

East Midlands Academy Trust – Finance, HR and Estates committee

Monday 17th October 2022 @ 10.00am. **Hybrid meeting**

First meeting of academic year 2022/2023

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

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. Welcome	<p>Present: Martin Conlon (Trustee) - Chair 📞 Nick Bell (Trustee) 📞 Kevin Crompton (Trustee) 📞</p> <p>Joshua Coleman (EMAT: CEO) 📞 Paul Wheeler (EMAT: COO) Nattia Dhana (EMAT: Finance Manager Accountant) Daryl Unitt (EMAT: Head of Shared Services) Ruhena Mahmood (EMAT: SWP & HRBP) 📞 Monica Juan (EMAT: Head of Governance & Compliance) – Minutes</p> <p>The Clerk 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 Andy Davis	
3. Quoracy	The meeting was quorate.	
4. Declarations of interest	The clerk 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	This item was deferred to the next FHRE meeting as AD had sent his apologies. MC agreed to chair the meeting.	
6. Minutes of FHRE meeting 12/07/2022 & matters arising not appearing on the Action Log	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 12/07/2022 had been distributed with the agenda for this meeting and were agreed to be an accurate representation of the meeting.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed. MC agreed to physically sign the minutes during the next face to face meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising not already on the agenda for this meeting.</p>	
7. Actions Log from the meeting held on 12/07/2022	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 12/07/2022 were reviewed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AD to meet PW to look at finance papers on 19/07/2022- DONE 2. Provide Exit Interviews information at next FHRE meeting- DONE 3. Provide SAM update at next FHRE meeting - DONE 4. Present Staff survey action plan at next FHRE meeting – New survey results to be presented at next meeting. 	

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	<p>5. Provide regular PP updates to FHRE - PW to provide info next meeting</p> <p>6. FHRE ToR to be approved at TB - DONE</p> <p>7. Ratify policies electronically - DONE</p> <p>8. Distribute to trustees the legal advice regarding notice periods. – DONE. KC informed that trustees had decided not to change the current notice terms.</p>	
<p>8. Finance Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMAT Management Accounts – August 2022 	<p><i>The papers for this item had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>ND presented the highlights of the Management Accounts for the period August 2022. For the year ended 2021/22 EMAT had achieved a £248k group surplus against a £310k Forecast surplus. This was £62k lower than the predicted forecast, mainly due to the NIA extra expenditure which included Aspens loses. PW informed trustees that, albeit being a very challenging year, the trust had managed to invest £500K across all schools.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the catering issue at NIA and in response to a question from a trustee regarding whether enough food had been available for all children during the previous year PW confirmed that all children had had access to food, but the offer had been altered to speed up the process. To mitigate this, more tills had been opened this year during breaks. PW informed trustees that all catering contracts would go through the procurement process by June 2023 to ensure competitive rates.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the cost recovered from staff absence insurance and noted that the actual cost was more than what the trust could recover. In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether it was worth to invest in supply insurance cover ND explained that the insurance cover was part of the risk mitigations. The team had identified better ways to process claims and therefore more income should be recovered in the future. Part of the trust strategic plan was to have its own supply bank, which could reduce the overall expense as well as improving the QoT. However, during COVID all schools had needed supply at the same time, making it difficult and expensive to obtain quality cover. The insurance cover was reviewed yearly to ensure best value for money was achieved.</p> <p>Trustees debated whether pupils' numbers across the trust were a concern and noted that the demographic projections in Northampton and MK were currently low but would recover in future years. Trustees agreed that the addition of SEND units and nursery provision to some of the schools would boost future provision and numbers.</p> <p>Trustees were informed that PP reports had been submitted by all schools and requested an update on PP impact at the next TB meeting.</p> <p>PW gave trustees a brief update regarding the pay review agreed by the teachers' body. The total cost would have a £500K impact on the budget and contingencies would need to be built into the next budget to address the difference, including the possibility of asking schools to contribute.</p>	<p>Add PP impact item to TB agenda</p>

