

East Midlands Academy Trust – Finance, HR and Estates committee

Wednesday 14th July 2021 @ 12.30pm. Meeting to be conducted virtually.

Seventh 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>Present:</p> <p>Andrew Davis (Trustee) - Chair <i>left meeting at 14.23pm</i></p> <p>David Houghton (Trustee)</p> <p>Asvin Morjaria (Trustee) <i>chaired the meeting from 14.23pm</i></p> <p>Fiona Wheeler (Trustee)</p> <p>Ayo Salam (Trustee) <i>left meeting at 14.00pm</i></p> <p> </p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO)</p> <p>Paul Wheeler (EMAT: COO)</p> <p>Nattria Dhana (EMAT: Management Accountant)</p> <p>Daryl Unitt (EMAT: Head of Shared Services) <i>joined at 12.50pm</i></p> <p>Ruhena Mahmood (EMAT: Senior Workforce Planning & HRBP)</p> <p>Monica Juan (EMAT: Head of Governance & Compliance) – Minutes</p> <p> </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 Stephen Morales .	
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 09/06/2021 & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 09/06/2021 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 09/06/2021	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 09/06/2021 were reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Amend formatting in Management Accounts papers - DONE 2) Provide NIA recruitment figures at next FHRE meeting - DONE 3) Prepare Bridge report for next FHRE meeting - DONE 	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
7. COVID19 Update	<p><i>JC and PW gave a verbal update.</i></p> <p>JC informed trustees that a new governance guidance would be in force from 19th July with all restrictions ending on 16th August. New guidance required testing to resume in September for secondary schools with staff testing at home. There was no need to obtain consent from current students, only new ones.</p> <p>A new outbreak plan had been drafted, one-way systems would be removed, mask would not be enforced, and only close contacts would need to self-isolate in case of positive cases. JC reminded trustees that responsibility for complying with the guidance rested with the trust.</p> <p>Remote learning was still available and ready to be deployed to use widely if needed.</p> <p>The external audit had confirmed that all COVID funds had been used appropriately across the organization. Tracking the impact of this extra funds on children would be evidenced in September.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the new guidance and how schools were planning to work around this during the next academic year JC explained that the expectation in the guidance was that the organization would follow safer working practices. EMAT would continue to maintain the current cleaning regime until further notice. Vaccination and test & trace would help to bring down the number of cases and reduce transmission. Increased ventilation would continue across all schools with regular air conditioning purges.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the trust was collating vaccination records for staff RM clarified that vaccination records were not collected due to GDPR reasons as it wasn't mandatory. However, if this information was needed to inform the Risk Assessments in the future the trust might consider asking for the information on a voluntary basis.</p>	
8. Finance Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAT Management Accounts – May 2021 • EMAT Budget 2021/2022 and 5-year plan • EMAT ICFP Budget Report 2021/2022 – update • EMAT Central Services budget - update 	<p><i>Finance papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>PW ran through the highlights of the Budget 2021/2022 and 5-year plan and confirmed that the retention was excluded from the forecast.</p> <p>PW explained that the plan was to deliver in 2021/22 a £297K surplus. The current reserve policy required to hold one month expenditure as a reserve, this should be around £2million. The trust was successfully working towards this figure, balancing the need to be prudent and set some money aside with the need to make the necessary investment across all facilities to maintain the education outcomes whilst focusing on the catch-up activities from September.</p> <p>The trust used GAG pooling and kept a notional management charge of around 6% which was in line with the money needed to fully support to the schools so they could concentrate in teaching & learning. One of the</p>	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	<p>challenges the organization had moving forward was to look at the centralized HO functions and adjust the best way to spend resources.</p> <p>PW presented the final HO structure which had been designed to build capacity. The two main new posts, <i>Head of Education</i> and <i>Head of Inclusion and EMAT Training Hub</i> were central to the development of the trust and its growth aspirations. PW explained that the new HoE, being an experienced Ofsted HMI, would be able to deliver extensive support to school improvement, providing a forensic eye to the curriculum and furthering the journey of EMAT schools from good to outstanding. The Head of Inclusion had been an internal appointment and would be central to the cultural change around safeguarding, concentrating in inclusion and growing our own workforce.</p> <p>Trustees debated extensively the proposed HO structure and whether it was justified and sustainable. Trustees looked into why certain appointments had already taken place and whether the internal appointment was best value for money. Trustees recommended that future growth of the central team should be first sourced from existing staff from any new academies joining. Trustees acknowledged that the trust had grown hugely in numbers since its separation from the sponsor and recognized that some capacity was immediately needed to provide better support for leaders.</p> <p>After a robust discussion the FHRE committee unanimously agreed to approve the Budget 2021/22 and structures proposed, with the caveat that next year budget would not increase the head count in the central team unless new academies joined the trust and, if changes were necessary, they should be discussed during the February budget assumptions.</p> <p>PW presented the highlights of the Staff Pay proposal paper and asked trustees to consider the approval of a non-consolidated (on-off) retention payment on recognition for the work done during a very unusual and challenging year. This would be paid to all staff who have been in post during 2020/2021 and had not been offered a national pay increase or did not qualify for pay progression. The actual payment would be made by December 2021.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether certain members of staff might find the proposal unfair and how would the trust deal with this PW explained that all cases would be looked individually and would go through a rigorous PM process, so no payment would be given if the performance was inadequate, or the individual was in an informal support plan.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding who would be covered under the ‘support staff’ retention payment and what was the split between support staff and teachers PW clarified that support staff was all staff under the ‘green book’. Essentially all staff across the trust other than teachers. The split would be around 60% (support staff) and 40% (teaching staff). The retention payment would not double reward individuals.</p>	<p>Review HO structure during Feb budget assumptions</p> <p>Present budget to TB for ratification</p>

