



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 12 March 2025 at 6.00 pm

Venue: Large Conference Room, Fambridge Road

Present:

Mr T Bailey	(TB)	Trustee, Chair of Finance & Premises Committee
Ms J Ellum	(JE)	Trustee
Mrs L Jones	(LJ)	Trustee
Mr M Howell	(MH)	Trustee, Health and Safety Link

In attendance

Mr T Baster	(TBA)	Joint Head of Academy
Mrs R Clark	(RCL)	Joint Head of Academy
Mrs K Redmond	(KRE)	Clerk to Trustees (Governance Professional)
Mr R Scott	(RSC)	Director of Finance & Premises

Apologies:

Mrs E Crees	(EC)	Trustee
Ms S Robinson	(SR)	Trustee, Vice-Chair of Finance & Premises Committee

This group was quorate for the purpose of resolutions

Item	Topic	Minute
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were NOTED.
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting	Minutes of the previous Finance & Premises Committee meeting held on 20 November 2024 were APPROVED unanimously.
3.	Matters Arising	Trustees NOTED: 06.03.24 - item 11.2: a reminder had been sent to those Trustees who had not yet completed GDPR training. 20.11.24 – item 7: cyber security insurance was now in place. 20.11.24 – item 10.2: an Amazon account was now in place. 20.11.24 – item 12: CCTV cameras had been audited and there had been wholesale replacement across both campuses. All other Matters Arising were covered by the agenda or had been completed.
4.	Notification of Any Other Business	There were no matters of Any Other Business
5.	Declaration of Business Interests	There were no new declarations of business interests and no Trustee recorded any conflict of interest with the items on the agenda or the receipt or giving of any gifts or hospitality since the last meeting.
6.	Summary of actions taken since the autumn term	There were no actions to report since the last meeting.

7.	Strategic Development	<p>a) Academy Expansion</p> <p>Trustees NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. building work at Mill Road Campus (MRC) had commenced in January 2025. The project was currently on track and on budget with no issues found so far ii. savings of £165k had been identified which will fund the MRC netball courts iii. repairs will be made to any disturbed areas of tarmac on the primary school site close to the MRC boundary iv. the work at Fambridge Road Campus (FRC) will begin at Easter rather than June 2025 which will reduce the impact on stakeholders v. temporary car parking arrangements at FRC during the building works. The car park will be closed for community use at weekends. <p>b) Primrose Meadow</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that RSC had met with Sport England and Essex Housing to discuss Primrose Meadow's current use as a sports field and options from Sport England to mitigate against the loss of the field and the lack of artificial pitches in Maldon.</p> <p>Trustees requested that RSC investigate options for providing alternative sporting facilities including costs and planning requirements</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p> <p>c) <i>Confidential item</i></p>
8.	Finance Report	<p>1. Trustees REVIEWED the Management Accounts (month 5) and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) analysis.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that a proposal to increase the cost of school dinners will be submitted at the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p> <p>2. Update on Three Year Budget Summary</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the three year budget plan presumed a carry forward of £89,211. There were planned efficiencies in years two and three to reach a break even position. There would be additional income in 2027/28 due to increased student numbers but this would be balanced against the possibility of requiring more teaching staff.</p> <p>3. School Resource Management Self-Assessment (SRMSA)</p> <p>Trustees REVIEWED the SRMSA and were advised that RSC had met with SR to review the responses to prepare for submission by the deadline of 14 March 2025. Trustees NOTED that an action plan will be created from the answers provided.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p>

