

Strategic Plan

2020 - 2023

***Stronger together in pursuit of excellence
Collaboration, Aspiration, Transformation***



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Background

ROBUS Multi Academy Trust

ROBUS MAT was formed in September 2014. It came into fruition as a natural development of positive relationships built between neighbouring schools in the local area. We continue to work in partnership with all schools and academies in the locality. We believe that collaboration is the key to a successful education system.

ROBUS is Latin for 'strength in togetherness' and this underpins our philosophy. All academies within the ROBUS MAT have the commitment to share their ideas, their expertise and their unique experiences, so that pupils and staff can learn, develop and grow together. We take collective responsibility for our pupils; pooling our energy to find solutions to problems that arise and removing barriers that may prevent success.



Kingston Primary School

Kingston Primary School is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. Ofsted judged it to be an 'Outstanding' Academy when inspected in 2009. It is a National Support School and in 2015 was granted Teaching School status.

'At Kingston we believe that every single child has the right to an exceptional education that provides them with the opportunities to flourish and reach their potential.'



Montgomery Primary School

Montgomery Primary School is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. Ofsted judged it to be a 'Good' Academy when inspected in 2017.

'At Montgomery we aim to engender a real love of life-long learning. We strive to create a positive and caring environment in which everyone is encouraged to develop and reach their full potential.'



Thundersley Primary School

Thundersley Primary School is a 2-form entry Academy in Thundersley. Ofsted judged it to be a 'Good' Academy when inspected in 2017.

'At Thundersley we want our pupils to succeed in every area of their life at school and develop a lifelong love of learning''



Woodham Ley Primary School

Woodham Ley Primary is a 1-form entry Academy in Benfleet. It was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted when inspected in 2017.

'At Woodham Ley, our commitment is to develop unique and ambitious pupils who make informed choices and are inspired to reach their greatest potential'

Introduction

Message from the Chair of the Trust Board

The Board knows that education is the springboard for life. It is determined therefore that ROBUS should be founded on 3 enduring pillars:

- The best possible education, experience and environment (learning and caring) for its pupils;
- The best possible environment for its staff to teach, nurture and support their pupils; and
- An open and active relationship with its families and the communities it serves.

We believe that this foundation will enable the Trust to meet its goals enabling our pupils and staff to excel. We also believe that the Trust and its commitment to challenge and support is unleashing the talent and energy of our academies. We are determined to nurture and sustain this.

The Board is delighted therefore to endorse this Strategic Plan and commends the CEO and team for the work and understanding that underpins it. It sets out how we will achieve our vision, sustain our values and achieve the outcomes that our pupils and staff rightly deserve. It provides the guidance, support that our academies need. It ensures that the Trust and its academies are focused on improving teaching and learning, leadership and governance and raising standards. It rightly focuses us on outcomes. Outcomes enabled by efficient and effective systems and processes (Finance, HR, Infra and Risk) that allow our academies to focus on delivering exceptional educational outcomes and flourish.

The Board looks forward to its work with the CEO and academies to realise an ambitious Strategic Plan and a shared journey.

David Norris OBE
Chair of the Trust Board

Introduction

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

We are enormously proud of our academies and of the leaders, governors, teachers and support staff who every day ensure all pupils enjoy and make good progress in their learning, both academic and personal.

My role is to work together with the Board of Trustees and the leaders of each academy to create the vision, strategic direction and teaching and learning environment that will enable children across our Trust to thrive, regardless of their background or starting point. The leaders within the Trust are relentless in ensuring that our children flourish and empower their staff and wider school communities to have the same high expectations of both the children and themselves.

One of the most important priorities for the Trust is to build capacity to ensure that we always have the ability to meet needs within our academies. We believe that in order to build capacity we need to not only grow leadership from within, but also be outward looking and develop close relationships with other academies, MATs and organisations.

Our academies serve their local communities and have their own unique identity. The Trust values the healthy diversity within our academies and encourages member academies to further develop their own distinctive culture, ethos and character. Being part of a Multi Academy Trust has already provided member academies with a range of financial and practical benefits. Our role is to ensure each academy is financially secure. We want communities to be proud of their local ROBUS academy and are determined to make it the first choice for all families. We want to transform the lives of the pupils in our academies and support them to grow and thrive as kind, ambitious future citizens.

