

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S SCHOOL
BUSINESS COMMITTEE
Incorporating the Audit & Risk Committee
TERMS OF REFERENCE

SUMMER 2025

The Business Committee is responsible for the financial strategy and financial accountability of the Trust and securing an effective approach to risk management. This Committee also has responsibility for the safe and effective use of the Trust's resources and for the planning and monitoring of capital investment projects.

The Business Committee incorporates the duties of the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Objectives of the Business Committee are:

1. To ensure compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and other relevant regulatory requirements;
2. To ensure that the School has effective arrangements for the identification and management of present and future risks to its effective and continued operations and that internal controls and systems are adequate and effective in order to manage risk;
3. To ensure the School develops and maintains short-, medium- and long-term financial plans with robust monitoring arrangements and remains solvent;
4. To ensure that the Annual Financial Statements can be recommended to the Full Governing Body and Members of the Academy Trust and that there is adequate budget for proposed expenditure over the lifetime of any capital item or project;
5. To ensure that the School has effective arrangements to prioritise capital investment needs and for project delivery;
6. To fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the Audit & Risk Committee;
7. To ensure the estate, facilities and infrastructure (e.g. IT) are well maintained and provide a high quality environment for teaching and learning;
8. To develop and monitor the implementation of strategies (short-, medium- & long-term) to ensure that the estate is able to support the needs of the School and its students;
9. To ensure the best value for money from service and contracts;
10. To ensure that the School's Health & Safety Policy is implemented and to monitor adherence to the Policy.

Areas of Responsibility

The Chairs and the Committee hold the following delegated authorities from the Full Governing Body:

Financial Management

- Recommend the Financial Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations to the Full Governing Body;
- Approve other key financial policies;
- Support the People Committee in the appointment of the Headteacher (Accounting Officer) and Finance Manager (Chief Finance Officer);
- Review and approve any contracts, leases and financial transactions where required by the Finance Scheme of Delegations or the Academy Trust Handbook;

- To review the development of and to monitor income generation proposals;
- Responsibility for opportunities for extended use of school for community activities.

Financial Planning, Monitoring and Reporting

- Approve short- and long-term financial plans after consultation with staff and other committees as necessary, to include:
 - Agreement to the annual budget;
 - Review of the reserves and their designated usage;
 - Approve any deficit recovery plans;
 - Agreement to the three-year budget forecasts;
 - Scrutiny and monitoring of capital projects and budget performance of Facilities, Catering and IT.
- Review the Annual Financial Statements for recommendation to the Full Governing Body.

Value for Money

- Responsibility for ensuring best value for money from all contracts and capital projects;
- Responsibility for reviewing insurance arrangements;
- Responsibility for school meals: cost, content and presentation in line with any statutory requirements.

Capital Investment & Projects

- Develop and agree the capital investment strategy and to review and propose to the Full Governing Body any capital investment needs for the School;
- To provide oversight of the delivery of capital projects;
- To support procurement activities;
- Ensure that effective management arrangements are in place for the delivery of major projects.

Audit & Risk Committee Function:

- Fulfil the responsibilities of an Audit & Risk Committee, and in particular:
 - monitor the effectiveness of external auditors and financial assurance arrangements and advise the Members and the Trust Board on the appointment, reappointment, dismissal and remuneration of the external auditors and the contract for the financial assurance functions;
 - consider the financial assurance reports and auditor's report and, if appropriate, advise the Full Governing Body of material control issues;
 - consider all complaints and whistleblowing allegations about the financial management of the Trust.

In line with the Academy Trust Handbook, the Audit & Risk Committee must:

- Agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year;
- review the ratings and responses on the risk register to inform the programme of work, ensuring checks are modified as appropriate each year or more often if needed;
- Agree who will perform the work;
- Consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of work;
- Consider progress in addressing recommendations;

- Consider outputs from other assurance activities by third parties including Department for Education financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations;
- Have access to the external auditor, as well as those carrying out internal scrutiny, review their plans and reports and also consider their quality.

Internal Control and Scrutiny

- Approve the financial and non-financial assurance framework including the annual programme of work to ensure the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal control and scrutiny in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Full Governing Body;
- Monitor and ensure the Trust's compliance in relation to relevant policies, rules and procedures as published from time to time by external bodies including the Department for Education, Charity Commission and Companies House.

Risk Management

- To ensure that the School has adequate arrangements for the identification of key financial and operational risks to its current and future effectiveness, and in particular:
 - To review the risk register and recommend to the Full Governing Body actions to address key risks;
 - Ensure adequacy of Information Governance and Data Protection arrangements, including monitoring the number and outcome of requests for information under these arrangements;
 - To monitor the number and type of complaints received and the stage reached;
 - Ensure the adequacy of Health & Safety arrangements;
 - Receive and review the insurance arrangements.

Health & Safety

- Monitor health and safety and risk management arrangements.

Estate Management

Facilities and Infrastructure

- Responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of school premises, equipment and infrastructure;
- To receive and review a fixed asset report on an annual basis;
- Responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate maintenance strategy is implemented and kept up to date.

Land & Buildings Steering Group

When necessary, the Business Committee will sit as the Land & Buildings Steering Group or a formal sub-committee with a delegated authority will be asked by the Business Committee to consider the following in relation to the physical assets of the school:

- The Land & Buildings Strategy to include:
 - the identification of new requirements due to new statutory or operational requirements (i.e. overcrowding);

- the strategic basis for taking forward any new proposals;
- understanding the implications of any proposals on the land, buildings and space available for the school;
- the creation and implementation of strategies in relation to land, buildings and space.

The Group will take into account the following in order to support the Land & Buildings Strategy:

- The School's financial strategy and contribute to it;
- Fundraising options;
- Income generation opportunities.

The Membership of this Group will include the Chair of the Business Committee, the Headteacher and the Business Manager. Their work will be supported by the Clerk to the Governors.

Membership

The following roles will be included in the membership of the Business Committee:

- Finance Governor;
- Chair of the Education Committee and a representative of the People Committee;
- Any other Governor who has been appointed to the Committee based on their skills.

The following will attend meetings but will not usually be members of the Committee:

- Chair of Governors unless they also chair one of the committees noted above;
- Accounting Officer;
- Responsible Officer if one has been appointed;
- The Business Manager;
- The Finance Manager.

The Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee shall not be employees of the School. The Chair of the Committee will be appointed by the Full Governing Body but cannot be the Chair of Governors.

The work of the Committee will be supported by:

- The Headteacher/Accounting Officer;
- The Business Manager;
- The Finance Manager.

General

- To approve, review and monitor the implementation of all requisite policies as defined in the Delegated Policy Framework and the Finance Scheme of Delegations.
- Any other delegated authority and/or request to work on behalf of the Full Governing Body as may be minuted at their meetings.

Approved by the Full Governing Body at its meeting on 25th September 2025.