

System of Governance and Working Practices

Learning Today for the World of Tomorrow

CONTENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Purpose	3
1.3 Continuing Process Improvement	3
1.4 Principles of Implementation	3
1.5 Accountable Body	4
1.5.1 Financial Probity	4
1.5.2 Operational Regularity	4
1.5.3 Learning Performance	4
1.6 Communication	5
2.0 GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK	6
2.1 Accountability & Responsibility Structure	6
2.1.2 Members	6
2.1.3 Board of Trustees	6
2.1.4 Executive Team	7
2.1.5 Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Boards	7
2.2 Governance Schematic	8
3.0 TRANSPARENCY PROCESSES WORKING PRACTICES	9
3.1 Transparency	9
3.2 Clarity of Process	9
3.3 Working Practices	10
3.3.1 Code of Business Conduct	10
3.3.2 Appointment and Selection of Office Holders	10
3.3.3 Reporting and Communication Framework	10

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The system of governance adopted by Transforming Lives Educational Trust (TLET) comprises a number of interdependent working practices and associated documents and protocols.

1.2 Purpose

The system of governance establishes the integrity and transparency of governance central to the operation of the Trust. It is provided for information and made available to TLET stakeholders via the Trust’s official website.

1.3 Continuing Process Improvement

TLET promotes continuing process improvement and as such the current system of governance builds from prior academic years, being further strengthened by recommendations arising from periodic external (independent) governance performance reviews.

1.4 Principles of Implementation

The implementation and delivery of governance within and across TLET is based on three principles:

- Establishing, developing and maintaining a business environment and **culture of governance** by appointing people skilled and experienced in educational business;
- Ensuring **compliant governance** by adherence to internal and external documented protocol, process and management standards;
- Evaluating and **confirming governance** performance by adherence to operational reporting frameworks, checks and balances and policy and practice.

People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trust Members, Trustees and Executive• Academy Improvement Management Boards Partners and Link Trustees• Lead Trustees/Lead AIM Partners for Specified Strategic/Functional Areas• Embedded Vision and Values• Approved Code of Business Conduct• Skills Analysis: Annual Self-Assessment and Review	Culture
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheme of Delegated Authority• Risk and Audit Committee• TLET Sub-committees annual Schedule of Activity• Internal and External Audit Programme• Terms of Reference• Chairs’ & Executive’s Meeting	Compliance

Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KPI led Monitoring and Reporting • Operations Standards Committee • Strategic Plan Impact Assessment and Review • Monthly Management Accounts Receipt and Analysis • Policy Review: Trust-wide and AIM Local Policies • Leadership Group • Forums: Safeguarding; SEND 	Confirmation
-----------------	---	---------------------

1.5 Accountable Body

The TLET Board of Trustees (BoT) as recognised by the ESFA Funding Agreement and the Regional Schools' Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education, is the accountable body for the Trust, with accountability extending (but not limited) to: Financial Probity, Operational Regularity, and Learning Performance.

1.5.1 Financial Probity

Financial Probity is managed and monitored by the Audit & Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC is a sub-set of the BoT with delegated authority and chaired by a nominated lead trustee with the pertinent skill set.

Ratified by the BoT, the Terms of Reference of the ARC sets out its scope and remit, which in turn is augmented by an annually approved Schedule of Activity

The ARC meets three times per year (min.), reporting to the BoT agreed actions and/or matters requiring consideration by the full Board of Trustees. The scope of the ARC encompasses:

- Audit Regularity
- Risk Evaluation and Management
- Financial Management Policies
- Internal Scrutiny

1.5.2 Operational Regularity

Operational Regularity is addressed through the Operation Standards Committee (OSC). The OSC is a sub-set of the BoT with delegated authority and chaired by a nominated lead trustee with the pertinent skill set.

Ratified by the BoT, the Terms of Reference of the OSC sets out its scope and remit, which in turn is augmented by an annually approved Schedule of Activity.

The OSC meets 3 times per year (min.) and reports operational anomalies, agreed actions and/or matters requiring consideration by the full Board of Trustees. The scope of the OSC encompasses:

- Remuneration Standardisation
- Safeguarding Performance
- Resource Management

1.5.3 Learning Performance

- 1.5.3.1 Learning Performance is developed and managed through the TLET 'Leadership Group'. This group, chaired by the CEO and attended by academy Principals and the TLET

Central Team, reports performance updates to the BoT. The scope of the Leadership Group encompasses: Operational Standardisation, Quality Assurance, and Teaching & Learning.

1.5.3.2 TLET recognises local Academy Improvement and Management (AIM) boards as integral to its system and design of governance and working practices to ensure learning provision at each Academy remains fit for purpose.