We are stronger together in our pursuit of excellence.

Emma Dawson
Chief Executive

Our Vision

Our Vision statement

Through collaboration, determination and commitment, we will ensure outstanding opportunities that enable all stakeholders to thrive, grow and achieve.

We are stronger together in pursuit of excellence.

Our Values

- Collaboration
- Aspiration
- Transformation

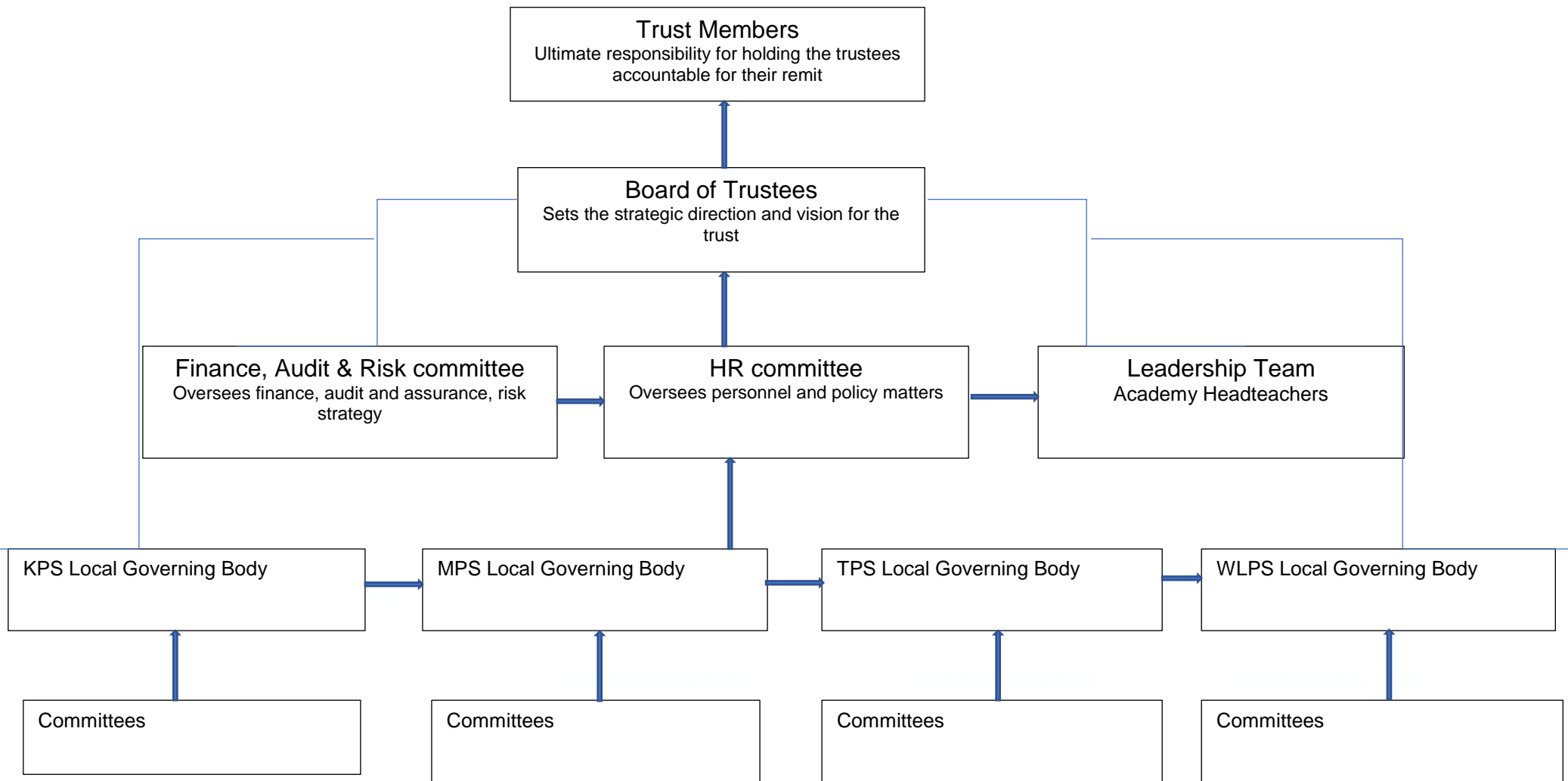
Our Aims

In ROBUS Multi Academy Trust we aim to give every child:

