

Minutes of the Trustee Finance, Human Resources and Estates Committee

Pyramus House Roman Way, Grange Park Northampton NN4 5EA

Monday 15 May 2023 @ 10.00am

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

Attendance		
Role	Name	Present
Trustee	Nick Bell	A
Trustee	Ayo Salam (Chair)	A
Trustee	Martin Conlon (Vice Chair)	P
Trustee	Kevin Crompton (Chair – Board) ☎	P
Trustee	Stephen Morales ☎	P
	In Attendance	
CEO/Accounting Officer	Joshua Coleman	P
Chief Financial/Operations Officer	Paul Wheeler	P
Finance Business Partner	Nattia Dhana	P
Senior Workforce Planning and HR BP	Ruhena Mahmood	P
Head of Shared Services	Daryl Unitt	P
Procurement Manager	Nel Planas	P
Governance Professional	Juliette Pierson	P
P=Present A=Apologies x = Absent		

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded all that the matters discussed during the meeting should remain confidential until such time as the minutes were approved.	
2. Apologies	Apologies were received in advance of the meeting and accepted from Nick Bell and Ayo Salam.	
3. Quoracy and Confidentiality	<p>The meeting commenced at 10.05am. The Governance Professional advised that the meeting was not quorate. However, the arrival of Kevin Crompton was anticipated. Martin Conlon as Vice Chair chaired the meeting in the absence of Ayo Salam.</p> <p>The Vice Chair welcomed all and reminded those present both online and in person, that matters raised would remain confidential until such time as the minutes were agreed and signed.</p>	
4. Declarations of interest	There were no declarations of interest pertaining to this agenda that had not already been declared on the annual Register of Interests.	
5. Minutes of FHRE committee meeting held on 29/03/2023	The minutes of the meeting held on 29/03/2023 including a confidential minute had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting and were agreed and approved by all present to be an accurate representation of the meeting	

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& matters arising not appearing on the Action Log.	that took place. The Vice Chair agreed to sign the minutes during the next face to face meeting.	
6. Actions arising from the meeting held on 29/03/2023 & matters arising	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GP to rectify typographical mistake in minutes of the previous meeting before releasing – completed 2. Head of Shared Services to put together an analysis of risks and mitigations re the Arbor system implementation to take to the A&R Committee meeting – completed 3. CFO to produce a high-level summary of any changes to the cleaning contract – contract to be re-tendered. Trustees agreed to close off the action. 4. Head of Shared Services and CFO to look into benchmarking for energy usage – suitable and applicable benchmarking data was not found. Trustees agreed to close off the action. 5. HR Business Partner to conduct further analysis of absences breaking them down per job role etc – completed 6. GP to add Anti-harassment and Bullying policy to central location - completed <p>The CFO updated Trustees on the situation with the cleaning contract. The contract is currently in the process of being re-tendered due to a legal challenge from the current supplier around a clerical error on the tender documents. The CFO reported that new bids have been requested and the item return to the committee for consideration in the Autumn.</p> <p>With regard to the benchmarking for energy usage, no suitable benchmarking data from similar schools had been found. The current data from schools within the trust is being used to benchmark schools and the focus is on those schools ie Stimpson Avenue, Orchard and Shepherdswell with higher kilowatt per hour usage in an effort to decrease usage to reduce costs. A Trustee recommended that contact is made with two suppliers to the education sector and agreed to pass on the relevant contacts.</p> <p>All actions were either completed or closed off. There were no matters arising not already included on the agenda for the meeting.</p> <p><i>Governance Professional Note: The CEO joined the meeting at 10.08am. Kevin Crompton joined the online call at 10.08am.</i></p>	Stephen Morales to pass on energy contacts to the Head of Shared Services
7. – Finance Update	<p>Standing Item</p> <p>The management accounts were circulated to Trustees in advance of the meeting. The Finance Business Partner provided a summary overview of the figures. The trust reported a 94k surplus at the end of March 2023, which represented a reduction from the February reported surplus of 106k. This was due to an overspend at NIA on ad hoc general agency over which brought in month spend over budget. The finance team quickly identified the issues and met with staff at the NIA to work out a plan to rectify the problem. The draft</p>	

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	<p>position for this month has now resulted in a reduction in agency spend in line with the long-term forecasted position.</p> <p>The re-forecasted surplus for 2022/23 stands at 212k. The finance team is currently producing the April accounts which will see the surpluses returning to targeted levels.</p> <p>A Trustee commented that despite the pressures from inflation and increased staffing costs, it was encouraging to see that the overall financial position is being kept under strict control and extended thanks to the finance team for the diligent work being undertaken. Following a question from a Trustee around whether the overspend at the NIA was before the current Executive Headteacher took up post, the CFO explained that it took place soon after and that some of the amount related to cover for vacancies but the majority related to ad hoc agency cover. The expected levels of control to approve the expenditure were not embedded, which the new Executive Headteacher quickly rectified. The Finance Business Partner and the HR Business Partner now review the situation on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to approve the March 2023 management accounts.</p>	
8. HR Update	<p>Standing Item The HR report was circulated to Trustees in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>A Trustee commented that absences were high at the NIA. The HR Business Partner explained that work was ongoing with regard to interventions and early support for those absent. Line Manager were also being trained to offer the required support.</p> <p>Following a question from a Trustee about the mental health absences at Stimpson Avenue Academy and whether there was a common thread, the HR Business Partner outlined that both were unique circumstances and that both members of staff have been given the appropriate support through the employee assistance programme. The CFO outlined that the contract for the Educational Psychologist has been renewed and the trust will receive additional support and training in order to support staff with mental health issues. A Trustee confirmed that mental health, stress and workload are driving attrition from the professional nationally and that quite often absence data can mask a mental health problem behind it. The HR Business Partner outlined that data is analysed weekly and meetings held with school staff and Headteachers to ensure that staff get the right support and counselling as soon as possible. Access to the employee assistance programme is increasing with staff awareness. A Trustee commented that the biggest cause of absence was for surgery and asked whether it was possible for staff to schedule surgery outside of term time. The HR Business Partner confirmed that the trust has a special leave policy and that absences were assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p>	

