

Operations Committee Meeting Minutes

Date/Time	07/06/2017 15:00	
Invitees	Jodie Croft, CEO and Andy Collings, Director of Finance, Dr Harry Ziman Chair of the Trust Board, Joe Garrod Director of H&S	
Apologies	Joe Garrod	
<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Action</b>
1. Review of last meeting's minutes	<p>The minutes were reviewed and approved.</p> <p>Outcomes of action points:</p> <p>BFRO submitted on time (May 19 2017)</p> <p>JC requested additional £70k of PDG in relation to the deferral of KPA to 2019 – awaiting outcome</p> <p>TPA external works taking place Summer 2017 following delay in funding from EFA</p>	<p>JC to obtain written comfort from OCC re outstanding building/remedial works at DPA</p>
2. School Annual budget 17/18– pre approval	<p>TPA showing a healthy surplus for 2017/18 – JC warned this could evaporate if a 6<sup>th</sup> teacher is required.</p> <p>The committee agreed that the 17/18 budgets look achievable, demonstrate value for money and cover statutory requirements</p> <p>AC/HZ asked JC to balance the GLT budget in light of the KPA deferral. This could be done by factoring in further PDG or by increasing top slice.</p> <p>AC asked JC to recover legal costs for the Hatching Dragons contract from TPA in 17/18</p> <p>The committee are happy to recommend the budgets for full board approval on the basis above.</p>	<p>JC to present balanced GLT budget to the GLT board 20 June 2017</p>
3. GEMS Kingston Primary Academy deferral	<p>JC explained the reasons ESFA have given for deferral. JG and JC both challenged this decision but the project has to be deferred to Sept 2019. The process is out of the Trust's hands. The comments below are from Paul Mustow, Divisional Director - Free Schools Capital</p>	<p>JC to 'request' deferral of KPT from sept 2018 to sept 2019 on behalf of GLT</p>

	<p><b>Education &amp; Skills Funding Agency</b></p> <p>The project team has carefully reviewed the possibility of temporary accommodation on the permanent site and unfortunately it is just not feasible to do so in a safe manner. The main issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The tight nature of the site means there would be limited outside space shared between an occupied school and fully operational building site for a period of at least 8 months;</li> <li>- Health and safety considerations to the children, staff and daily operational matters as a result of being closely surrounded by and being beneath the fully operational construction site;</li> <li>- Noise and dust implications as a result of the construction site operations affecting school operations;</li> <li>- Increased traffic to and from the site shared between construction activities and staff/parents.</li> </ul> <p>As such, we do not consider that a safe method of opening and operating the school can be safely achieved in September 2018 on the permanent site.</p> <p>In order to look at all possibilities, we commissioned LocatED to look again to see if any other suitable temporary sites could be found. One was identified in February, but as it was over 2 miles away it was understandably felt to be unsuitable.</p> <p>With no further temporary options available, the project team is concentrating on getting the permanent site ready for occupation in September 2019.</p> <p>The scheme has taken longer to design and get planning approval than initially anticipated, due primarily to a redesign required to address flood risks raised by the Environment Agency. The planning process is underway. A number of issues have been raised which either have been, or are in the process of being addressed; but we are optimistic that we will have a decision in July. Final approval will be later once the S106 has been agreed, but we will issue the Invitations to Tender to run in parallel with this process.</p>	
<p>4. EOYC completion</p>	<p>Unaudited EOYC certificates are to be submitted by 9<sup>th</sup> July</p> <p>JC queried whether she needs to sin EOYC for LGPS. AC confirmed not.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>5. Management accounts</p>	<p>The committee noted that the large surplus achieved by DPA in 16/17 is due to the early draw down of POG. They recommend spreading the POG back over the next 6 years as is the case for most schools during pre-opening phase.</p>	<p>JC to adjust 17/18 DPA budget to reflect 6 years of draw down of POG rather than 3.</p>
<p>6. Staff contracts</p>	<p>JC to roll out new staff contracts for existing staff over summer 2017 with support from Strictly Education</p>	<p>JC to roll out new staff contracts for existing staff over summer 2017 with support from Strictly Education</p>
<p>7. RSC Regional Growth Fund Grant application – feedback</p>	<p>JC reported reasons for refusal of our grant request early 2017:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We did not submit plans for taking failing schools into the trust</li> <li>2. We did not submit plans for new schools in any of the DfE priority areas</li> </ol>	<p>HZ requested a review of GLT development priorities at next full board meeting 20/06/2017 in light of previous 2 years performance data from</p>

