

Minutes of meeting

Financial Oversight and Risk Committee

Date:	Wednesday 27 November 2019	Time:	12:00
Location:	RSM, 25 Farringdon Street, London, EC4A 4AB	Clerk:	Claire Lovell Sarah Vout
Apologies:	Peter Murray PM Founding Chair and Trustee Ian Brookman IB Trustee and Chair		
Attendees:	Frances Hall FH Trustee Nick Hudson NH Chief Executive Officer and Trustee Andrew Jones AJ Trustee		
In attendance:	Joanne Dawson JD National Director of Finance Sarah Vout SV Head of Finance Claire Lovell CL Head of Compliance and Reporting Sam Thomson ST Head of Academy Finance (S/E) Rob Pritchard RP National Director of Education (in part) Carmel Brown CB National Director of HR and Operations (by telephone) James Miller JMi National Director of Estates (by telephone)		

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome and apologies	
1.1	Apologies were received from IB.	
2.	Approval of minutes of meetings held on 15 May 2019	
2.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2019 were approved and signed as a true and correct record of the meeting.	
3.	Matters arising	
3.1	The action log in relation to matters arising was reviewed. The Trustees commented on the number of outstanding action points within the FOR tracker and requested an update on how these would be addressed.	

	<p>The Trustees queried the action report on the agency absenteeism. The Executive attendees confirmed this will be looked at by the next meeting.</p> <p>All matters arising had been actioned, were ongoing or formed part of the meeting agenda.</p>	
4.	Financial position of Trust	
4.1	<p>CL and ST presented an overview of the August year end position and provided Trustees with comments by exception.</p> <p>The Trustees commented that there was a larger variance compared with budget in the final year end position, compared with the forecast that was provided in the last set of numbers which were presented to Financial Oversight and Risk committee (FOR).</p> <p>It was concluded that the last report that was submitted to FOR was the March 2019 management accounts at the May 2019 meeting. (Following the meeting it was confirmed that the May 2019 management accounts were presented to the Board in July 2019).</p> <p>It was discussed that although the variance is bigger compared with the March forecast numbers the reasons for this were as a result of a number of specific academy variances. There were also other academies who improved their result from their original forecast in May.</p> <p>It was agreed that the frequency and timing of meetings would be considered going forwards.</p> <p>CL stated that the finance reports are prepared on a monthly basis and should be going to the Chair of the Board for review. The Trustees requested a paper detailing the main reasons behind the movement in the last reported performance review and the final year end position.</p> <p>CL ran through the new format of the spreadsheet and the early identification of risks and opportunities within the academies.</p> <p>Trustees were advised which academies will come in on budget, however the report highlighted to the Trustees areas where there were some issues that still required some resolution.</p> <p>SV outlined the cashflow position and it was confirmed to the Trustees that the cash position is healthy.</p>	
5.	Curriculum Led Financial Planning (CLFP)	
5.1	<p>RP discussed the main headlines surrounding CLFP. In order to increase reserves and invest in self improvement the Trust needs to be able to self-fund. This can be derived in part from CLFP.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed their full support for this process.</p>	
6.	Safeguarding	
6.1	<p>RP advised that the Safeguarding Lead has left OAT and that interim arrangements are in place.</p> <p>The interim arrangements are split into the following areas with the following support:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safeguarding audits to be completed by the regional designated safeguarding leads 2. Advice – the first point of call will be the Regional Directors, who will escalate to RP if and when required 3. Policies – the Head of Governance will sort out the safeguarding policies. <p>Trustees agreed that they were satisfied with the interim arrangements but wanted to know how long they would be in place.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Executive need to have the time to consider the best solution overall for the Trust.</p>	

	<i>(RP then left the meeting)</i>	
7.	RAG rating	
7.1	<p>CL and ST ran through the RAG rating report explaining the basis behind the ratings and where academies had moved from a positive RAG rating to a more negative RAG rating.</p> <p>The Trustees confirmed that they were in agreement with the revised RAG ratings and it was agreed that they would be communicated to the academies.</p> <p>It was discussed that a move towards the financial RAG ratings and the school RAG ratings should be looked at together in order to identify relationships and trends. This will either be considered at the next Financial Oversight and Risk meeting or the next School Improvement meeting.</p>	
8.	Decision framework and scheme of delegation	
8.1	It was discussed that this needs to be reviewed and would be brought back to the next meeting in February 2020.	
9.	Tender process for external audit	
9.1	<p>It was agreed that the Head Office team have a good relationship with the audit partner.</p> <p>Early in the new year (2020) a meeting will be organised with RSM where it will be suggested that the manager is rotated.</p>	
	<i>SV, CL and ST left the meeting. CB and JMi joined the meeting.</i>	
10.	Ops model	
10.1	<p>JD, JMi, NH and CB provided an update on the Ops Model project and presented proposed structures for IT, Estates and Finance (National and Regional).</p> <p>The Trustees commented on the volume of work to be conducted and queried ownership of the full breadth of Governance and Risk management.</p> <p>The latest reserves plan was presented which highlighted the need for integrated planning and operating efficiencies to be delivered in order to deliver both school improvement and a more secure financial position.</p>	
11.	Any other business	
11.1	<p>Update on communication with the ESFA</p> <p>JD stated that there has been no further meetings with the ESFA since the last Financial Oversight and Risk meeting</p>	
12.	Dates of next meetings	
12.1	To be confirmed.	