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	<p>The HR Business Partner confirmed that there had not been as many staff resignations as last year and some vacancies had already been filled for September.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the HR Business Partner for the report and feedback.</p>	
<p>9. Update on procurement, IT & Estates</p>	<p>Standing Item</p> <p>The shared services report was shared with Trustees in advance of the meeting. The Head of Shared Services provided a brief summary overview: all established key performance indicators were being achieved. There had been two RIDDOR incidents in the period, both of which had been investigated and neither of which provided any major concerns.</p> <p>Following a question from a Trustee about one of the incidents, the Head of Shared Services confirmed that risk assessments were in place and that a NEBOSH certified individual had been to the location and carried out an investigation. However, the supervision was found to be adequate and the risk assessments checked and overall it was deemed to be an accident.</p> <p>Following a question from a Trustee regarding the level of compliance at Hardingstone, the Head of Shared Services explained that the reason why compliance figures were lower was that a member of the estates staff was absent. The Head of Shared Services agreed to share the compliance data for the current week outside of the meeting.</p> <p>Following a question from Trustees around the removal of the Crazy4Kids facility from the school site at Hardingstone, the Head of Shared Services outlined that once the mobile classroom has been removed, the grass will be re-seeded and the area tidied, in order to improve the look and feel of the school site from the car park.</p> <p><u>Carbon Report</u></p> <p>The CFO outlined that the trust is expecting an increase in the price of gas and electricity once current agreements come to an end. Current quotes indicate that the increase is likely to be in the region of 372% against a budgeted figure of 300% and the worst-case scenario is that energy bills will increase by one million pounds. The purchasing team are currently obtaining quotes from additional sources to ascertain whether there are better deals available from the commercial market.</p> <p>The Head of Shared Services outlined that measures to reduce energy usage were being investigated and those with minimal expenditure for maximum impact will be implemented. As boilers come to 'end of life' they will be replaced with carbon efficient heating systems. It is anticipated that all measures will assist to reduce costs. Data being collected is now being used to help to make informed decisions. A Trustee outlined that energy wholesale prices appear to be decreasing and therefore firm decisions should be delayed for as long as possible. The CFO confirmed that a one-year agreement will be</p>	<p>The Head of Shared Services agreed to share the compliance data for Hardingstone for week beginning 15.05.2023.</p>

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	<p>sought instead of the usual three-year until prices stabilise in order to balance risk with pricing.</p> <p><u>Procurement Strategy</u></p> <p>Two documents; the Procurement Strategy and Summary to the Procurement Bill were circulated to Trustees in advance of the meeting. The CFO outlined that the Procurement Manager was asked by the committee to produce a procurement strategy to tie in with the spend analysis. The Procurement Manager presented a summary overview of the strategy and the key objectives. A Trustee asked how delivery and progression can be monitored in relation to the objectives. The CFO outlined that key performance indicators in relation to procurement will be set from the October strategy event which will then be monitored.</p> <p>The Procurement Manager outlined that the White Paper which comes into effect from 2024 will bring no real material changes for EMAT as there are few high spend areas. Changes concentrate on the tendering process and EMAT has few tenders. The paper also highlights training for procurement professionals which will be offered prior to the Bill being enacted.</p> <p>A Trustee outlined that there is significant drive to improve commercial capability within Trusts but currently there is no legislation around this. The trust quality framework describes how a high quality trust should look and behave.</p>	
10. Policies for Review	Policies will be put forward to Trustees for approval outside the meeting.	
11. Any Other Business	There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11.05am.	
12. Dates of Next Meeting	<p>Dates for the academic year 2022/2023 have been set and distributed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 July 2023 – 10.00am <p>The CFO is unable to make the July date and requested that the July meeting is moved to Thursday 20 July at 10.00am.</p>	

The meeting closed at 11.05am

Signed by Chair of FHRE Committee.....

Name..... **Date**.....

Actions from the Finance, HR, Estates Committee – 15/05/2023

No.	Action	Owner
1.	Trustee to pass on energy contacts to the Head of Shared Services - completed	DU
2.	The Head of Shared Services agreed to share the compliance data for Hardingstone for week beginning 15.05.2023 - completed	SP
3.	Policies to be approved by Trustees outside of the FHRE committee meeting: Charging and Remissions, Employee Sickness and Attendance, Social Media.	JP
4.	GP to ask Trustees to change the date of the FHRE meeting to Thursday 20 July at 10.00am if possible - completed.	JP

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