- A high-quality learning experience enabling them to excel academically, socially and emotionally.
- The opportunity to develop high self-esteem, to build confidence and to be courageous.
- A motivating and memorable learning experience that flames the desire for lifelong learning.
- A humanitarian appreciation of the need for self-respect and respect of others.

Governance Structure

The ROBUS Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who are accountable to the Members and have overall responsibility and ultimate decision-making authority for all the work of the Trust, including the establishing of the academies operated by the Trust.



Governance

The Trust has clearly defined roles and responsibilities for Members, Board of Trustees, CEO, Local Governing Bodies and Academy Leadership Teams through its Scheme of Delegation.

Members

The Members of ROBUS MAT are the guardians of the governance of the Trust with the general duty to further the Trust's charitable purpose of advancing education for the public benefit in the UK. They are responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with all aspects of law and regulation to it, and operates within the requirements set out in the Trust's Articles of Association, the Academies Financial Handbook and current policy of the Department for Education and Charity Commission.

Core functions

- Members will hold the Trustees accountable for ensuring that the Trust's Objects (as set out in its Articles of Association) are met and that the income and property of the Trust shall be applied solely towards the promotion of the Object.
- Members will be responsible for appointing or removing Members and for appointing or removing Trustees as set out in the Trust's Articles of Association.
- Members are responsible for the appointment or removal of the Trust's auditors.
- Members can amend the Trust's Articles of Association (subject to permission from DfE/Charity Commission for certain clauses).
- Members can direct the Trustees to take specific action in certain circumstances.

Accountability

Accountable to the Secretary of State for Education.

Trustees

Core functions are:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team to account for the educational performance of academies and pupils, and the performance and management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of each academy and ensuring value for money.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitoring the work of Local Governing Bodies.
- Assessing and managing the principal risks to the Trust.
- Appointing the CEO and holding him/her to account for the Trust's overall performance, and for discharging the role of the Accounting Officer.
- Ensuring that the Trust operates with prudent financial planning and remains solvent.

Trustees' duties, under the Companies Act 2006, include:

- Acting within their powers.
- Promoting the success of the Trust.
- Exercising independent judgement.
- Exercising reasonable care, skill and diligence.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Declaring any interest in proposed transactions or arrangements.

Role of the Local Governing Body

The role of the Local Governing Body (LGB), as delegated by the Trust Board, is to support the effective operation of the Trust and its policies by overseeing all matters in each school relating to pupils' learning and well-being. The core function of a LGB covers all factors which relate to, and underpin, good teaching and learning and to also ensure that the Trust Board remains aware of any issues and risks within each school.

Each school within the Trust has a maximum of eleven LGB members, comprising:

- Headteacher
- 2 Staff Governors
- at least 2 co-opted/Community Governors
- at least 2 Parent Governors

For Local Governing Bodies to carry out their role effectively all governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously.
- Acknowledged by the Senior Staff in the academies and accountable to the Trust Board.
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in their role.
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

We would expect that the core business of each Local Governing Body to:

- Review and monitor the School Improvement Plan.
- Monitor and review Progress and Attainment.
- Review Headteacher performance.
- Review and monitor the Curriculum.
- Ensure that feedback from external quality assurance, including internal audit, is acted on appropriately.
- Review and monitor financial performance and budgets.

Our Key Performance Indicators SEE SOA

Trustees will meet a minimum of 6 times a year and receive 6 written reports relating to the following Key Performance Indicators

- **Standards/Outcomes**

- ✓ Academies are at least good and/or improve their Ofsted inspection rating.
- ✓ Academies can demonstrate that their curriculum is ambitious, fully inclusive and designed to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- ✓ Academies can evidence successful safeguarding systems are in place.
- ✓ Academies on track to meet or exceed National Averages (NA) or Trust targets (whichever is the higher) at EYFS, Phonics, KS1, KS2 (Reading, Writing and Maths plus Combined at KS2).
- ✓ Parent and pupil survey data illustrates satisfaction.
- ✓ Monitoring shows that teaching across the MAT is effective.
- ✓ Academies to be at or above National Averages for attendance and Persistent Absence (PA).