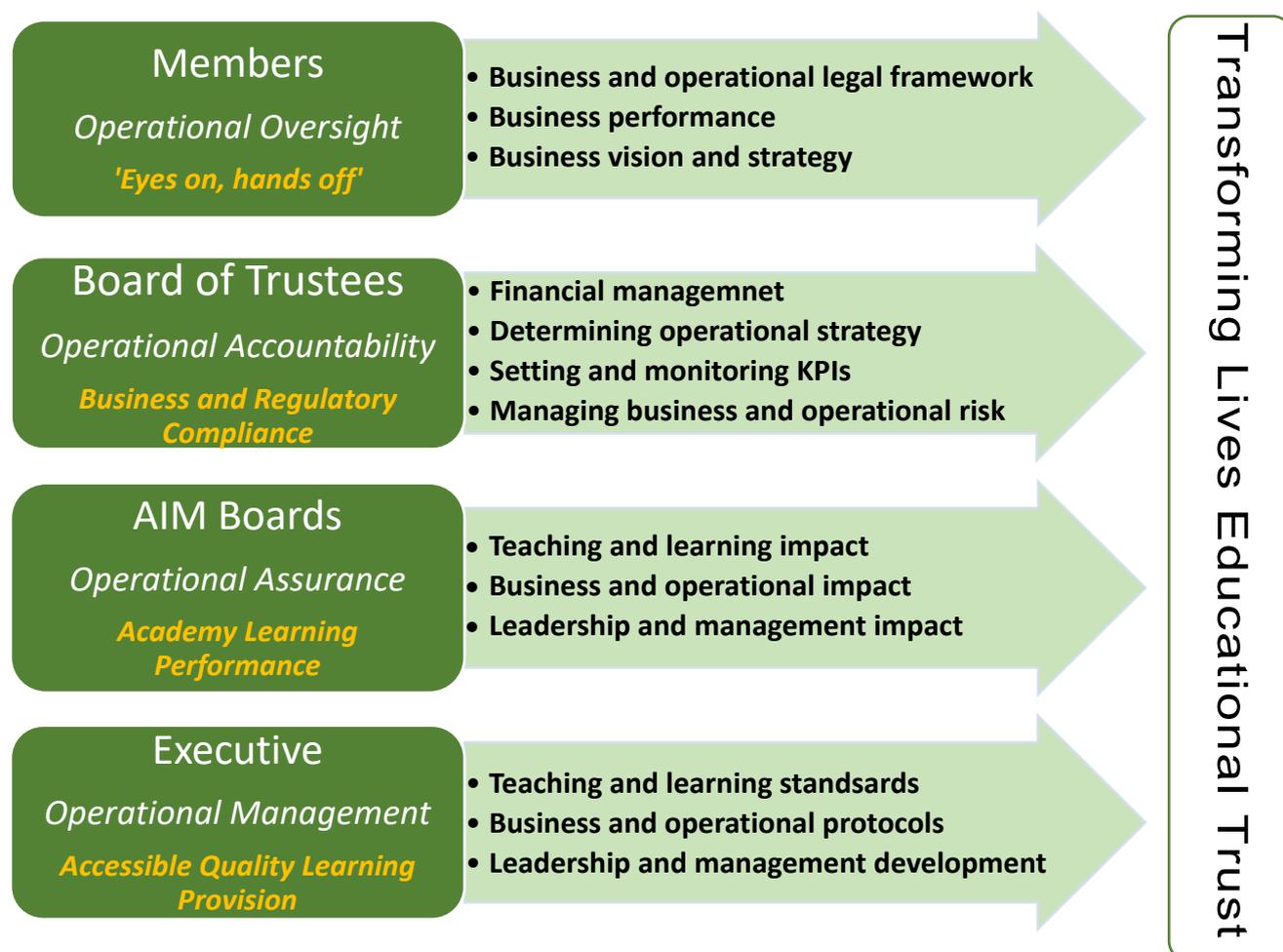
1.6 Communication

Meetings are scheduled to enable optimum two-way communication and/or consultation. The Board of Trustees normally meets 6 times across the academic year, with the Members meeting (Annual General Meeting) at the mid-point of the academic year. AIM board meetings are scheduled just prior to/after the main board meetings.

2.0 Governance Framework

TLET's governance framework and working practices are integral to the structure of the Trust with robust and transparent governance demonstrable across the organisation hierarchy.

