

**East Midlands Academy Trust – Finance, HR and Estates committee**

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 @ 10am. Meeting to be conducted virtually.

**First meeting of academic year 2020/2021**

These minutes reflect the order of the agenda, not necessarily the order of discussion

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <p><b>Ayo Salam</b> (Co-opted Trustee)  <b>Stephen Morales</b> (Co-opted Trustee)  <b>Andrew Davis</b> (Trustee)  <b>Asvin Morjaria</b> (Trustee)</p> <p><b>Joshua Coleman</b> (EMAT: CEO)  <b>Paul Wheeler</b> (EMAT: Finance &amp; Operations Director)  <b>Dhillan Mistry</b> (EMAT: Finance assistant)  <b>Monica Juan</b> (EMAT: Head of Governance &amp; Safeguarding) - Minutes</p> <p>MJ welcomed everyone and reminded all present that the matters raised within this meeting would remain confidential until the minutes were agreed and signed off.</p>	
2. Apologies	Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from <b>David Houghton</b> . <b>Matt Johanson</b> was absent.	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of interest	MJ asked if there were any declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda in addition to those already recorded on the annual Register of Interests. None were declared.	
5. Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair	<p><b>Andy Davies</b> was appointed Chair of the FHRE committee.  <b>Asvin Morjaria</b> was appointed Vice-Chair of the FHRE committee.</p>	
6. Minutes of FHRE meeting 10/07/2020 & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 10/07/2020 had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting and were agreed to be an accurate representation of the meeting.</p> <p>AD agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted.</p> <p>There were no matters arising not already on the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
7. Actions Log from the meeting held on 10/07/2020	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 10/07/2020 were reviewed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Amend point 2.2 in Gas &amp; Electricity feasibility report - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>2) Present NIA staircase feasibility study at TB - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>3) Upload ratified policies to website - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>4) Forward impact evaluation form - <b>DONE</b></li> </ol>	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
8. Finance Update: i. Period 12- Management Accounts ii. Finance Handbook update	<p><i>Finance papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>i. PW presented the Management Accounts for the period to August 2020 in the financial year 2019/2020. PW was pleased to report that EMAT had achieved the May forecast of £277K surplus across the group despite the exceptional costs generate by the COVID19 pandemic. All this had been achieved whilst still investing significant capital in all schools.</p> <p>2019/20 had been the first year that the trust had adopted GAG Pooling as well as using the IFCP staffing model. Four of the seven academies had come very close to their May 2020 forecast while SAA, NIA and PWS had recovered well from their initial deficit.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the Reserves Policy</b> PW clarified that the policy was set out to hold revenue reserves equal to a one-month expenditure. As the schools were currently growing the estimated reserves oscillated around £2 million.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the cost generated by the pandemic and how much could be claimed back</b> PW explained that of the additional £103K, spent mostly in cleaning and PPE, £80K had been put forward for claims and expected to recover around £50k. This was due to the fact that ESFA and DfE had stated that schools could only claim back if they were showing a deficit.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the 71% staffing ratio across all academies and future costings in agency staff</b> PW explained that agency expenditure had reduced significantly since the appointment of the Planning Workforce Manager (PWM). Furthermore, the PWM was currently setting up the EMAT supply bank. This in-house venture would help to reduce considerably the future agency expenditure as the rates paid to supply staff would be considerably lower compared to the external ones. Additionally, the implementation by HR of wellbeing practices and the employee's forum would continue helping to maintain levels of staff attendance. JC also added that (secondary) schools were deploying cover supervisors more effectively before any long-term cover had to be put in place, helping to bring down the overall cost of supply teaching staff.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the current and future cleaning costs</b> PW explained that under the current situation the projection was around £100K extra annually, mainly around the provision of day cleaners. Contingencies had been put in place to cover that level of expenditure until costs could be scaled back. JC was pleased to inform trustees that financial planning from previous years had provided good contingency plans to deal with the current situation making EMAT's position robust and secure.</p> <p>PW informed trustees that statutory accounts were currently being collated.</p>	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	<p>Trustees welcomed the introduction of dashboard infographics to present the EMAT Headlines Statistics and thanked PW and rest of the finance team for their work producing the Management Accounts.</p> <p>ii. PW presented the latest Financial Handbook for Academies. HTs across the trust would also receive this document. This year there were not major changes affecting operating procedures. Areas updated were procurement, budgetary control methods and expanding on fraud as recommended by the audit. The document presented a reasonable and comprehensive set of procedures on how the trust should be governed.</p> <p>Trustees thanked PW for the updated document and requested to include a summary page with changes in any future updates or similar documents.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether auditors would look at the Financial Handbook document</b> PW confirmed that both internal and external auditors looked at the document.</p> <p><b>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to approve all papers presented: Management Accounts August 2020 and Finance Handbook.</b></p>	<p><b>PW to include summary of changes in Financial Handbook</b></p>
