



## STOC 2025-2028 Strategy

### 1. **Context and Journey:**

1.1. Following four years of rapid growth STOC has established a consistent operating model based on 4 corporate functions. This model has ensured each service across the organisation has grown to support the schools we serve. Alongside this growth we have also seen some success in terms of school improvements and regulatory outcomes. All schools that joined our trust prior to 2022 have now been judged as good by Ofsted. Alongside this all CSI inspections over the last three years have returned good or better judgments. The previous strategy 2022-2025 for the Trust focused on the delivery of four key objectives. These were;

1. Development of a distinctive Catholic Culture and Mission on which all Trust actions are predicated.
2. Planning and delivery of coherent strategy to ensure all Trust schools are continuously self-improving.
3. The building of a coherent organisational structures and processes that reflect our distinctive Catholic nature and are credible with external stakeholders and agencies.
4. Proportionate Growth in line with Diocesan and National directions of travel.

1.2. We are now in the second phase on the trust's growth journey. We are now classed as a large Academy Trust and have refined these objectives for the next three years. It is intended to retain the principles that have been used previously but focus more fully on landscape challenges that have emerged. The trust is at an inflection point in its growth journey and must therefore for act accordingly. Our Trust exists to serve the needs of our communities. We can only Make Christ Known if we are driven to excel and provide the best education for communities that deserve only this.

1.3 This sector continues to change and evolve. The change of government in May 2024 has resulted in a number of strategic developments. These are;

- a) Revised DfE focus on school accountability which will come into force in the autumn of 2025 and the development of RISE teams to support wider sector improvement.
- b) Revised Ofsted framework which will come into force in Autumn 2025.
- c) There is recognition that the Academy sector remains a key part of the school improvement landscape. The Diocese of Salford remains committed to moving all its schools into one of three Academy trusts over the coming years.
- d) Relationships with some local authorities remain vital. These will be managed effectively and professionally in all instances.
- e) We also recognise the importance of productive relationships with professional associations and other stakeholders.

1.4 Other Long-term challenges remain regardless of the government. These include;

- a) School funding as a critical concern. Pay awards as they are granted year on year are not fully funded. These awards are challenging to facilitate in the longer term and deficits must be managed. The Trust continues to face the challenge of growing the service to schools whilst remaining financially sustainable.
- b) SEND need across the sector continues to create challenges for all stakeholders. We expect clarification from central governments that more need should be met in mainstream settings, and all schools should be increasingly inclusive. This has significant implications for the skill sets of our workforce. A formalised approach, that would be laid out in a SEND white paper is both necessary and welcome.
- c) The decline in pupil numbers and subsequent funding implications is now crystallising across various STOC footprint areas and schools. Providing greater understanding to stakeholders at levels regarding implications of these challenges is also a priority.

## **2. Outline of Trust Strategic Performance Ambitions 2025-2028**

2.1 Retaining the consistency of overarching objectives over the past four years will have positive impact. This approach should continue as we move into the next phase of our Trust development. We will adopt an amended focus on four key performance ambitions for the next 3 academic cycles. These ambitions have similarity with those objectives from the previous four years but have been amended slightly to provide great precision.

***These performance ambitions are as follows;***

- 1. Further build our distinctive Catholic Community.***
- 2. Refine improvement strategy to meet needs of all pupils in all schools.***
- 3. Ensure coherent process and effective capacities are in place and sustainable across functions to provide service that will improve outcomes.***
- 4. Continue sustainable growth in line with Diocesan direction of Travel.***

2.2; Each ambition has clear and measurable objectives. These objectives will be agreed in consultation with the Board, Chief Officers and their direct reports and overseen by the CSEL. Objectives have been used to generate key performance indicators, from which the trust board will use to hold leaders to account for performance. It is not been the expected that each function and service create objectives than span or cross all four organisational functions. These performance ambitions are high level aspirations to support the Board in taking a longer-term view of organisational development and improvement.

2.3 Chief Officers and direct report's key objectives for implementation in the 2025/26 year have now been drafted, and each service has developed an implementation plan for delivery. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> the CSEL chaired the first implementation meeting where each service lead or equivalent shared their 2025/26 objectives.

### 3. **Performance Ambition Board Summary and monitoring**

3.1 Below for the Trust Board are the implementation objectives for 2025/26, draft KPI's and each objectives owner. Behind this outline sit individual serve implementation plans. These implementation plans have not been shared with the Board but are available to Board committees were they to be requested. The CSEL will hold Chief Officers to account for the delivery of these plans through the regular agreed line management cycle.

