

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

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 @ 10.00am. Meeting to be conducted virtually.

**Fourth 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>  <b>Andrew Davis</b> (Trustee) - Chair  <b>David Houghton</b> (Trustee)  <b>Bernard Shaw</b> (Trustee) – Attending to reach quorum  <b>Ayo Salam</b> (Trustee) – Attending to reach quorum</p> <p><b>Paul Wheeler</b> (EMAT: Finance &amp; Operations Director)  <b>Nattria Dhana</b> (EMAT: Management Accountant)  <b>Dhillan Mistry</b> (EMAT: Finance Business Partner)  <b>Ruhena Mahmood</b> (EMAT: Senior Workforce Planning &amp; HRBP) – <i>joined the meeting at 10.30am</i>  <b>Monica Juan</b> (EMAT: Head of Governance &amp; Compliance) – Minutes</p> <p>AD 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>Stephen Morales, Asvin Morjaria and Josh Coleman</b>	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. Declarations of interest	AD 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. Minutes of FHRE meeting 15/02/2021 & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 15/02/2021 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>	
6. Actions Log from the meeting held on 15/02/2021	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 15/02/2021 were reviewed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Schools to forward reopening information to parent/carers - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>2) Reissue summary page - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>3) Upload policies to website - <b>DONE</b></li> </ol>	

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7. COVID19 Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools reopening – Risk Assessments.</li> <li>• Catch-up funding</li> </ul>	<p><i>PW gave a verbal update and answered questions from trustees.</i></p> <p>PW reported that all schools had successfully reopened, and all RA assessments had been updated prior to the opening. Testing procedures had been added to the secondary RA documents. There was a common agreement amongst staff that, albeit students coping very well with remote learning, this return should be focused on nurturing emotional wellbeing.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether there were any guidelines around testing times</b> PW confirmed that PWS and NIA were following the recommended government guidelines of testing twice a week those students that had consented to take the test.</p> <p>Catch-up funding was being regularly monitored and there were plans in place across all schools to take it through the year. PWS had already started deploying theirs, itemizing all interventions and costing them against their funding. S&amp;P committee would be looking at the impact of those interventions. Trustees requested for the information to be also reported to the FHRE committee.</p> <p>Trustees discussed at length the letter received from the teachers' union NASUWT, regarding the re-opening of schools. PW explained that the trust has sought legal advice and the RPA had confirmed, based in the evidence provided, if a claim was to be brought to any school it would provide indemnity. Correspondence from the insurer had been shared with trustees.</p> <p>There were no plans to lengthen the school term into the summer holidays, particularly in secondary schools, as they would have extensive building work taking place during the summer.</p> <p>Trustees thanked PW for his report.</p>	<p><b>Catch-up funding impact and costed plans to be shared with FHRE</b></p>
8. Finance Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Management Accounts P5</li> <li>ii. Budget assumptions for 2021/2022</li> <li>iii. Forecasts and ICFP forecast</li> </ul>	<p><i>Finance papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PW presented the Management Accounts for the period to January 2021. The current surplus for the group was £311K.</li> </ul> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding PWS deficit and how they had managed to reduce it</b> PW explained that it was due to a combination of having more funding allocated in the current year, higher pupil numbers, previous staff long term sick issues been resolved and some saving from the resources not being used during lockdown.</p> <p>PW clarified that NIA showed a large surplus which was a knock-on effect from the restructuring put in place. As the new recruitments came into payroll the figure would go down and surplus would reduce during the second half of the year.</p> <p>PW presented the SWOT analysis requested by trustees.</p>	