<p>9. Update on Procurement, IT &amp; Estates</p>	<p>PW informed trustees that extensive procurement work had been put in place looking to improve current frameworks and contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new energy contract was now in place which would save £320K over 3-year period. Savings would be reinvested in new technology to help reduce energy consumption.</li> <li>• Around 250 new devices had been purchased, IV had been improved and 30 new Prometheus screens had been deployed.</li> <li>• A new staircase had been installed at the NIA and the commercial areas had been fitted out.</li> <li>• Science and Math building refurbishment had been completed at PWS. The humanities block would continue to operate across both.</li> <li>• O/S communications department are to be combined. MK council will fund and execute the project to take place during the summer holiday.</li> <li>• Microsoft Teams had been embedded across all sites and online learning was already taking place through the platform. The implementation of the software had substantially improved support across schools.</li> <li>• IT was working closely with the procurement officer to upgrade all leased lines as and when they were up for renewal, in order to continue improving infrastructure across all sites.</li> <li>• A new electronic signing system called Inentry had been installed and linked across all schools. The system helped to track attendance and to improve safeguarding and H&amp;S systems.</li> </ul>	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology allowing hybrid meetings to take place across all sites was to be installed. This would have a positive impact with communications and online learning.</li> <li>PWS fase 3 was still being pursued and a meeting had been set up with NCC. The council has confirmed that they had funding in place and a summer start was likely.</li> <li>NIA – A definitive defects list and 125-year lease was to be signed in the coming weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the ongoing issues with the outdoor patio at NIA</b> PW confirmed that the whole patio had been replaced during lockdown with a much more stable structure.</p>	
10. HR Update	<p>JC gave a verbal update to trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EMAT was successfully working towards having its own staff bank. More than 30 people had been already recruited and were being trialled at the NIA. HR was expecting to launch the service before Christmas. This would reduce dramatically the current agency costs.</li> <li>Staff numbers across the trust have increased up 600 people in total. Attendance is high across all sites.</li> <li>NIA restructure is currently being undertaken by the new HT with a new matrix and small school system to be put in place.</li> <li>3 new Heads of schools (HAR/SAA/Castle) They were closely working together, supported by LB, ZM and AIPs.</li> <li>All central team appraisals had been completed.</li> <li>Pay rise agreed by trustees had been implemented. HTs had been briefed about the importance to link pay progression with appraisals, how to document the process and the importance to seek validation with CEO/CFO before communicating decision to staff.</li> <li>No staff grievances</li> </ul> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding trust expansion and potential increase of staffing costs</b> JC explained that there was not an immediate need to increase the central team. The structures of any school joining in the future and any potential efficiencies to be made would be managed through the due diligence process and TUPE transfer. This would also include further discussions with the RSC.</p>	
11. Policies for Ratification	<p><i>The following policies were presented for ratification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Asbestos Policy</i></li> <li><i>Working at Height Policy</i></li> <li><i>NHS Test &amp; Trace Privacy Notice</i></li> </ul> <p>MJ confirmed that the Emergency Business Continuity Plan had been withdrawn pending further amendments.</p>	<p><b>MJ to upload policies to website</b></p>

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	<p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding members of staff with own children suspected of suffering from COVID19 but not able to access testing promptly JC explained that the expectation was that the member of staff would stay at home with the child until a test was carried out. The school bubble would not self-isolate until a positive case was confirmed.</p> <p><b>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to ratify all policies.</b></p>	
13. AOB	<p>MJ reminded trustees to send their Pen Portraits and Declarations of Interest before the next meeting.</p> <p>AM requested a copy of the current budget.</p>	<b>PW to send current budget document to AM.</b>
14. DONM	<p><b>Dates for the academic year 2020/2021 have been set.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 10am</li> <li>• Tuesday 2nd February 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Thursday 4th March 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Friday 16th April 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Tuesday 8th June 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Thursday 8th July 2021 at 10am</li> </ul>	<b>Calendar appointments had been sent</b>

**The meeting closed at 12.02pm**

**Actions from the FHR & Estates committee meeting 05/10/2020**

Item	Action	Owner
1.	PW to include a page with summary of changes in future documents	PW
2.	Upload ratified policies to website	MJ
3.	PW to send current budget document to AM.	PW
4.	Trustees to send Pen Portrait and DoI to MJ	All/MJ