#### 3.2 Performance Ambition Objectives and Draft KPI's

The tables below outline for each performance ambition the 2025/26 implementation objectives and draft Key Performance Indicators and deliverables.

<b>Performance Ambition 1- Further Build our Distinctive Catholic Community.</b>			
<b>25/26 Implementation Objectives</b>	<b>Outline 2025/26 KPI /actions and deliverables</b>	<b>Service Owner</b>	<b>Monitor</b>
1a, Strengthen Stakeholder Voice, Engagement and Trust Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust-wide Stakeholder Engagement Plan developed informed by BOC, current best practice, and Trust mission and values.</li> <li>Baseline stakeholder satisfaction / engagement data established.</li> <li>Internal Communication Framework developed: Aligned to Trust mission and values. Informed by BOC insights and best practice.</li> <li>External communication and public narrative review completed:</li> <li>Clearly defined Trust Communications "Offer" in place outlining role and boundaries for central and school communications</li> <li>Mapping and engagement plan for key external relationships (Diocese, Local Authorities, education networks, community partners). plan agreed.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Innovation</a>	CIO
1b Build a sustainable mission-aligned approach to Trust wide worship, mission and catholic Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Core principles and framework for Trust-wide worship and mission developed and agreed: Agreed framework developed and approved by SLG by end of Term 2.</li> <li>New Trust-wide pupil worship/mission opportunities piloted: Minimum of 2 new opportunities (e.g. pupil leadership gatherings, shared mission events) piloted by Term 3.</li> <li>Communication and celebration of Trust-wide worship and mission activity strengthened: Regular communications outputs shared via Trust channels; increased visibility of mission activity.</li> <li>BOC feedback on mission connection re-evaluated and impact assessed: Re-evaluation of stakeholder perceptions conducted by end of academic year.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Innovation</a>	CIO
1c. Build a cohesive governance community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governance communications strategy completed and approved by end of Term 1.</li> <li>At least 50% of governance stakeholders engage with pilot communications (e.g. open rate, views, responses) by end of Term 2.</li> <li>≥ 75% of governors and directors report improved connection and clarity of information in end-of-year feedback survey.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Governance</a>	CIO



<b>Performance Ambition 2- Refine our school improvement strategy to meet needs of all pupils in all schools</b>			
<b>25/26 Implementation Objectives</b>	<b>Outline 2025/26 KPI /actions and deliverables</b>	<b>Service Owner</b>	<b>Monitor</b>
2a. Trust Attendance is the business of all stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved overall attendance rates across all Trust schools with fewer pupils falling into patterns of persistent or severe absence.</li> <li>Early identification and intervention for pupils showing signs of declining attendance, preventing issues from becoming entrenched.</li> <li>Consistent, Trust-wide application of supportive and formal measures, ensuring fair, timely, and proportionate responses to attendance concerns.</li> <li>No pupil is overlooked—all cases of persistent and severe absence are actively monitored and followed up.</li> <li>Increased re-engagement of pupils with severe absence, through compassionate, well-structured support and personalised plans.</li> <li>Strengthened collaboration with families, leading to better understanding of barriers and more effective, tailored support.</li> <li>Greater staff confidence and clarity in their roles and responsibilities around attendance, due to a unified approach.</li> <li>A positive culture of attendance, where early help is embedded and expectations are clearly understood by pupils, families, and staff</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Safeguarding and Compliance</a>	CPO
2b. The safeguarding culture across the Trust continues to strengthen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding approaches, documentation, and responses will be consistent across all Trust schools through the implementation of aligned policies, shared best practices, and regular quality assurance.</li> <li>A positive Safeguarding culture is embedded across school life, enabling safeguarding to be considered as a separate judgment during Ofsted inspections, through leadership modelling, whole school engagement and continuous training. Safeguarding is judged as effective in any regulatory inspection.</li> <li>Pupil voice will reflect feelings of safety and trust as a result of nurturing environments, clear reporting mechanisms, and a proactive approach to listening and responding to pupil's concern.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Safeguarding and Compliance</a>	CPO
2c. Refine and strengthen leadership and management across primary and secondary phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen leadership structures and line management across all schools.</li> <li>Develop and embed coherent, proportionate and proportionate QA systems.</li> <li>Build leadership capacity to ensure readiness and accuracy of self-evaluation for the revised OFSTED framework and ongoing Catholic Schools Inspections.</li> <li>School level evaluations match regulatory evaluations.</li> <li>Refine and evaluate professional development systems including NPQ access for sustainable and impactful professional learning.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Regional Performance/Improvement Officers</a>	CPO
2d. Refine and strengthen Trust and school level standards strategy to improve outcomes for all pupils.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refine and implement trust-wide assessment strategy and ASR processes.</li> <li>Strengthen moderation practices and develop internal moderation systems.</li> <li>Embed responsive teaching based on assessment insights.</li> <li>Evaluate and update assessment guidance and intervention impact.</li> <li>Outcomes in all regulatory examinations improve in schools compared to 2024.</li> <li>Outcomes for all groups of pupils improve in schools compared to 2024.</li> <li>Where school level or group level outcomes in schools have been below national average, they will move towards or in line with national averages in 2025.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Regional Performance/Improvement Officers</a>	CPO
2e. Refine and improve Inclusion & SEND provision across STOC schools to ensure that all children with SEND have their needs met leading to progress and achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strong audit systems for SEND provision.</li> <li>Enhance inclusive practice through targeted CPD and peer reviews.</li> <li>Strengthen leadership and documentation for SEND across all schools.</li> <li>Improve transitions and develop trust-wide SEND strategy and principles for implementation.</li> <li>Improve Curriculum-Aligned Assessment Practices in schools categorised at stabilise and repair.</li> <li>Strengthen Inclusive Teaching and leadership of SEND Provision with particular emphasis in the secondary phase</li> <li>Outcome gaps between SEND and Non-SEND pupils close across all indicators.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Regional Performance/Improvement Officers</a>	CPO
2f. Implement Standardised Assessments to provide effective data comparisons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment(s) to be completed within a set window and submitted accordingly.</li> <li>Analysis/Report(s) to be completed within a set window and distributed (using Central SharePoint).</li> <li>Any challenges and training needs identified and resolved, with an overarching report to track.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Data and Insights</a>	CIO
2g. Ensure attendance reporting is timely and accurate through the Data team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-time and correct Attendance recording by schools is completed</li> <li>Analysis/Report(s) to be completed within a set window and distributed (using Central SharePoint).</li> <li>Review and Audit processes in place for continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Data and Insights</a>	CIO