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	<p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding staff absence and whether educational performance could potentially be an issue</b> PW explained that this SWOT analysis was only looking at financial performance. Educational strengths &amp; weaknesses would be scrutinized at the S&amp;P committee through different reports. PW concurred that as staff absence was a threat this could eventually have a negative impact on the performance of pupils. However, schools had several control systems in place, like learning walks, DATA scrutiny and the AIF to detect and manage underperformance as early as possible.</p> <p>Trustees suggested to create a SWOT analysis to present to S&amp;P and a summary of both presented to the A&amp;R.</p> <p>ii. PW presented the Budget Reforecast Report and praised the work done by the Finance team on the paper. Due to the pandemic, secondary timetables had changed dramatically, and the document had had a complete re-write. PW confirmed that despite those changes everything was lining up against to their year-to-date performance for the five months.</p> <p>PW ran through the KPIs and benchmarking and took questions from trustees.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding PWS Y7 numbers for 2021-2022</b> PW responded that there had been 235 offers, however this might drop to around 225/230 which would help to bring the average class size to where it needed to be.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the difference around contact ratio and salary between NIA and PWS</b> PW explained that the trust was looking to achieve 0.79 across the group. PWS and primaries were already operating around that figure. NIA, being an all through school had most of the leadership assigned to the secondary phase. Also, with the new HT in post, some space had been allocated to implement the new structure and therefore the contact ratio would raise in future, in line with the rest of the group.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding PWS average teacher salary</b> PW explained that there was an expectation that schools would have a balance between UPS teachers and NQTs, bringing the average salary close to the benchmark. In PWS, the average salary was high due to the large number of UPS teachers on roll at the moment.</p> <p>PW indicated that self-generating income had been very low this year due to COVID19.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether there had been any demand from outdoor spaces rental since the reopening of school and whether the trust could donate some outdoor space time to the community</b> PW confirmed that there had been interest to rent outdoor spaces across the</p>	<p><b>MJ to contact SI team to produce a SWOT for S&amp;P</b></p>

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	<p>trust, particularly the Astro turf at PWS. This would start from 29<sup>th</sup> March. Wheelchair rugby was keen to use the NIA again and this was already part of the community uptake.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding why SHEPS had only one SLT member and whether this could pose a risk</b> PW explained that SHEPS was a small infant school with only three year groups, their main capacity being 180 children. The majority of children moved to Orchard which was a two-form entry. Although SHEPS only had one SLT member (HT), this was not considered a risk as they had UPS teachers within the staff and were supported by Orchard as they were geographically very close.</p> <p>iii. PW presented the Budget Assumptions 2021-22 paper to trustees for approval. The key budget assumptions were as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Efficiency Metrics (ICFP)</li> <li>• School Improvement Budget</li> <li>• Notional Management Fee</li> <li>• Reserves Policy</li> <li>• Contingencies</li> <li>• Central Services</li> </ul> <p>The FHRE June meeting will receive all schools ICFPs for approval alongside a Head Office paper. The five-year plan would go to the TB meeting in July for final budget approval.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the NCC move to two unitary councils would have an effect on the trust</b> PW confirmed that it would not have an impact on the finances as the funding came directly from the DfE.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding what would happen with the final budget if the merger with HAT was to be completed</b> PW confirmed that the budget process for EMAT would remain the same and an overlay for HAT would be added if the merger went ahead. However, the RSC was clear that until the current safeguarding issues at NIA had been resolved they would not support EMAT taking any more schools.</p> <p>PW stressed that providing support to HAT had been a positive experience for the trust, demonstrating that EMAT had capacity to assist other schools before integrating any new organization within the group. For that reason, any support that had been put in place so far could be easily unwound without any structures imploding.</p> <p>There were strong reservations from trustees around some of the support provided for HAT, particularly around HR &amp; Payroll and the impact that could have in the long term for the EMAT staff workload.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the HAT situation at length and agreed that, although</p>	<p style="color: red;">Amend page formatting in the Budget Assumptions 2021-22 paper</p>

