East Midlands Academy Trust – Finance, HR and Estates committee
Wednesday 9th June 2021 @ 9.30am. Meeting to be conducted virtually.
Sixth 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	**Present:** **Andrew Davis** (Trustee) - Chair **David Houghton** (Trustee) **Asvin Morjaria** (Trustee) **Joshua Coleman** (EMAT: CEO) **Paul Wheeler** (EMAT: COO) **Nattria Dhana** (EMAT: Management Accountant) **Daryl Unitt** (EMAT: Head of Shared Services) **Monica Juan** (EMAT: Head of Governance & Compliance) – Minutes **Lorna Beard** (EMAT: Castle Headteacher) **Dan Lugg** (EMAT: Castle Head of School) **Zoe McIntyre** (EMAT: HAR/SAA Exec Headteacher) **Julie Stevens** (EMAT: HAR Head of School) **Luci Clapton** (EMAT: SAA Head of School) **Ruth Ryan** (EMAT: Shepherdswell Headteacher) 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.	
2. Apologies	Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from **Stephen Morales, Jo Trevena, Liz Dormor and Callum Brown.**	
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 16/04/2021 & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	The minutes of the meeting held on the 16/04/2021 had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting and were agreed to be an accurate representation of the meeting. AD agreed to physically sign the minutes once lockdown restrictions had been lifted. There were no matters arising not already on the agenda for this meeting.	

East Midlands Academy Trust

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6. Actions Log from the meeting held on 16/04/2021	Actions from the meeting held on the 16/04/2021 were reviewed: 1) Catch-up funding impact and costed plans to be shared with FHRE/S&P/TB – **FHRE to be copied to final report** 2) Contact SI team to produce a SWOT for S&P – **Already in place through Performance Report** 3) Produce an update on Primary numbers to share with trustees – **Agenda item** 4) Invite Heads to next FHRE meeting - **DONE**	
7. COVID19 Update • Catch up funding impact & cost update	*PW and LB gave a verbal update..* PW informed trustees that all schools had planned activities to use approximately £300k funding. The activities had been planned during the first lockdown but delayed due to the second lockdown and were taking place during the summer term. PW reported that children had bounced back easily from the first lockdown and showed great resilience. However, the second lockdown had presented much more significant issues around mental health and behavior. Some children in primary school had regressed significantly and most of the funding had been invested around reintegration in the classroom. PW informed trustees that there was not clarity yet around what government funding would be available moving forward. However, the new budget would be prepared with some headroom to provide for pupils if necessary. LB described some of the interventions taking place across the schools, with 1-2-1 and small groups tuition as prime examples. CPD had been put in place for staff to fully embed the curriculum, ensuring that any gaps were filled with the right information. There were no questions from trustees. Trustees thanked PW and LB for thei report.	
8. Finance Update: i. EMAT Management Accounts – March/April 2021 ii. EMAT Staffing & ICFP Plan 2021/2022 iii. EMAT HO/Central Services Budget report 2021/2022	*Finance papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.* **i.** PW clarified that the March accounts were for information only as they had been superseded by the April accounts. ND presented the Management Accounts for the period to April 2021 and confirmed that the trust was performing better than expected. ND ran through the highlights in the report and took questions from trustees. Some inconsistencies were noted in the formatting of the report (page 4) and PW agreed to correct these for the next report. **The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to accept the Management Accounts – Period March and April 2021.**	**PW/ND to amend formatting**

