



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

22nd May 2025 at 5:00pm

Rowan House Committee Room

Present:

Catherine Christie (Chair)
Clare Greenslade
Dominic Lynch

In Attendance:

Paul Lonsdale (CFO)
John Abbott (CEO) – via Teams
Richard Anderson (IT & Facilities Director)
Jessica Doyle (Finance Manager)
Barbara Barratt (Chair of Governors for RHC)
Dave Tomaney (Vice Chair of Governors for RHC)
Emma Fielding (Principal of RHC)

Clerk:

Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

MINUTES

Action

1. MEETING FORMALITIES

This followed item 2.

**FGP
24/212**

1.1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The chair welcomed attendees, there were no apologies for absence.

**FGP
24/213**

1.2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

**FGP
24/214**

1.3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the last meeting on 13th March 2025 were reviewed, with a minor amendment noted, and approved. The Chair consented for her electronic signature to be used in signing them off.

**FGP
24/215**

1.4. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising were discussed and were agreed as being complete or will be brought forward as agenda items to the next meeting.

2. FINANCIAL AND STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE

2.1. Oak House

This item was taken as the first item.

**FGP
24/216**

DT gave an overview in his role of the Chair of the RHC Finance Committee wanted to raise some points of discussion about the finances of the facility. The CFO assured the RHC colleagues that the financial operation of the facility is well understood by the trust; the Chair of the F&GP Committee concurred that it is a regular item of business for the committee.

**FGP
24/217**

The CFO outlined that the profile of recruitment to the facility is closely monitored and to ensure it remains sustainable the processes and policies around this have been reviewed and adjusted as a result.

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FGP 24/218 The committee discussed current and planned occupancy. The Principal of RHC confirmed that she meets with the senior leadership responsible for the facility on a monthly basis to ensure it is closely monitored.

The return on investments in relation to occupancy over the medium and long term were discussed.

FGP 24/219 **Has the staffing model of the boarding house been reviewed?**
The leadership at the college remain responsible for implementing the staffing arrangements. The current staffing model delivers high quality management of the operations of the facility day to day. Efficiencies are made wherever possible. Recruiting staff can be challenging.

FGP 24/220 **What is the approach to marketing of the facility?**
The facility is looking to be full for next year but beyond that there is a need to build an effective marketing strategy moving forwards, which is something that governors have pushed the leadership on. They have sought support in pulling together a marketing strategy.

FGP 24/221 **Is there an alternative plan if there are not enough students recruited in the longer term?**
The alternatives have been considered. A key challenge remains that the facility is leased rather than owned outright.

The Chair thanked RHC colleagues for attending.

RHC colleagues left the meeting

FGP 24/222 Directors agreed it was a helpful discussion and agreed it would help to remain sighted on the overall costs and implications to ensure the efficient management of the provision in the longer term.

2.2. Oversight Report, including Management Accounts for March 2025

This followed item 1.

FGP 24/223 The CFO gave a summary of the report highlighting. There were no new issues of significance to raise in the accounts. Frustrations remain regarding the speed and amount of income to support SEND pupils at schools; this has negatively impacted the schools over time on how they plan and organise support for the children that most need it. This has different implications for impact depending on the composition of the school and numbers of EHCP students.

Directors noted the outturn forecast reserves are moving closer to the expected 5%.

FGP 24/224 **What is the current interest rate on deposits?**
The CFO did not have the details to hand but agreed to circulate them.

FGP 24/225 **Are nurseries accounted for together or separately for each school?**
They are accounted for separately.

FGP 24/226 **2.3. Budget for 2025/2026 – first draft summary**
This was agreed as a confidential minute

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FGP 24/230 **2.4 Overview of iPlicit**
The Finance Manager gave a demonstration of how the new finance system, iPlicit, works. The version used by RHT is specific to the education sector with education specific functionality and reporting embedded. The implementation of the system has gone well and

Signed:....Catherine Christie..... Date:....24/06/2025.....

gives greater capacity for monitoring and oversight. The system is user-friendly and benefits from templates that provide consistency of information when reporting and access to aspects of the system-

FGP 24/231 **2.5 Novel or contentious transactions**
There were no novel or contentious transactions to report.

3. TRUST INFRASTRUCTURE

FGP 24/232 **3.1. Health & Safety update – term 2**
The Director of IT and Facilities tabled a paper in relation to this item. Directors noted the latest updates in relation to the management of health and safety across Huish as detailed in the paper. The latest health and safety reports for the academies are being acted on to ensure any areas for improvement are met.

FGP 24/233 **Has anything arisen that is outside of the budget provision?**
Nothing has arisen in this respect and has been budgeted for. There have been some changes in the coding to ensure this is more accurate. Directors discussed the implications on the budget if there is something that could be raised in a future review that is a surprise in the budget. The CFO assured directors that if the affected academy was unable to meet the cost then alternatives ways of funding a solution would be available.

FGP 24/234 There have been a range of health and safety and related checks this year including an insurance check in relation to RPA, directors noted this and agreed that together this provides a high level of confidence in the quality of health and safety at Huish.

FGP 24/235 **Is there anything of specific concern?**
The H&S arrangements for a H&S lead at Pyrland needs to be reviewed shortly. The H&S lead was the former headteacher, the current Estates Manager has temporarily taken ownership of the H&S action plan, this will need to be reviewed as they will be leaving the school towards the end of the Summer term.

FGP 24/236 **3.2 Capital projects/SCA update**
The Director of IT and Facilities updated the committee with the related paper which included an overview of projects projected for the next three years and details of the related funding that is anticipated.

FGP 24/237 **Is the assessment undertaken every year for the condition data collection?**
Huish engage with the information collection every year, but the external funding assessment is made periodically. The implications of the funding allocations for Pyrland were noted.

FGP 24/238 **For 2025/2026 is there an estates plan set of priorities that was approved and is being worked to?**
This is in place, in addition to the Carbon Reduction Strategy. The limitations of the funding conditions were discussed as the ESFA SCA funding will not fund all aspects of the estates and facilities maintenance.

FGP 24/239 The CFO detailed that planning and compiling the projects is time consuming, in recognition of this a portion of the SCA funding will be drawn to account for this cost internally, this has been cleared as acceptable with Bishop Fleming as the alternative would be to pay an external consultant.

FGP 24/240 **3.3 Insurance arrangements**
The CFO confirmed that insurance arrangements for the schools will remain with the DfE's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) and the college will remain with the commercial insurers. The RPA rate has been increasing over time but remains the best option for the smaller schools for 2025/2026.

Signed:...*Catherine Christie***..... Date:...**24/06/2025**.....**

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**FGP
24/241**

4.1. Any other business
There was no other business.

**FGP
24/242**

4.2. Agenda for next meeting
Directors noted the agenda.

**FGP
24/243**

4.3. Confidential items
Item 2.3 was agreed to be confidential.

**FGP
24/244**

4.4. Date of next meeting
The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 24th June 2025

The meeting closed at 6.55pm

Signed:...*Catherine Christie*..... **Date:**...24/06/2025.....