

Minutes of meeting

Financial Oversight and Risk Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 12 February 2020	Time:	11:00– 13:00
Location:	CEO Office, Birmingham OAT HO	Clerk:	Claire Lovell
Apologies:	Peter Murray , Founding Chair and Trustee		
Present:	Andrew Jones , Trustee and Chair Ian Brookman , Trustee Frances Hall , Trustee	In Attendance:	Nick Hudson , Chief Executive Officer and Trustee Joanne Dawson , National Director of Finance Claire Lovell , Head of Compliance and Reporting Sarah Vout , Head of Finance Sam Thomson , Head of Academy Finance Rob Pritchard , National Director of Education (in part)

	Item	Minutes	Action
1.	Welcome and apologies		
2.	Approval of minutes from previous meeting	The minutes of the meeting on 27 November 2019 were approved.	
3.	Matters arising from previous minutes	The Trustees queried the amount of outstanding issues that are included on the FOR tracker and asked whether they were all achievable. JD stated that a large number of the outstanding points relate to budget issues and should therefore be resolved during the budget process.	
4.	National Director of Finance update	JD outlined the main points from the pre read. The Trustees confirmed their support of integrated planning and the need to make progress with this in order to move towards a more centralised process. JD stated that Curriculum Led Financial Planning (CLFP) involves working with the academies to allow them to deliver what is best for their academy, whilst managing their funding effectively. It was also stated that some academies have advised her that the CLFP process has allowed positive conversations to take place.	
5.	Finance transformation	JD discussed the process surrounding Finance transformation. The move towards the single purchase ledger will generate significant benefits with an impact on all of the cycles, not just the P2P.	

		<p>There is room for improvement around existing processes. The Head Office team are currently reviewing all process and any interlinks between them. It was also noted the impact of Hoge's own development and lack of set structures as a challenge in order to get to best practice. Weaknesses around forecasting were also identified.</p> <p>The Trustees asked whether consideration should be given as to whether moving from 40 to 1 ledgers should be tried on the current system as opposed to adopting a new system.</p> <p>It was agreed that a pilot group would be set up on Hoge in July with the rest of the academies moving over in November, as this works best around the budget cycle. At the end of March, the design phase, the process would be paused to identify the risks and to decide what should be done next. The Trustees asked to see the high-level project plan at the next meeting and queried whether the issue is with Hoge or with Dimens.</p> <p>JD outlined the risks and benefits of working with Hoge. The position is not ideal, but neither is moving to a new supplier at this point.</p> <p>FH joined the meeting during the NFD update.</p> <p>JD went on to discuss the staffing changes in the finance team. JD thanked SV, CL and ST for their work in a time of flux. The team is now complete and the team structure will be reassessed in due course. The Trustees added their thanks.</p>	JD/SV
6.	Performance Review	<p>JD outlined the performance review.</p> <p>The Trustees noted that additional rigour has been added to this process. The inclusion of risks and opportunities gives more comfort around the forecast being achievable.</p> <p>The Trustees noted an improvement in culture towards thinking collectively as a Trust and not as individual academies.</p>	
7.	Reserves plan	<p>The Committee discussed the reserves paper, cash flow and KPIs.</p>	
8.	Budget process	<p>JD advised that normally this would not be brought to FOR, so is for information only.</p> <p>The Trustees stressed the importance of academies identifying ways to generate additional income.</p>	
9.	ESFA checklist	<p>CL outlined the Trust's responses to the checklist and noted where actions are in place or where there are in part answers. Progress has been made and it is noted that there are links with this work and other tasks that are being carried out.</p> <p>The Trustees queried whether this was an annual requirement and JD stated that this was the first time it was completed but that it is expected to become an annual requirement.</p> <p>The Trustees agreed this should be presented to the Board of Trustees.</p>	JD
10.	Growth strategy paper	<p>NH outlined the paper.</p> <p>The committee discussed the optimum MAT size.</p> <p>The Trustees noted the importance of consolidating and improving what we already have, (subject to potential growth in the South and North where academies are spread out) and NH agreed.</p>	

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

		FH queried how far the growth strategy is shared. NH agreed that this should be shared, once feedback is received from the DfE on Thursday.	
11.	Safeguarding	RP summarised the key points of the Safeguarding report. RP then left the meeting.	
12.	Any other business	None.	
Date of next meeting: Wednesday 13 May 2020, location TBC			