.review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's managers in response to those findings
- 26.review findings from other assurance activities by third parties including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations
- 27.assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor
- 28.Report on the committee's conclusions on the above assessment to advise the board of trustees and members, including recommendations on the reappointment or dismissal or retendering of the external auditor, and their remuneration
- 29.to seek assurance that the risks identified are those which may occur, for example, operational risk, financial risk, compliance risk, regulatory and legal risk, major accident
- 30.review the ratings and responses on the risk register to inform contingency and business continuity planning and the programme of work, ensuring risks and control measures are adequately identified and modified as appropriate. However, ultimate oversight of the Trust risk register is retained by the Board of Trustees
- 31.provide reports for each full trust board meeting, highlighting emerging risks or significant anomalies at the earliest opportunity
- 32.agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year
- 33.agree who will perform the work
- 34.consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of internal scrutiny
- 35.consider progress in addressing recommendations
- 36.recommend to members the appointment of an external auditor (in accordance with the trust's articles of association)
- 37.receive the external auditors' annual plan, annual report, and accounts and recommend appropriate actions to the Trust Board in response to the findings
- 38.to review the trust's insurance cover in compliance with its legal obligations

These Terms of Reference were reviewed and approved by the Trust Board on **13th July 2026** and will be reviewed annually.