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
	<p>After a robust discussion the FHRE committee unanimously agreed to approve the staff retention payment.</p> <p>Trustees noted the Accounts for the May Period.</p>	
9. HR Update (paper) Pay Review 2021/2022	<p><i>AM took the chair</i></p> <p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>RM presented the highlights from the HR report and answered questions from trustees.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding how the staff still isolating was being utilised and what was the impact in schools RM explained that there was a mix of support and teaching staff on an adapted timetable, mainly offering remote support to older children. HR was closely supporting these members of staff on their reintegration to schools.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether exits interviews were being conducted and what were the main reasons for leaving RM explained that DATA was being collated around this and would be presented at the September meeting. The turnover of staff was a healthy one with the main reasons from leaving the organisation being promotion and relocation. RM clarified that all teaching vacancies had been recruited for September 2021 and reputation was high, with better quality of applications being received.</p> <p>Trustees thanked RM for her report.</p>	
10. Update on Procurement, IT & Estates	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>DU presented the highlights from the Shared Services report. There were no questions from trustees.</p> <p>Trustees thanked DU for the clarity of the report.</p>	
11. Chairs report	<i>This item was referred for the next meeting</i>	
12. Policies for ratification	<p><i>The following policies were presented for ratification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charging and remissions</i> • <i>Health & Safety</i> • <i>First Aid</i> • <i>Premises management documents</i> • <i>Social media</i> <p>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to ratify all policies.</p>	MJ to upload policies to website
13. AOB	There were no AOB	

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
14. DONM	<p>Dates for the academic year 2021/2022 have been set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 8th October 2021 at 10am • Monday 6th December 2021 at 10am • Monday 14th February 2022 at 10am • Monday 21st March 2022 at 10am • Wednesday 8th June 2022 at 10am • Tuesday 12th July 2022 at 10am 	Calendar appointments had been sent

The meeting closed at 12.26pm

Actions from the FHRE committee meeting 09/06/2021

Item	Action	Owner
1.	Review HO structure during February budget assumptions	PW/ND
2.	Present Budget 2021/22 and 5-year plan to TB for ratification	PW/MJ
3.	Upload policies to website	MJ