- **Human Resources**

- ✓ Academies are fully staffed.
- ✓ Absence rates among staff is 5% or less (contextualised to allow for any unavoidable absence due to long term sickness, maternity etc).
- ✓ Staff survey data illustrates satisfaction.
- ✓ Retention of staff is at least 85%.
- ✓ Pupil to teacher ratios are compared favorably to national levels.
- ✓ All staff across the Trust access/receive bespoke CPD programmes, positively impacting on outcomes and performance.

- **Finance**

- ✓ The number on roll of Trust academies should be a minimum of 95% of potential numbers and be full in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).
- ✓ All academies effectively operate Trust systems and deliver better value at lower cost with a target of ensuring a surplus budget and that target reserves are met.
- ✓ Audit reports identify no high-risk aspects.
- ✓ Accounts filed with Companies House for public access and on the Trust website by 31 January of the following year.
- ✓ Trust to submit audited financial statements, Auditor's Management Letter and accounts submission coversheet by 31 December to ESF.
- ✓ All statutory returns submitted on time.

- **Governance**

- ✓ All Members and Trustees fully understand their duties and responsibilities as Company Directors and Charity Trustees as laid out in the Companies Act 2006.
- ✓ Attendance at Full Board and Committee meetings to average 90% or higher over the academic year.
- ✓ The Schemes of Delegation are reviewed annually.
- ✓ Academies have a full complement for their Local Governing Bodies, with an appropriate set of skills and experiences to undertake their defined roles.
- ✓ Regular review of skills matrix of each Board/Committee to ensure ability to deliver their core functions.

Our Strategic Priorities

The Robus Multi Academy Trust has determined four strategic objectives understood and agreed by Trustees, Governors and staff.

Objective A

Quality of Education:
Continuously improving the quality of provision of all our academies and enhancing pupil outcomes across the Trust.

Objective B

Leadership and people:
Providing outstanding governance, executive leadership and school leadership with clear succession planning; attracting, developing and retaining the best, most effective people to work in our academies.

Objective C

Operational effectiveness:
Ensuring financially viable and sustainable academies in ROBUS; working together to enable academies to maximise their resources to increase the quality of provision.

Objective D

Developing and growing our partnership: Strategic growth of our existing partnership, working alongside other local academies and teaching academies for the benefit of all our staff and pupils.

Strategic Objective A: Quality of Education - Continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning across the Trust in all our academies and transforming pupil outcomes

Success Criteria

1. Outcomes in all ROBUS Academies are in the top quartile nationally, for all pupil groups and each school is closing the attainment gap for its SEND and/or disadvantaged pupils.
2. Attendance in all ROBUS Academies is above national average and persistent absenteeism is decreasing.
3. Each school has a curriculum in place that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, the knowledge, skills and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
4. All ROBUS Academies maintain or improve their most recent Ofsted grading in their next section 5 Ofsted inspection.
5. A programme of quality assurance is in place that supports staff development, builds expertise and capacity and raises standards to deliver positive outcomes for pupils.