2.1 Accountability & Responsibility Structure



2.1.2 Members

Members hold strategic and legal oversight of the Trust. Members are required to fulfil their legal and business duty in an 'eyes on, hands off' mode so as to negate direct influence/business persuasion of the Board of Trustees operational responsibility and business discretion.

2.1.3 Board of Trustees

Trustees are accountable for operational compliance and financial probity of the Trust. To ensure focus of business objectives, trustees, with pertinent skill sets, are assigned as 'lead' for each of the key Objectives/Pillars of the Trust's Strategic Plan.

Similarly, 'lead' Trustees are appointed oversight for Trust-wide areas such as Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Staff and Student Wellbeing, Finance and Personnel. In so doing, it is understood that responsibility for such is vested in all Trustees and not solely that of the 'lead'.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Accounting Officer (AO), whilst not an elected trustee and therefore, carries no voting rights, is pivotal to the efficient and effective operation of the Board.

A Clerk to the Trustees supports the Board by way of professional secretariat services and the administration of regulatory compliance data and information.

2.1.4 Executive Team

The Executive Team is responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of the operational, business and educational functions across the Trust and comprises:

- Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer
- Chief Finance Officer
- Business Operations and Estates Manager

The extended Executive team includes the Trust's wider central team, e.g. IT, HR, etc. as well as the TLET Leadership Group.

2.1.5 Academy Improvement Management (AIM) Boards

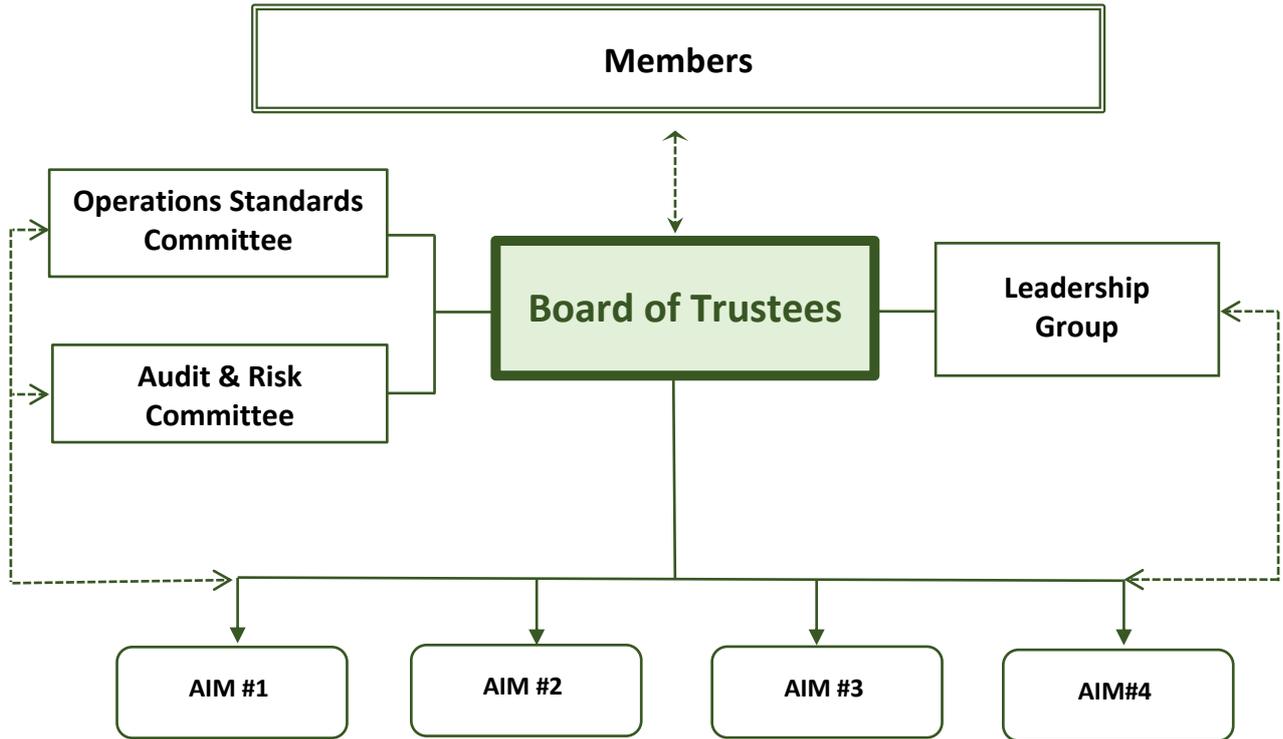
TLET system and design of governance and working practices recognises local Academy Improvement and Management (AIM) boards as integral to its governance framework. The inclusion of local AIM boards ensures learning provision at individual academy level fit for purpose and sustains the vision of 'learning today for the world of tomorrow'.