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	<p>the proposal made sense, EMAT needed to focus resolving any internal issues before embarking in new challenges. The committee requested to add this as an item for discussion at the next TB meeting.</p> <p><b>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to accept the Management Accounts – Period January 2021, the Budget Reforecast Report and approved the Budget Assumptions 2021-22 paper.</b></p>	<p><b>MJ to add HAT merger item to the next TB agenda.</b></p>
<p>9. Update on Procurement, IT &amp; Estates</p>	<p><i>PW gave a verbal update and answered questions from trustees.</i></p> <p>PW reported that all DfE laptops distributed during lockdown had been recalled and were being serviced and reconfigured, to be redeployed after Easter to those students in need.</p> <p>PW explained that an opportunity had arisen at Pyramus House to rent the floor above the central office to create a training facility to deliver CPD for the trust. PW had negotiated an advantageous deal with the landlord to lease the space for the next five years.</p> <p>Trustees were happy to support the proposal. PW confirmed that a paper would be presented to trustees at the following meeting.</p> <p>Regarding the NIA feasibility plan that had been produced to include the additional bulge year, PW confirmed that this had been presented to the NCC. PW explained that the plan had included refitting two of the commercial units at the front of the building to accommodate the Mental Health Hub and extend the current alternative provision. The figure for this refitting was around £230K and although the trust was able to cover this from their own capital allocations, PW was hoping to combine the work with the feasibility study presented to NCC to achieve better economies of scale.</p> <p>Regarding PWS phase 3, the trust was waiting for the funding agreement back from NCC. PW informed trustees that a planning meeting was taking place the following day to discuss the site master plan. This would support the formal request to reallocate the current PAN from 280 to 230.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the GDPR report PW confirmed that the paper would be presented to the A&amp;R committee.</b></p> <p>Trustees thanked PW for his report.</p>	<p><b>Pyramus paper to be added to next agenda</b></p>
<p>10. HR Update</p>	<p><i>The HR report had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>HM presented the highlights of the report and took questions from trustees.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding maternity leave across the trust and the potential impact this could have around staff cover HM confirmed that there was a plan in place, so all maternity leave had been</b></p>	

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	<p>successfully covered so far.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the new HR managing system and how secure it would be</b> HM confirmed that all the systems currently being explored were completely secure, IT had checked all of them. Some of them were already working with several MATs in the UK and had a number of features that would allow current information to be seamlessly integrated into the new system. They were also willing to adapt some of their features to support the needs of the trust.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the surge in staff disciplinarys and whether they were all related to safeguarding</b> HM clarified that most of them were related to conduct.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding Mental Health Champions and whether the trust had engaged with any organisations</b> HM confirmed that the trust was working with St Andrews and two schools were already pursuing the Kite Mark. The process had started to roll out the program across the whole trust so the EMAT could also apply for the Kite Mark. Schools had been asked to put forward volunteers to complete the accreditation. Central Team and Governance would also be offered places.</p> <p>Trustees praised the comprehensive HR report and thanked HM for her presentation.</p>	
11. Policies for Ratification	<p><i>The following policies were presented for ratification.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Online Safety Policy 2021-23</i></li> <li>• <i>Anti-harassment and bullying – Staff policy 2021-22</i></li> <li>• <i>COVID19 Addendum – new update</i></li> </ul> <p><b>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to ratify all policies.</b></p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the upkeep of the policies schedule</b> MJ confirmed that the current process was manual, however the new HR system would incorporate an electronic compliance feature that would be used to monitor policies moving forward.</p>	MJ to upload policies to website
11. AOB	MJ reminded trustees that the new <b>Whistleblowing policy 2021-22</b> had been ratified electronically and had been uploaded to the trust website.	
12. DONM	<p><b>Dates for the academic year 2020/2021 have been set.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 10am</li> </ul>	Calendar appointments had been sent

**The meeting closed at 12.30pm**

**Actions from the FHR & Estates committee meeting 10/03/2021**

Item	Action	Owner
1.	<b>Catch-up funding impact and costed plans to be shared with FHRE</b>	PW
2.	<b>Contact SI team to produce a SWOT for S&amp;P</b>	MJ
3.	<b>Amend page formatting in the Budget Assumptions 2021-22 paper</b>	PW
4.	<b>Add HAT merger item to the next TB agenda.</b>	MJ/JC/PW
5.	<b>Pyramus paper to be added to next agenda</b>	MJ/PW
6.	<b>Upload policies to website</b>	MJ