Why is it important?		
For our pupils to truly thrive, the quality of education in Trust academies needs to be exceptional. The principle of developing and offering a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils in each ROBUS school is central to our strategy and is key to pupils' success.		
Indicators of success/Milestones		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders have a clear strategy for improving outcomes for summer term 2021, ensuring a broad balanced curriculum, effective use of Sports Premium, Catch up/Pupil Premium funding and the National Tuition programme • Trust academies engage in the Essex Disadvantaged Strategy and a robust plan is in place for Summer 2021 and beyond to ensure excellent outcomes for disadvantaged pupils • A systematic assessment timetable and method for capturing and analysing outcomes is in place that provides reports both at school and Trust level and drives improvement. • Leaders and Trustees agree a set of Key Performance Indicators to ensure consistency of reporting at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ROBUS School Improvement Plan for 2021-22 is created to ensure that where there are common areas for development, resources are shared and where those are matched by areas of expertise, these are monopolised upon. • A talent and capacity register is put in place to identify staff in all roles who have expertise to share. • Plans are in place for sharing great practice ensuring that Subject Leaders have a network of expertise and that resources can be coordinated. • Peer reviews are reinstated to allow quality assurance of self – evaluation and monitor the effectiveness of the ROBUS School Improvement Plan and individual School Improvement Plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cycle of self – evaluation and improvement at the Trust level is established and there is a network of expertise and specialists across the Trust who are leading projects in all ROBUS academies. • KPIs used by Governors and Trustees to hold leaders to account and therefore improve provision in each school and across the Trust.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
Individual School Improvement Plans.		
Evaluation/challenge of School Improvement Plans and SEFs.		
Local Governing Body scrutiny/Trust Board scrutiny		

Strategic Objective B: Leadership and people - providing outstanding governance, executive leadership and school leadership at all levels with clear succession planning; attracting, developing and retaining the best people to work in our academies.

Success Criteria

1. The Board of Trustees and all those responsible for governance across ROBUS have the knowledge and skills to act strategically in the best interests of the Trust, governing in accordance with its Articles of Association/Scheme of Delegation and having highly effective governance arrangements.
2. There is a development programme in place for all staff, Governors and Trustees
3. The ethos across ROBUS academies is one committed to ensuring staff well being is high on the agenda and that we attract, develop and retain talented and capable staff to posts in our Trust.

a) Effective governance at Trust and Local Governing Body level

Why is it important?		
Highly effective leadership and governance is pivotal for the success and sustainability of our Trust and academies to ensure that the highest of standards are set and met in all aspects of Trust life.		
Indicators of success		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust academies are highly effective in their statutory roles throughout the pandemic and are supported and held to account by their Governors and Trustees. There is a strategy for recruitment, induction and training for ROBUS Trustees and Governors. An effective dashboard of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is developed. A system is in place for the adoption, review and updating of all Trust policies. Plans are put in place for self-evaluation of the Trust and Local Governing Bodies. Scheme of Delegation is reviewed to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' on a yearly basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is clarity on the roles of Trustees and Governors in holding leaders in each school to account. ROBUS review of Governance is completed by a National Leader of Governance and a Trust Development/Succession plan is in place. KPIs are in place and used by the Trustees and Governors to hold leaders to account. An effective professional cycle is in place and ensures that all Governors and Trustees have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focused and well-trained Trustees/Governors are operational in all ROBUS academies. A succession plan is in place at both Trust and Local Governor level. No vacancies at Trust or LGB.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
Trust Development Plan		
Trust Self-evaluation plan		
Trust Board/National Leader of Governance		

b) Effective development, retention and succession planning of staff in all Trust academies

Why is it important?		
For our pupils to enjoy a truly excellent experience we must provide consistently high quality teaching backed by high quality professional development and support. Staff motivation and skills are key to the quality of our learners' experience and staff development and morale are central to the Trust's vision.		
Indicators of success		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous Professional Development provision across the Trust is planned, evaluated and refined linked to personal, Trust and school priorities. A plan is in place to achieve the Trust's vision of a 'flightpath' approach to staff development entitling all Trust staff to high quality training with clear direction determined by role, skills, experience and aspiration. Early Career Framework training programme is in place ready for early career teachers (NQTs & NQTs+1) in September 2021 and includes NQTs from 2019/20. Performance Management system is reviewed and quality assurance put in place to ensure equality of opportunity and consistency across the Trust and that this fits with the flightpath vision. A cycle of well-being surveys for staff to ensure that morale, capacity and retention is high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff have an agreed professional flightpath for their development for the academic year and beyond. Expectations for Upper Pay Range teachers are defined, linked to Performance Management and a programme of UPS research based projects is in place in each school which drives improvement. A well-being programme is in place for staff using partners such as the School Sports Partnership and local businesses. HR Policy harmonisation adopted across the Trust Trust wide talent map and succession plan in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ROBUS flightpath – a common and extensive programme of staff development operates across the Trust. This will extend to senior and middle leaders, aspiring leaders, teaching and support staff and non-qualified teachers. A well established wellbeing programme ensures that retention, morale and ultimately effectiveness is excellent.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/monitor action?		
School Improvement Plans.		
Continuous Professional Development Plans		
Trust Board Human Resources Committee		

Strategic Objective C: Operational effectiveness - ensuring financially viable and sustainable academies in ROBUS; working together to enable academies to maximise their resources to increase the quality of provision.