<b>Performance Ambition 3- Ensure coherent process and effective capacities are in place and sustainable across functions to provide service that will improve outcomes.</b>			
<b>25/26 Implementation Objectives</b>	<b>Outline 2025/26 KPI /actions and deliverables</b>	<b>Service Owner</b>	<b>Monitor</b>
3a. Further refine Finance and procurement process to ensure they are efficient and compliant and cost positive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary in year positions are balanced and/or do not deteriorate</li> <li>Secondary in year positions are surplus.</li> <li>Unrestricted reserve at end of 2025/26 sits at £1000K</li> <li>Monthly management account variances reduce month on month</li> <li>Clarified and codified procurement process is approved by the Board</li> <li>All stakeholders understand and follow procurement processes.</li> <li>Clear procurement structure, including responsibilities at central and local level, and process expectation is outlined and shared with the Board along with expected implementation plan and schedules.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Finance Business Partnering</a>	CFOO
3b. Ensure Payroll and pension compliance, and capacities are in place to meet statutory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit action plan delivered.</li> <li>Pensions reported in timely manner each month</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Payroll</a>	CFOO
3c. Ensure Trust wide catering provision meets the needs of stakeholders, is fit for purpose and is cost efficient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete collation and review of current catering provisions across STOC.</li> <li>Clear catering structure, including responsibilities at central and local level, and process expectation is outlined and shared with the Board along with expected implementation plan and schedules.</li> <li>2025/26 catering spend will be cost neutral with exception of Bury LA Schools</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Trust Catering Manager</a>	CFOO
3d. Ensure Facilities and Estates service provides compliance and value for money.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust School Condition Plan completed for all schools and planned for joiners</li> <li>Interim estates project capacity sourced and in place prior to Head of Service recruitment.</li> <li>Trust estates plan developed to maximise use of SCA funding across STOC for 2025/26 and 2026-28 years.</li> <li>Clear Facilities structure, including responsibilities at central and local level, and process expectation is outlined and shared with the Board along with expected implementation plan and schedules.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Facilities and Estates</a>	CFOO
3e. Ensure Health and Safety compliance, and capacities are refined and in place to meet statutory requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional capacity for the Health and Safety service has been recruited to.</li> <li>Clear programme of compliance activity is in place for the 2025/26 academic year.</li> <li>Clear Health and Safety structure, including responsibilities at central and local level, and process expectation is outlined and shared with the Board along with expected implementation plan and schedules</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Health and Safety Manager</a>	CFOO
3f. Build an effective and compliant governance function that will Attract, develop, and retain skilled and diverse governors and Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internal clerking service model and role profiles finalised</li> <li>Clerks recruited and trained ready for 26-27 academic year</li> <li>Panel toolkit finalised, launched and trained</li> <li>QA Framework developed and refined</li> <li>Develop a comprehensive onboarding and induction plan. .</li> <li>100% completion of onboarding and induction framework by end of Term 2.</li> <li>All core onboarding and induction materials approved and ready by Term 2 Week 6.</li> <li>Pilot programme completed with feedback gathered from ≥2 new governors/directors and 1 school, with refinements implemented before end Term 3</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Governance</a>	CIO
3g. Implement HALO reporting system to improve support for Arbor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a monthly report detailing Ticket Volume, FTF, Resolution etc.</li> <li>Reduce response time to Arbor queries.</li> <li>Increase staff satisfaction to query resolution</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of Data and Insights</a>	CIO
3h. To implement an HR helpdesk to improve efficiencies, monitor workflow and assess capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process for raising HR queries through the HR Helpdesk is understood and utilised across the Trust.</li> <li>Process for making recruitment requests and contract variations through the HR Helpdesk is understood and utilised across the Trust.</li> <li>Process for making employee led requests through the HR Helpdesk is understood and utilised across the Trust.</li> <li>90% of HR queries and requests are made and responded to through Halo by August 2026.</li> <li>100% of recruitment requests and contract variations are made through Halo by December 2025.</li> <li>Average time to respond to tickets to be 48 working hours.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of HR</a>	CIO
3i. To further codify recruitment processes to streamline the service and provide clarity to users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment processes operate smoothly and efficiently.</li> <li>Recruiting Managers understand the process for recruiting to a vacancy.</li> <li>The Trust Recruitment Team and wider Central Team understand the process for recruiting to a vacancy</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of HR</a>	CIO



