

Terms of Reference

Interim Academy Improvement Management Board

Introduction

The interim Terms of Reference as set out below are recognised and approved by the Board of Trustees of the Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) for the purpose of ensuring robust and transparent governance as Houlton School transitions from build development to operational ownership; as such, these Terms of Reference are time limited.

Although specific to the transitional period, these Terms of Reference in scope and remit form part of a suite of documents adopted by the Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) for the proper governance, oversight and management of TLET's community of academies. The principle aims are to:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Oversee the financial performance of the organisation and make sure its money is well spent.

As such, these Terms of Reference must be read in conjunction with the Trust's:

- System of Governance and Working Practices
- Code of Business Conduct
- Link Trustee Terms of Reference
- Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA)

Additionally, and central to the proper execution of these Terms of Reference are:

- The Academies Financial Handbook (Education & Skills Funding Agency)
- The Governance Handbook and Competency Framework (Department for Education)
- Master Funding Agreement (Department for Education)
- Supplemental Funding Agreement (Department for Education)

Context

The Department for Education (DfE) approved the development of a Free School, to be known as Houlton School, and located at the heart of the developing Houlton community on the outskirts of Rugby. Urban & Civic PLC secured the contract for the design and build of the school, with the DfE, entrusting TLET with the operation of the school. In so doing, the DfE hold expectation that from initial opening, the Trust/School will deliver accessible high-quality meaningful learning.

To this end, there is a:

- construction expectation of a timely build enabling learning provision from September 2021

- community expectation of the provision of properly resourced enabled learning
- compliance expectation of build / educational regulatory demand and operational governance
- cultural expectation of learning expertise and leadership delivery of pedagogical excellence

Against this backdrop, TLET formally recognises Houlton School local interim Academy Management (AIM) Board as being integral to its system and design of governance and working practices which ensure learning provision remains fit for purpose and sustains the vision of 'learning today for the world of tomorrow'.

Purpose

The purpose of Houlton School's interim AIM Board is akin to that of the 'Project Sponsor' in ensuring all aspects of build, curriculum and regulation are satisfied in a manner that provides for the planned opening of the school in September 2021. Moreover, to ensure through robust and transparent governance, that decisions shaping the timely and proper opening of the school stand scrutiny of and support the 7 Principles of Public Life.

Scope and Remit

Independent scrutiny, challenge and the proactive assessment of risk as provided through AIM Boards supports the development of the operational performance of our Academies. As such, the scope and remit of Houlton School's interim AIM Board extends to operational intent, implementation and impact.

The Houlton School's interim AIM Board shall:

- **Operational Intent**
 - develop a substantive AIM Board to provide continuing support and governance post opening
 - ensure all DfE requirements for the opening of a Free School are satisfied and signed-off
 - support the planned opening of the school - monitoring of documented plan milestones
 - determine acceptable level of risk and inform contingency planning as may be necessary
 - provide structured, informed and timely support, challenge and guidance to the leadership
 - contribute to and inform a planned launch event
- **Operational Implementation**
 - ensure the provision of an operationally safe and productive learning environment
 - embed, through direction, the Trust's vision, values and ethos in the operation of the school
 - advise the Board of Trustees re matters pertaining to curriculum in accordance with the Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA)
 - approve implementation and monitoring of proper and robust safeguarding protocols
 - agree people and budgetary working practices
 - provide for comprehensive handover to the substantive AIM Board
- **Operational Impact**
 - monitor effectiveness of leadership during pre-opening - holding the Principal to account
 - assessing (and supporting) the appointment of staff

- evaluating short term operational delivery through reference to external comparative data
- agreeing and informing operational success criteria and KPIs
- monitoring Risk register
- day 1, week 1, month 1 impact assessment

Composition

TLET AIM Boards normally comprise of 9 partner members drawn from academy, business, and parental communities. However, the scope and remit of the interim AIM Board is such that the TLET Board of Trustees have determined that interim AIM Board shall comprise:

- Trustees x 3*
- Co-opted Secondary Education Professional*
- Principal Designate*
- CEO
- CFO

(* Interim AIM Board partner members with voting rights)

Authority and Powers

The authority and powers the interim AIM Board cascades from the Trust through these Terms of Reference and the formal instrument of the documented Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA).

The interim AIM Board is authorised by the Board of Trustees to co-opt such others as deemed necessary to ensure the proper and timely opening of Houlton School.

Designation

AIM board members have the designation of 'Partner'.

This designation acknowledges that all AIM boards, interim or otherwise are 'partnering' the Academies via proactive support and development of operational performance, and in so doing, 'partnering' the Board of Trustees in the execution and delivery of their published strategy.

Term of Office

The term of office for all interim AIM board Partners shall be for the duration of the transitional phase. In other words, through to and including the opening of the School, and the proper installation with comprehensive handover to a substantive AIM Board.

Preparation for Substantive AIM Board

By the end of September 2021, the Interim AIM Board shall determine a comprehensive recruitment, induction and handover programme that ensures continuity of governance and business operations of Houlton School through a process of work shadowing and mentoring.

The handover, save for the Principal and a Link trustee, shall be premised on transition from Interim AIM Board Partners to substantive AIM Board Partners on a % basis approximating to 75/25; 50/50; 25/75; 0/100 respectively.

Post opening, TLET's standard Terms of Reference for its Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Boards shall be followed rather than the ToR developed for the interim period.

Clerk

The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Clerk to service the interim AIM Board.

Frequency and Conduct of Meetings

The interim AIM board shall ideally meet at least once per term; however, the precise frequency of meetings shall be determined by the operational/launch plan. AIM members shall uphold TLET's Code of Business Conduct and have regard for the operational requirements and responsibilities as set out in the ESFA Financial Handbook.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees

It is incumbent upon the Chair of the interim AIM Board to ensure the Chair of Trustees is appraised of developments/progress and that the full board of trustees receives a formal report at its scheduled Board meetings.