Success Criteria

1. To support academies to maximise the resources to improve outcomes for pupils and young people through activity such as the joint procurement of services to bring about better value for money and economies of scale.
2. To develop an efficient and effective school estate which supports and responds to enable the delivery of education services across the Trust.
3. To regularly review Trust staffing to ensure that benefit can be made of consolidating roles across the Trust when the opportunity arises.
4. To investigate other revenue streams that could be used to provide additional educational opportunities/services.
5. To identify and realise efficiencies (where they enhance outcomes).
6. To Identify and realise convergence across the Trust (without diminishing academy's strengths).

Why is it important?		
Trust Executive, Trustees and Members have a legal duty to manage the Trust's finances responsibly. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that all money is spent in pursuit of better provision for our pupils and young people. We must meet all our legal and moral obligations and be open and transparent.		
Indicators of success		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System is in place to maximise opportunities for joint procurement of contracts and efficient use of funds. Consistent financial reporting is in place across the Trust. Business Continuity Plan in place across the Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Trust wide financial and MIS [Management Information System] software is undertaken to evaluate and recommend/shortlist for Trust Finance committee. Review of adequacy and consistency of internal controls across all academies. A team is established and professional partners identified to undertake a review of IT infrastructure across Trust and develop the Trust digital strategy. Estate Management plans are developed in each Trust school to encourage a Trust wide maintenance and development programme of the Trust estates. To investigate other revenue streams that could be used to provide additional educational opportunities/services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New financial software is effectively in place and allowing efficient financial management. Clear IT infrastructure plan in place and academies clear as to the timetable for implementation of any recommendations. Digital strategy is implemented. Premises and academy sites are improved and developed appropriately. Lettings generate increased funds. Continued efficient use of resources.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/ monitor action?		
3 year Financial plans.		
School Improvement Plans.		
Estate Plans maintenance schedules / rotas		

Well-developed CIF bids.

Strategic Objective D: Developing and growing our partnership: Strategic growth of our existing partnership, working alongside other local academies and teaching academies for the benefit of all our staff and pupils.

Success Criteria

1. Trust is outward looking, engaging with other local academies through BATIC Trust and BTSA to ensure services such as CPD, and mental health provision are maintained and enhanced, leading to improved outcomes for all.
2. Links are made with the special academies in the local area to upskill staff and meet the needs of pupils.
3. The Trust has a growth strategy in place clearly stating in what context and within which principles further academies might join to strengthen our partnership.

Why is it important?		
To continue to keep developing and improving our academies to achieve the best outcomes for pupils and to ensure sustainability, as a Trust we need to be outward looking. This means actively engaging in local and regional networks and continually reviewing our vision for growth.		
Indicators of success/Milestones		
2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROBUS Academies involved in the inception of BATIC subject networks such as EYFS, SEND, Disadvantaged, curriculum subject areas to share best practice. • BTSA and Chafford Hundred Teaching Hub is effectively used in the planning of the Trust Improvement Plan and the Trust Professional Development Plan. • ROBUS Academies engage STEM learning project in conjunction with other local academies and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Science Learning Partnership. • English/Maths hub. • Youth Sports Trust. • Discussions around a growth strategy are had at Trust and Local Governing Body level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROBUS Academies are represented in all BATIC subject networks and membership of these is improving outcomes for pupils. • STEM learning project: ongoing outcomes communicated with ROBUS stakeholders • ROBUS growth strategy is published giving clarity around the Trust vision for growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROBUS growth strategy is reviewed and updated. • Outcomes for all ROBUS Academies improve due to active participation in networks.
Which strategies and plans will deliver/ monitor action?		
School Improvement Plans.		
STEM Learning project action plan.		
Subject Leader action plans.		

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