		<p>4. Benchmarking</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that the DfE benchmarking website had been updated with last year's data and a report will be provided for the next meeting Benchmark pupil and workforce data - Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool - GOV.UK</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action TB/SR/RSC</p> <p>5. External Audit Update</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that a system was now in place to address the control measure of significant weakness in bank reconciliations and physical signatures. RSC confirmed that he now signed all bank reconciliations and this was documented.</p> <p>6. Gifts & Hospitality Register</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that there had been two declared gifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. £10 Marks & Spencer voucher from Bidfood which was used to purchase biscuits for the staff room ii. £40 Amazon voucher which was used to purchase equipment for the mathematics department. <p>7. Academy Trust Handbook – Schedule of 'Musts'</p> <p>RSC confirmed that the academy was compliant with all requirements.</p> <p>8. Academies Planning Calendar 2024/25</p> <p>RSC confirmed that the academy was compliant with all requirements. The calendar will be added as an appendix to the Terms of Reference for this committee.</p> <p>9. Academy Trust Handbook</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the main changes from September 2024</p> <p>10. Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Letters to Accounting Officers dated 31 July and 11 September 2024</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the content of both letters.</p> <p>11. Analysis of current reserves</p> <p>Trustees REVIEWED the current reserves and requested that the proposed allocation of reserves be RAG rated, categorised and annotated as whether actual or estimated costs. Trustees also requested that a Reserves Policy be drafted for approval.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that the priority spend will be for fire doors and electrical works should the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids be unsuccessful.</p>
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9.	Health & Safety update	<p>Trustees RECEIVED the minutes of the Health & Safety Committee dated 21 November 2024 and 30 January 2025.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that there had been one RIDDOR reportable incident following an accident in the canteen. RSC confirmed that the incident had been recorded on Handsam.</p>
10.	Premises	<p>a) Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the draft Asset Management Strategy and proposals which were reviewed monthly by MH, SR and RSC to address key priorities. The action points will be RAG rated and submitted for approval at the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p> <p>b) CIF bids</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED an update for 2022/23 and 2023/24 projects and were advised that the academy was awaiting the outcome of the bids submitted for the FRC sports changing room roof and the electrical distribution board & wiring update.</p> <p>c) Minibus procurement</p> <p>Trustees RECEIVED a rationale and proposal to purchase or lease a minibus for student transport to fixtures and activities.</p> <p>Trustees AGREED to seek charitable donations or sponsorships in the first instance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action TB/RSC</p>
11.	Risk	<p>a) Risk Register</p> <p>Trustees REVIEWED the current Risk Register and agreed that no changes were required.</p> <p>b) Risk Management</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that the Risk Management Policy was in draft for approval at the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action MH/RSC</p> <p>c) Fire Risk Assessment report</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the updated report and action plan. A professional company had conducted a full site survey and review of both sites. The next steps were to create an action plan to identify how to mitigate against identified risks for the next meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p>

		<p>d) Internal Audit</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the resignation of the Responsible Officer and thanked him for his service to the academy.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that RSC was liaising with external auditors regarding next steps.</p> <p>Trustees AGREED that a short term solution must be found within next the six weeks to conduct a visit by the end of the academic year and to then agree the approach for 2025/26.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p>
12	Policies	<p>Trustees NOTED the following policies were not available for review and will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Data Protection & Freedom of Information b) Accessibility Plan c) CCTV d) Premises Management <p style="text-align: right;">Action RSC</p>
13	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	<p>a) Trustees NOTED that there had been three GDPR breaches reported in this academic year and none had reached the threshold for reporting to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that there had been four Subject Access Requests (SAR) relating to SEND student files and all had been responded to. There was a system in place to record each request.</p> <p>b) Trustees NOTED that there had been no Freedom of Information requests.</p> <p>c) Data Protection training</p> <p>Trustees NOTED a reminder had been sent to all those Trustees who had yet to complete the training.</p>
14	Trustee monitoring	<p>Trustees RECEIVED the following monitoring reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Data Protection, Cyber and Information & Communications Technology b) Finance.
15	Any Other Business	There were no matters of Any Other Business.
16	Confirmation of confidential items for the minutes	Item 3.1 and 7c
17	Date of next meetings	11 June 2025

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

Actions

Date of Meeting/ Item number	Topic	Minute
12.03.25 – item 7b	Primrose Meadow	RSC to investigate options for providing alternative sporting facilities including costs and planning requirements with the loss of Primrose Meadow
12.03.25 – item 8.1	School dinners	RSC to submit a proposal to increase the cost of school dinners at the next meeting.
12.03.25 – item 8.3	SRMSA action plan	School Resource Management Self-Assessment action plan to be created
12.03.24 - item 8.4	Benchmarking report	Benchmarking report to be provided for the next meeting
12.03.24 – item 8.11	Reserves Policy	Reserves Policy be drafted for approval.
12.03.25 - item 10a	Asset Management Strategy	Proposals to be RAG rated and submitted for approval at the next meeting.
12.03.25 – item 10b	Minibus procurement	Trustees to seek charitable donations or sponsorships in the first instance for a new minibus.
12.03.25 – item 11b	Risk Management Policy	Risk Management Policy to be submitted for approval at the next meeting.
12.03.25 – item 11c	Fire Risk Assessment report	RSC to create an action plan to identify how to mitigate against identified risks for the next meeting
12.03.25 – item 11d	Internal Audit	RSC to identify a short term solution to conduct a visit by the end of the academic year and to then agree the approach for 2025/26 at the next meeting.
12.03.25 – item 12	Policies	The following policies to be submitted to BoT for approval on 02.04.25: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data Protection & Freedom of Information 2. Accessibility Plan 3. CCTV 4. Premises Management