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	<p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding how active the trust was investing to maximise the rise of interest rates PW replied that the team was looking for different options, including safe deposits and bonds.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding how the internal risk audit plan was devised and how could trustees know that it was looking at the right risks PW explained that the internal audit had a rolling programme which was looked annually. The A&R committee oversaw the review of the programme. The latest audit had looked at Safeguarding, Fixed Assets and GDPR. VAT had been moved to the current year cycle.</p> <p>Trustees unanimously accepted the Management Accounts August 2022.</p> <p>Trustees thanked PW and ND for their reports.</p>	
<p>9. NIA update</p>	<p><i>PW gave a verbal update</i></p> <p>PW informed trustees that the Ofsted monitoring visit had been very positive and had asserted the work done by the trust so far. The report was now live on the Ofsted website and the information had been cascaded to all stakeholders.</p> <p>£250K had been invested, mainly supporting safeguarding, restructuring the SLT and improving the curriculum offering as well as providing much needed resources. A new interim HT was in place while the process of appointing the substantive head was ongoing. Many resignations had taken place at the end of July and recruitment had been high during the summer and beginning of term. Aside from the strain in pay, the rest of expenses would be covered by the budget.</p> <p>Investigations around reinforcing safety within the current the building's infrastructure were ongoing and PW confirmed that any changes would not be determined by lack of funding, but building constrains. JC and PW had met with council representatives to discuss the issues about road safety outside the school. A draft letter was being prepared for the LAB to send to WNC.</p> <p>A meeting with the new RDD team had been scheduled for the following week and would be attended by JC/KC & PW. They had strongly indicated that the NIA journey was a positive one and were happy with the trust response.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the quality of new staff and how had new recruits settled in the school RM explained that 31 new members of staff had started in September. A dedicated survey had been conducted with them and the feedback was generally good. The subjects where best quality teachers were most difficult to recruit were Maths & English.</p> <p>Trustees discussed two safeguarding incidents that had taken place in the school and were reassured by JC and RM that both incidents had been triggered by elements outside the school's control. Students and staff had been provided with all the necessary support to ensure their wellbeing.</p> <p>Trustees thanked PW for his report.</p>	

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10. Update on Procurement, IT & Estates	<p><i>The papers for this item had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting</i></p> <p>DU presented the highlights of the report and noted the positive trend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyberessentials certification renewal would start in January 2023. • Estates response had dropped by 1%, resolution time was higher as there was more time needed to complete the works. • IT performance had dropped considerably, however there had been double of tickets raised in the same previous period. Direct intervention had taken place to address underperformance issues. • Two new apprentices had been recruited. • One member of staff had been made business partner. <p>An update was provided across all major projects in the trust, including PWS. Trustees debated at length the cost implications and in response to a question from a trustee regarding what would happen if PWS sports hall became unaffordable due to inflation PW explained that a value engineering project had already been completed so any further changes would have to go through planning. The trust was exploring further avenues with the council to release extra funding in necessary. There was a possibility that trustees might need to consider using cash reserves to fund the project. If this was to happen, the plan would be fully costed and presented to the committee for approval.</p> <p>DU confirmed that the feasibility study to replace the current MIS System had been completed with successful participation from key members of each school. A huge piece of procurement was currently taking place to award new cleaning and catering contracts across the trust to high quality partners.</p> <p>Trustees thanked DU and PW for their reports.</p>	
11. HR Update	<p><i>The papers for this item had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting</i></p> <p>RM presented the highlights of the report. Absences had gone down across all schools compared with the previous period.</p> <p>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the high level of resignations in the trust RM explained that there was a correlation with staff expectations being dramatically increased to improve the quality of education. NIA/SHEPS/ORCH had also seen a new SLT structure put in place which had created a degree of change. However, most resignations continue to fall under relocation and/or promotion.</p> <p>The NIA Executive HT recruitment process deadline was Friday 17th October, with interviews expected to take place in November. So far, there had been a good range of applications showing the level of expertise needed to steer the school.</p> <p>JC informed trustees that the legal team had confirmed staff could not lawfully strike if their dispute was with the government and not the trust.</p> <p>Trustees thanked RM for her report.</p>	

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12. Policies	<p><i>The policies for this item had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV Policy In response to a question from a trustee regarding the quality of CCTV DU confirmed that all schools used digital systems apart from PWS which still had an analogue system. This was to be updated soon. • Staff Code of Conduct In response to a question from a trustee regarding how staff was inducted in the use of social media RM confirmed that there was a separate Social Media policy to ensure staff understood the social media protocol required when working in schools. <p>All policies were unanimously ratified</p>	Upload policies to websites
13. AOB	<p>JC informed trustees that the Head of Governance would be leaving the trust on 31st October 2022. Four applications were being considered for the role.</p> <p>Trustees thanked MJ for her services and support to the trust.</p>	
14. DONM	<p>Dates for the academic year 2022/2023 have been set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 7th December 2022 at 10am • Monday 20/02/2023 at 10am • Wednesday 29/03/2023 at 10am • Monday 15/05/2023 at 10am • Friday 21/07/2023 at 10am 	Calendar invites had been sent

The meeting closed at 12.05pm

Signed by **Martin Conlon,**

FHRE Chair

Date.....

Action Log from the FHRE committee meeting 17/10/2022

Item	Action/	Owner
1.	New staff survey results to be presented at December FHRE meeting	RM
2.	PP information to be presented at December TB meeting	PW/ND
3.	Upload policies to websites	MJ