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	ii. PW thanked HTs for joining the meeting and have been able to see the financial reports across all schools. PW presented the Staffing & ICFP Plan report for the year 2021/2022. PW ran through the benchmarking specific to the ICFP metrics and confirmed that most of them were in line with the national benchmarks. ND presented the highlights for each school and took questions from trustees. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether appointing a SEND HLTA rather than a teacher in Orchard was the best option for the pupils** ND explained that the current arrangements were based in the current MK SLA model, where there was an expectation that SEND children would access mainstream school, but the trust was actively pursuing more funding to appoint an extra teacher. PW and LB reassured trustees that the ORCH/SHEPS department would look at the needs of the children in September and if a large amount could not access mainstream education a qualified teacher would be appointed to the department in order to fully meet their needs. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding how the trust was supporting Shepherdswell around the admissions issue** PW explained that although the trust and school were in regular contact with the local authority, MK had very limited capacity funding and predictions were difficult to get right. Marketing to promote the school was already in place. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the timescale for the opening of the Hardingstone nursery** ND and ZM confirmed that the expectation was to open in January 2022 with a minimum of 10 children which would make the venture sustainable. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the new Castle structure** LB explained that she would leave the school at the end of the academic year to become EMAT Head of Inclusion. ZM would become the new Exec. HT (0.4FT) and would support DL. Castle/HAR/SAA Heads of Schools were already working together. The SLT beneath Castle HoS had also increased to provide support around EY as all the current KS Leaders were KS2 specialists. This would also support the new Exec. HT during the transitions phase. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the NIA ongoing discussion with the LA about a bulge year** PW confirmed that the LA was in need of secondary spaces in Northampton town, not primary. Primary low intake in schools was a county wide issue. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding the amount of teaching vacancies at NIA** PW agreed to provide an accurate number at the next meeting when the final budget would be produced.	**PW to provide recruitment figures at next FHRE meeting.**

East Midlands
Academy Trust

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	Trustees and HTs discussed the reports at length and looked at the September 2021 intake for all schools. HTs confirmed that the finance team had worked extensively with the schools to produce the ICFP paper and were pleased with the allocated budgets. **The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to accept the Staffing & ICFP Plan 2021/2022** **iii**. PW presented the HO/Central Services Budget report for the year 2021/2022. The report clarified the central funding received through GAG pooling and how it was distributed. PW presented the new central structure. **In response to a question from a trustee challenging the increase of central team headcount and how it would benefit all schools** PW explained that benchmarking across the sector showed that EMAT current notional fee was in line with the average size trust (4 to 6%) Regardless of size, a certain level of services needed to be provided to run the organization successfully. By centrally providing services like Payroll and HR, EMAT effectively had managed to save over the past 3 year around £750K. Trustees discussed at length whether it was the right time to improve capacity or whether new schools needed to join the trust before expanding the size of the central team. PW agreed to present a bridge report at the next FHRE meeting. Trustees agreed that this level of transparency was positive for the running of the organization. Trustees thanked HTs for their attendance and complimented PW and ND for the clarity of the finance reports. *All Heads left the meeting at 11.49am*	**PW to prepare Bridge report for next FHRE meeting**

9. Update on Procurement, IT & Estates
  i. Shared Services update report
  ii. Pyramus learning hub –update
  iii. Primary schools' intake numbers – update
  iv. PWS Site Appraisal Report
	Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.
	
	i. DU presented the highlights from the Shared Services report and answered questions from trustees.
	
	In response to a question from a trustee regarding the current level of cybersecurity risk in the organisation DU explained that from a 1 to 10 scale EMAT was currently at 5. However, there had been a significant programme of improvement put in place and DU expected the organisation to be around 8/9 by September.
	
	In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether there was any communication/support between the DfE and MATs around cybersecurity and between MATs to share best practice DU confirmed that some information from the DfE had been made available and any recommendations have been taken on board. However, as this wasn't a regular feauture, DU was in the process of creating a network with other professionals in the sector to share expertise and information.	

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	ii. Pyramus House Training Hub project had been completed and the first training session had taken place. **iii.** Covered during item 8. Trustees thanked DU for his report. **iv.** PW ran through the highlights of the PWS site report. The project was out for tender for the first phase and seven companies had been approached to quote for the project. This was going through the normal tendering process and was expected to start during the summer. **In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the funding allocated would be sufficient to complete the project including any costs that might rise in the future** PW explained that by next meeting they would be able to provide more clarity around costings and estimates. However, the trust had the ability to invest some of their own reserves to cover any contingencies if necessary.	
11. Items for next agenda	• Central Services budget update • ICFP update • Estates update • 5 year plan • HR update to include update around staff movement and disciplinaries	
12. AOB	There were no AOB	
13. DONM	**Dates for the academic year 2020/2021 have been set.** • Thursday 14th July 2021 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.	**Amend formatting in Management Accounts papers**	**PW/ND**
2.	**Provide NIA recruitment figures at next FHRE meeting**	PW
3.	**Prepare Bridge report for next FHRE meeting**	PW