	<p>3. We are not seen as financially supported by the GEMS group</p> <p>4. It is understood that the lack of funds in the centre keep the Trust lean and unable to provide much more in the way of services to our academies</p>	TPA and last year from DPA.
8. Internal audit process	<p>Internal auditors have yet to provide their report. JC noted the following matters arising during the audit process</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. NQTS weren't automatically enrolled in TPS – JC needs to trigger process for all NQTS in the future.</li> <li>2. Auditor requested data disaster recover policy – GLT yet to develop</li> </ol>	<p>AC to send JC new starter check list for pensions/HR matters</p> <p>AC to send JC data disaster recovery policy exemplar if he has one</p> <p>JC to check out current back up procedures for data at TPA, DPA and GLT</p>
9. Data Protection changes	HZ alerted the committee to new procedures required in the handling of data	JC to review policy in light of new changes – time frame 1 year to implement
10. Disaster recovery policy	See item 8.	
11. Review of EFA capital funding and procurement	<p>JC noted following procurement exercises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tender for phase 3 at TPA. Reds10 came in at £62k DFE at £89k Spotted Penguin – no quote submitted  Reds10 selected on price and quality of service</li> <li>2. Tender for external play equipment at DPA. Sovereign playgrounds: £36,000 Playdale - no quote provided Schoolscape - came in at £30 000 but had not listened to the brief Handmade Places - £86 000 Playforce £35 000 - preferred supplier - listened to the brief, fully covered.</li> <li>3. Tender for electronic car park gates at TPA City Axis - £12,500 – selected on quality of service – JC requested to lower price to match ones below. Barriers Direct £10866 First Fence - £10,747.00</li> </ol>	

12. Review Risk Register	The committee reviewed the register and amended some of the review dates. The committee agreed on the nature of the risks captured and on the strategies implemented to manage them.	
13. Approval for invoices over £10k – Business Rates	None. AC to check whether Business Rates need full board approval if over £50k	
14. Aob – Pay policy Any items for board agenda?	JC to review pay policy and present to board for approval. HZ insisted it must have no automatic rights for pay increments, any pay award must be based on performance  HZ requested a skills development strategy for developing talent within the organisation. JC confirmed that this is taking place but perhaps not recorded in a policy.	JC to review pay policy and present to board for approval 20/6/17  JC to ask TDQ to review our talent management and retention strategies and to record in an existing policy
Papers	Minutes of last meeting Management accounts TPA, DPA, GLT Risk register Budgets GLT, DPA, TPA Benchmarking exercise	

## Operations Committee Remit

### Financial monitoring

- Keep the GEMS Learning Trust's budget and finance schemes under regular review
- Ensure that the GEMS Learning Trust represents good value for money for the Academies;
- Authorise the award of contracts and payments up to the amount stated in the Scheme of Delegation
- Oversee procurement to ensure that value for money and internal efficiency gains are realised through collective purchasing and contracting and ensure compliance with procurement policies;
- Review financial policies; whistleblowing, lettings, LGPS Discretions, Expenses,
- Monitor and review Trust wide contracts
- Oversee bank and banking procedures
- Scrutinise and approve on behalf of the Board each academy's detailed annual budget, review annually plans to address identified over or underspends to the Board in line with academy priorities;
- Agree the scheme of financial delegation to trust academies and review this annually

### Compliance

- Ensure financial and procedural compliance with the Academies Handbook and Funding Agreements including reporting to the EFA;
- Prepare on behalf of The Trust Board the Governance Statement and Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance (by 31<sup>st</sup> December).
- Ensure that each Academy has suitably trained staff for the operation of financial systems;
- Ensure that annual accounts are accurate

### Premises

- Ensure that maintenance, decoration, and equipment/furniture renewal is planned and budgeted for
- Consider and determine the need for capital works at the academy, in line with academy development plans;
- Oversee Asset Management and review the use of academy premises, the equipment and resources and ensure they match the requirements of the academies' priorities;

### Audit

- Appoint the internal audit officer (Responsible Officer) and respond to their audit findings and recommendations
- Appoint the external auditor and assess independence of the external auditor, ensuring that key audit personnel are rotated at appropriate intervals.
- Approve the audit fees and pre-approve any fees in excess of £10,000 in respect of non-audit services provided by the external auditor and to ensure that the provision of non-audit services does not impair the external auditors' independence or objectivity.
- Discuss with the external auditor the nature and scope of each forthcoming audit and to ensure that the external auditor receives the fullest co-operation.
- Review the external auditor's annual management letter and all other reports and recommendations, together with the appropriateness of management's response.

- Review the performance of the external auditor on an annual basis.
- Review and consider the circumstances surrounding any resignation or dismissal of the external auditor.
- Receive the annual report from the GEMS Learning Trust's auditors and take the appropriate actions to respond positively to any recommendations;
- Monitor compliance with approved financial procedures and consider action required as a result of internal and external audit report;

## **Human Resources**

- Support with the appointment of academy Principals and members of the senior leadership team; to advise on procedures for staff appointments excluding Principals and Vice Principals;
- Support in relation to staff grievance, discipline or dismissal
- Advise on legal requirements and procedures relating to personnel issues;
- Assist in the development of all of the Trust's policies and procedures relating to personnel matters, including:
  - Performance management/Appraisal
  - General terms and conditions of employment
  - Pay and Pension
  - Leave of absence; maternity, paternity, sickness
  - Capability, Discipline and Grievance
  - Safer Recruitment
  - Equality
- Assist with and advise on salary reviews/pay matters related to performance on an annual basis;
- Act as a first appeals body as appropriate in relation to pay decisions.

