



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

16th October 2024 at 5:00pm

Virtual via MS Teams

Present: Catherine Christie (Chair)
Dominic Lynch

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

Clerk: Helen Wells

MINUTES

Action

1. MEETING FORMALITIES

- FGP 24/01** **1.1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
The chair welcomed attendees, there were apologies from Clare Greenslade. The meeting was quorate.
- FGP 24/02** **1.2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.
- FGP 24/03** **1.3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes from the last meeting on 27th June 2024 were approved and the Chair consented for her electronic signature to be used in signing them off.
- FGP 24/04** **1.4. MATTERS ARISING**
The matters arising were noted and were agreed as being complete.

2. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- FGP 24/05** **2.1. Oversight Report, including management accounts for August 2024**
The Management Accounts were circulated previously, adjustments and the reasons for them were discussed and noted as being relatively minor.
- FGP 24/06** The financial performance of the nurseries provision across Huish was discussed, including the recent investment into North Curry and how the financial performance of the nursery performs going forwards.
- FGP 24/07** The schools overall had a positive financial performance in 2023/24, if the trajectory continues the trust will be in a good position to achieve the desired reserves level.
- FGP 24/08** **Is there expected to be some further contribution from identified schools to their reserves this year?**
Most academies have improved their reserves position from their financial outturn for the year ended August 24. Lyngford Park and Nerrols have made investments in their estate that has reduced their closing reserves balance, on the back of their in-year financial performance being positive.

Signed:.....Catherine Christie..... **Date:**...5th February 2025.....

FGP 24/09	Directors discussed the approach of the trust with regards to supporting academies where the financial performance is of concern.	
FGP 24/10	The CFO gave an update on the current finance system and the plan to move to a new provider.	
FGP 24/11	2.2. Emerging budget challenges 2024/25 Discussions are underway with the new Director of Nurseries about the financial reporting and monitoring of the nurseries relating to the funding claims and tracking of them once submitted. Investigations are being made to understand the detail behind discrepancies between forecasting and reporting.	
FGP 24/12	Special Educational Needs (SEN) remains an area to improve in terms of tracking more accurately with the schools, directors noted the challenges with how funding comes through in this area.	
FGP 24/13	Is there a register of all Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and their status with the claim? The schools are responsible for managing this, but the consistency of approach is being looked into in more detail with school finance officers working with respective SENDCo's.	
FGP 24/14	Directors discussed the national pay awards for different groups of staff, the detail of which is being worked through at the moment for the purposes of forecasting and budget implications.	
	2.3. Review insurance arrangements	
FGP 24/15	There are no changes planned to the insurance arrangements, the schools will remain with the RPA and the college achieves better value for money through a private provider so will continue with the existing provider.	
	2.4 External auditor planning document	
FGP 24/16	Directors noted the plan.	
	2.5 Progress against strategic driver 3	
FGP 24/17	The CFO gave an update on progress in meeting strategic driver 3 which relates to the remit of the committee. The latest plan is for 2023-2027 and is progressing well in all areas at this point. It was noted that Huish continue to perform well when using financial benchmarking tools in the sector.	
FGP 24/18	What are the plans to address the artificial intelligence (AI) agenda within Huish? The committee discussed the current approach to information learning technology and how AI fits into this approach, along with some work that has already been undertaken and is planned by the college in this area. Directors emphasised the importance of having a strategic approach to AI.	
	ACTION: Consider the development of a strategic approach to AI for Huish and how that relates with central functions and the needs of teaching and learning at the schools/college.	CFO
FGP 24/19	2.6 Report any novel or contentious transactions and consider risk There were no novel or contentious transactions to report.	

Signed:.....Catherine Christie..... Date:...5th February 2025.....

3. TRUST INFRASTRUCTURE

FGP
24/20

3.1. School condition grant works (ESFA grant) and capital projects update

The Director of IT and Facilities gave a detailed overview of the works undertaken over the summer break across the group. Directors suggested sharing the same presentation with LGBs to help illustrate the breadth and quality of works that have been achieved across Huish.

FGP
24/21

3.2 Estates strategy update

This is the final year of the current strategy and the final elements that need to be progressed are being looked at closely. A new strategy is being developed to take the trust through to 2028 which will be available to the committee in the summer term for approval by the board later in that term.

FGP
24/22

3.3 Health & Safety update

Educating Safely will perform a trust wide audit and report on an ongoing basis to monitor compliance with a schedule of audits that have been agreed. Updates from schools regarding progress in meeting actions identified at the last audit round were noted and are still being gathered following the start of term. Directors noted that it is helpful to have oversight of the report.

4. COMMITTEE MATTERS/POLICIES

FGP
24/23

4.1. Committee report for 2023/2024

Directors agreed the content of the report summarising the activities of the committee last year.

APPROVED: Directors approved the committee's annual report and recommended it to be adopted by the board.

FGP
24/24

4.2 Latest version of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) and implications

Directors noted the latest version of the ATH and implications for the committee to monitor this year.

FGP
24/25

4.3 Financial Regulations

Directors noted the proposed changes to the regulations and key points within them.

RECOMMENDATION: Directors recommended the approval of the Financial Regulations to the Trust Board.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

FGP
24/26

5.1. Any other business

There was no other business.

FGP
24/27

5.2. Agenda for next meeting

Directors noted the agenda which is for the joint committee with the Audit & Risk Committee and auditors.

FGP
24/28

5.3. Confidential items

There were no confidential items.

FGP
24/30

5.4. Date of next meeting

The date of future meetings were noted.

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

Signed:.....Catherine Christie..... Date:....5th February 2025.....