



**RICHARD HUISH TRUST  
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 5:00pm**

**Virtual meeting via MS Teams**

**Present:** Catherine Christie (Chair)  
Clare Greenslade  
Dominic Lynch

**In Attendance:** Paul Lonsdale (CFO)  
John Abbott (CEO)  
Richard Anderson (IT & Facilities Director)  
Jessica Doyle (Finance Manager)

**Clerk:** Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

**MINUTES**

**Action**

**1. MEETING FORMALITIES**

**FGP  
24/56**

**1.1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The chair welcomed attendees, there were no apologies for absence but a delay in joining the meeting for Dominic Lynch.

**FGP  
24/57**

**1.2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

**FGP  
24/58**

**1.3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from the last meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were approved and the Chair consented for her electronic signature to be used in signing them off.

**FGP  
24/59**

**1.4. MATTERS ARISING**

All matters arising were discussed and were agreed as being complete or updates confirmed as noted on the accompanying paper.

**2. FINANCIAL AND STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE**

**FGP  
24/60**

**2.1. Oversight report, including management accounts, January 2025**

Nursery finances remain an area of focus. The impact of the National Insurance increases will be known from April and the funding impact has been considered. There has not been much change in terms of finances between the December and January reports. The granularity of monitoring by Finance Officers with their headteachers has improved significantly, which has helped with the detail of the reporting. Directors discussed the financial challenges faced by schools with the significant lag in funding for SEND children.

**FGP  
24/61**

**What are the strategic targets for the development of the nurseries?**

There are budgets set for each nursery which include targets for the contribution back to the school. The setting manager and headteacher are responsible for setting targets. The Director of Nurseries, with the executive team, are responsible for oversight and holding nurseries to account for their performance. There is a quality improvement plan for the nurseries which is being monitored for progress.

*DL joined the meeting following a slight delay; no conflicts of interest were noted.*

**Signed:**.....Catherine Christie..... **Date:**...22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.....

Directors discussed the recent monitoring reports for schools.

## 2.2. Financial modelling

**FGP  
24/62** Directors discussed future financial modelling options and projections.

**FGP  
24/63-  
75** The detail of the discussion was agreed to be confidential.

## **FGP 24/76** 2.3. Draft base budget and assumptions for 2025-2026

Uncertainty exists around which parts of the teachers' pay increases will sit with the general annual grant. The forecasts are therefore impacted on, which translates to less reserves being accrued than hoped, but they are still well within reason. The CFO noted that there remains significant uncertainty with regard to when grants will be confirmed, making it extremely challenging to plan ahead.

**FGP  
24/77** Within the planning period there is the tri-annual evaluation of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). It is not expected to have any significant increase for the college but forecasting for this is cautious as it remains uncertain whether this will increase or decrease.

**FGP  
24/78** **When do budget discussions start with academies for 2025-26?**  
This is already underway. The annual grant statements for the schools were received at the end of last week. The reconciliations are underway, and any discrepancies are being investigated.

**FGP  
24/79** **Where are we with meeting the reserves targets?**  
The aim is to get the reserves to 5%; it is clear that this threshold must be met. It is anticipated the threshold will be met by the end of the next financial year.

**FGP  
24/80** Directors noted that income is going up less than costs; savings will need to be made to address this.

Directors agreed they accepted the draft financial budget planning recommendations and assumptions as a basis for the budget.

## **FGP 24/81** 2.4 Benchmarking

Directors noted the submission of the Schools Resource Management and Self-Assessment Checklist (SRMSAC). The CFO highlighted that Huish undertakes a significant amount of benchmarking to understand performance levels. Directors reflected that the benchmarking helps to build the contextual picture for the performance of the trust overall; there do not appear to be any significant areas where there is cause for concern.

**FGP  
24/82** **2.5 Report any novel, contentious or repercussive transactions and consider risk**  
There were no novel, contentious or repercussive transactions to report.

## 3. TRUST INFRASTRUCTURE

### **FGP 24/82** 3.1. Health & Safety (H&S) Report – Term 1 2024/2025

The Director of IT and Estates provided an interim update in addition to the term 1 report including that health and safety inspections are underway, there have been change in site management staff within the trust, training and CPD is being provided for staff with H&S responsibilities. He noted that the fire risk assessment is currently undergoing a major review, as required every 5 years. Cyber risks are included in the H&S reports for

Signed:.....Catherine Christie..... Date:....22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.....

academies, for which there is full compliance across Huish but this is not consistently articulated at a local level.

**FGP  
24/83**

He outlined that due to staff changes that the trust need to ensure there is a qualified person/persons within the trust who has achieved the managing safely accreditation and that a way forward with this is being considered in terms of managing any potential risk.

**FGP  
24/84**

**Why have the termly safety walks been removed?**

There was a capacity issue with the service provider being able to meet this area of the contract, so it was removed on the basis that the other measures are demonstrating confidence with H&S across the board.

**FGP  
24/85**

**3.2 ESFA School Capital Allocation (SCA) Grant**

The CFO noted the allocation has not yet been received; the allocation is expected to increase based on the growth of RHC, Nerrols and Pyrland. The SCA fundable projects for 2025/26 have been compiled with reference to existing condition survey recommendations and H&S/campus security related issues. Directors noted that this has been reviewed in detail previously and that the latest information presents a more focused update. Directors discussed the details of potential areas of work and reasoning for prioritisation of specific projects. The way in which SCA funding is allocated and distributed was discussed, the CFO highlighted the funding is used to meet the priorities of Huish as a whole, rather than the priorities of any individual academy.

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**FGP  
24/86**

**4.1. Any other business**

There was no other business.

**FGP  
24/87**

**4.2. Agenda for next meeting**

Directors noted the agenda.

**FGP  
24/88**

**4.3. Confidential items**

There were confidential items agreed for the minutes and supporting papers.

**FGP  
24/89**

**4.4. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

**Signed:**.....*Catherine Christie*..... **Date:**...22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.....