3j. Continue to revise and consult on and implement key policies that are required to support the organisation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR policies are in force across the Trust</li> <li>HR policies are understood by leaders and managers across the Trust</li> <li>HR policies are applied consistently across the Trust</li> <li>HR policies are understood and can be located by all staff across the Trust</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of HR</a>	CIO
3k. Build an IT asset management capable of housing, maintaining new and existing asset data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All IT assets are imported in ITSM</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of IT</a>	CIO
3l. Complete the Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus certification process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cyber Essentials self-assessment completed and submitted by end of Autumn Term.</li> <li>Cyber Essentials certification achieved by end of Autumn Term.</li> <li>Cyber Essentials Plus technical assessment completed and passed by end of Spring Term.</li> <li>All identified remediation actions from CE+ completed by end of Summer Term.</li> <li>100% of in-scope devices and systems aligned to Cyber Essentials requirements.</li> <li>Central and school-level IT practices documented to meet audit trail expectations</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of IT</a>	CIO
3m. Define a sustainable and costed model for student devices in secondary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial options paper drafted and reviewed by end of Autumn Term.</li> <li>Costed device model(s) defined with full lifecycle costs by end of Spring Term.</li> <li>Stakeholder consultation completed, including parent input, by end of Spring Term.</li> <li>Final proposal approved by senior leadership team and trustees by end of Summer Term.</li> <li>All secondary schools aligned to a consistent and agreed approach for student device provision.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Head of IT</a>	CIO

<b>Performance Ambition4- Continue sustainable growth in line with Diocesan direction of Travel.</b>			
<b>25/26 Implementation Objectives</b>	<b>Outline 2025/26 KPI /actions and deliverables</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Monitor</b>
4a. Refined growth plan is developed and approved by the Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth plan developed with a focus on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) School Performance</li> <li>e) School Locations</li> <li>f) School financial position</li> <li>g) School condition.</li> <li>h) Strategy engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>Positions of schools will be reallocated to deliver organisational sustainability.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CSEL</a>	Trust Board
4b. Ensure that communication of revised growth plan is managed appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline clear communication strategy for all key stakeholders</li> <li>Engage with key stakeholders at appropriate points</li> </ul>	<a href="#">CIO</a>	CSEL
4c. Increase Trust engagement with schools keen to convert and recognise the benefits of structural collaboration.	Plan and deliver Roadshow events. Ensure mechanism is in place to gauge school perceptions. Continue to liaise with Diocesan colleagues as part of this wide process.	<a href="#">CIO</a>	CSEL