The authority and powers AIM boards cascade from the Trust and are set out in the instrument of a documented Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA).

AIM board members have the designation of 'Partner'; this designation acknowledges that AIM boards 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.

Subject to approval by the Trust, AIM boards may nominate a 'lead Partner' to have specific oversight for Academy functional/operational areas such as Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Staff and Student Wellbeing, and Academy budget and personnel matters. In so doing, it is understood that responsibility for such areas is vested in all AIM partners and not solely that of the 'lead' Partner.

2.2 Governance Schematic



3.0 Transparency | Processes | Working Practices

The entirety of TLET's System of Governance includes this document plus a number of specified 'sub-systems', working practices and associated documents. Taken together, these provide for transparency of governance, clarity of process and consistency of working practice across the Trust.

3.1 Transparency

With the exception of what is acknowledged as commercially sensitive and/or confidential information regarding governance, the Trust is transparent in respect of information accessible on its official website and that of its academies. This includes, but not limited to:

- This document: TLET System of Governance and Working Practices
- Members & Trustees Professional Biographies
- Declaration of Pecuniary Interests
- Trustees & AIM Appointments & Attendance Record
- Regulatory and Legal documentation
- Trust-wide and local policies
- Scheme of Delegated Authority
- Committee Structures
- Terms of Reference and where applicable, associated Schedule of Activity

Note: Minutes are available upon request and may be redacted due to commercially sensitive and/or confidential information.

3.2 Clarity of Process

The financial processes, which the Trust must adhere to, are set out in the ESFA Financial Handbook, whereas guidance pertaining to good practice governance and governance competencies is as per gov.uk.

Clarity of delegated process across the Trust is cascaded by way of a version-controlled Scheme of Delegated Authority (SoDA). The SoDA sets out the prescribed operational authority levels for the AIM Boards together with the hierarchical interrelationship between Trust, CEO, AIM and Principal(s). The SoDA extends to:

- Strategy & Leadership
- Education & Curriculum
- HR and Operations
- Strategic Impact Support - investment and access
- Finance (including financial decision levels)

In addition to the SoDA, TLET have documented Terms of Reference (ToR) for:

- Audit & Risk Committee
- Operations Standards Committee
- AIM Boards
- AIM Board Link Trustee

- TLET Leadership Group

3.3 Working Practices

TLET’s educational ethos and working practices derive from the belief that education is transformative and that our academies have the responsibility to lead their communities in transforming lives by raising aspiration.

As stewards of public funds provided for the delivery of value for money and effective teaching and learning, TLET ensures its working practices as expressed through business conduct, the appointment and selection of office holders, through to the implementation of reporting frameworks etc., are fit for purpose and reflect the highest integrity of governance practice.

3.3.1 Code of Business Conduct

The Trust Executive and office holders (Members/Trustees/AIM Partners/Clerks) are required to operate to and uphold the Nolan Principles (the 7 principles of public life). However, these seven principles represent the minimum acceptable threshold of expected conduct and in seeking to operate to the highest professional standard Transforming Lives Educational Trust extend these principles with specific complementary behavioural and business ‘ethics’ which, together with the Nolan Principles, establish the Transforming Lives Educational Trust Code of Business Conduct.

3.3.2 Appointment and Selection of Office Holders

TLET recognises that effective Members and a skilled and effective Board of Trustees and AIM Board Partners are essential if the Trust is to achieve its stated and published objectives. To ensure transparency and integrity of process regarding the appointment and selection of TLET office holders, the Trust conducts such recruitment in accordance with TLET’s documented procedure. Appointments reflect identified skills need, with such skills being assessed using the National Governance Association’s skills audit and skills matrix assessment tool.

3.3.3 Reporting and Communication Framework

At the commencement of each Academic Year the Trust establishes an overarching schedule that provides for proper up/down stream of information between TLET and AIM Boards with reporting embracing both formal (documented) and informal (face- to- face) protocols:

Report	Frequency	Protocol
TLET Chair/CEO KIT	Monthly	F2F
TLET Chair & AIM Board Chairs/Vice Chairs KIT	X 3 per year	F2F
TLET Chair/CEO/CFO Review of Management Accounts	Monthly	F2F
Management A/Cs to BoT	X 6 per year	Documented & F2F
Management A/Cs to Principals	Monthly	F2F
CEO Operations Performance Report to BoT	X 6 per year	Documented & F2F

CFO Financial Report to BoT	X 6 per year	Documented & F2F
AIM Annual Review with the OSC	Annually	F2F
Safeguarding Audit	Annually	Documented