

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

 Monday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021 @ 6.00pm. Meeting conducted virtually.

**First meeting of academic year 2021/2022**

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

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
1. <b>Welcome</b>	<p><b>Present:</b>  <b>Andrew Davis</b> (Trustee) - <b>Chair</b>  <b>Ayo Salam</b> (Trustee)  <b>Stephen Morales</b> (Trustee)</p> <p><b>Joshua Coleman</b> (EMAT: CEO)  <b>Paul Wheeler</b> (EMAT: COO)  <b>Nattia Dhana</b> (EMAT: Finance)  <b>Daryl Unitt</b> (EMAT: Head of Shared Services)  <b>Ruhena Mahmood</b> (EMAT: Senior Workforce Planning &amp; HRBP)  <b>Monica Juan</b> (EMAT: Head of Governance &amp; Compliance) – Minutes</p> <p>MJ 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. <b>Apologies</b>	Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from <b>Kevin Crompton</b> .	
3. <b>Quoracy</b>	The meeting was confirmed as quorate.	
4. <b>Declarations of interest</b>	MJ 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. <b>Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair</b>	<b>Andy Davis</b> was appointed Chair <b>Ayo Salam</b> was appointed Vice-Chair	
6. <b>Minutes of FHRE meeting 14/07/2021 &amp; matters arising not appearing on the Action Log</b>	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 14/07/2021 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>	
7. <b>Actions Log from the meeting held on 14/07/2021</b>	<p>Actions from the meeting held on the 14/07/2021 were reviewed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review HO structure during February budget assumptions - <b>Ongoing</b></li> <li>2) Present Budget 2021/22 and 5-year plan to TB for ratification - <b>DONE</b></li> <li>3) Upload policies to website - <b>DONE</b></li> </ol>	

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<p>8. Finance Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMAT Management Accounts – August 2021</li> <li>• Audit Strategy Memorandum</li> <li>• Academy Trust Handbook 2021 update</li> <li>• EMAT Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<p><i>Finance papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p><b>EMAT Management Accounts:</b> ND ran through the highlights of the Management Accounts – August Period and explained that the £75K originally budgeted for the honorarium payment had been incorporated to the current surplus. ND explained that there were no other foreseeable adjustments to be made to the current accounts.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the PWS current plan</b> PW confirmed that the PWS funding and plan had been confirmed and all monies had been secured.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the extent of the pension liability and any provisions in place</b> PW confirmed that the NCC and BUCKS scheme were likely to end up with a deficit however it would become clearer once the statutory accounts were finalised the following week. The local government schemes were around the TPS with the exception of PWS which was higher at present.</p> <p>PW explained that there had been an adjustment in NI which would become a tax from the following year. Everyone would experience a reduction, approximately around £40K in NICs. The impact this year had been absorbed within the contingencies.</p> <p><b>Trustees unanimously agreed to approve the EMAT Management Accounts – August 2021</b></p> <p><b>Audit Strategy Memorandum:</b> PW presented the paper, there were no changes from the previous year.</p> <p><b>Trustees unanimously agreed to approve the Audit Strategy Memorandum</b></p> <p><b>Academy Trust Handbook 2021 update:</b> The new Finance Handbook was presented to trustees, incorporating the updates from the new Academy Trust Handbook. The main theme across the document was the strengthening of procedures. The ESFA had increased its focus around finance, H&amp;S and Safeguarding which was currently covered at the trust through a range of policies and procedures.</p> <p><b>Capital Projects:</b> Trustees praised the impressive range of projects that the trust had managed to deliver during very challenging times and concurred that including this information in any new bids would be an excellent example to showcase how the organization was reinvesting money to achieve its aims.</p> <p>Trustees thanked ND and PW for their report.</p>	
<p>9. HAT update and Management Agreement/SLA</p>	<p><i>Please see confidential minute.</i></p>	

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<b>10. Stanton Cross application - Update</b>	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>JC explained that the paperwork would be submitted on the 15<sup>th</sup> October subject to the trustees approval.</p> <p>Trustees discussed at length the proposal and agreed it was closely aligned to the EMAT aims. Trustees were satisfied that the organisation had the capacity to successfully expand and accommodate more schools.</p> <p><b>Trustees unanimously agreed to approve the submission of Stanton Cross bid.</b></p>	
<b>11. Procurement, IT &amp; Estates update</b>	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting.</i></p> <p>DU presented the highlights of the report. The success of the IT system and service desk was noted. After a lengthy discussion around the type of incidents reported, and in order to give an idea of continuity, trustees requested for the report to capture general Incidents and critical issues, showing any downtime.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding the importance of cyber essentials being a massive priority for the DfE and whether there were any potential weaknesses in security</b> DU explained that the trust was in a journey to achieve cyber essentials plus and it was adding capacity on a monthly basis. This was in line with the strategy agreed by the Audit &amp; Risk committee.</p> <p>Trustees praised the work done by the team and thanked DU for his report.</p>	<p><b>DU to include information in report.</b></p>
<b>12. HR Update</b>	<p><i>Papers had been distributed with the agenda for the meeting</i></p> <p>RM presented the highlights of the report and took questions from trustees.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding staff absences due to COVID19 and how these were managed</b> RM explained that, although each case was different, most of the COVID19 absentees were working from home. Schools had updated their RAs which would determine when the site would have to close in the event of high staff absence. Attendance was still higher than national but anxiety around exams was already palpable.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that it would be difficult for schools to impose any tougher measures than those currently recommended by the DfE.</p> <p><b>In response to a question from a trustee regarding whether the trust had sufficient funds to cover any agency cover requirements</b> RM clarified that the actual problem was availability of supply staff, as agencies had also been hit hard with positive cases.</p> <p>RM confirmed that the Mental Health award was ongoing, with school starting the accreditation programme in January 2022.</p>	

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<b>13. Policies for ratification</b>	<p><i>The following policies were presented for ratification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Fraud Policy statement (for information)</li> <li>• CCTV Policy</li> <li>• Lettings Policy</li> <li>• Password Policy</li> <li>• Information Security Policy</li> <li>• Staff Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Disciplinary, Capability &amp; Grievance procedures</li> </ul> <p><b>The FHRE committee unanimously agreed to ratify all policies.</b></p>	<p><b>MJ to upload policies to website</b></p>
<b>14. AOB</b>	<p>PW reported that the trust had successfully taken part in a pilot scheme to obtain the School Mark – new Kitemark for Academy Trusts. EMAT had been awarded with the accreditation which demonstrated excellent running of the organisation and services provided.</p> <p>Trustees thoroughly congratulated PW and everybody involved in the exercise completing this achievement.</p> <p><i>Please see confidential minute.</i></p>	<p><b>JC to report at next FHRE</b></p>
<b>15. DONM</b>	<p><b>Dates for the academic year 2021/2022 have been set.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monday 6th December 2021 at 10am</li> <li>• Monday 14th February 2022 at 10am</li> <li>• Monday 21st March 2022 at 10am</li> <li>• Wednesday 8th June 2022 at 10am</li> <li>• Tuesday 12th July 2022 at 10am</li> </ul>	<p><b>Calendar appointments had been sent</b></p>

**The meeting closed at 20.15pm**

**Actions from the FHRE committee meeting 11/10/2021**

Item	Action	Owner
1.	<b>Include new info in Procurement, IT &amp; Estates report</b>	DU
2.	<b>Upload policies to website</b>	MJ
3.	<b>Report progress on confidential item</b>	JC