

### Operations Committee Minutes

<b>Date/Time</b>	27/09/2017 12pm-1pm	
<b>Present</b>	Jodie Croft, Andy Collings, Danielle West, Joe Garrod	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Points of discussion</b>	<b>Questions asked/outcome</b>
<b>1. Appoint the Chair</b>	DW kindly offered to chair the operations committee	Agreed by all
<b>2. Approve last meeting's minutes</b>	The committee reviewed the minutes of the last meeting.	The minutes were approved.
<b>3. Review Bank Signatories</b>	JC requested removal of PHA and VP (due to resignation) and to add HJZ, BG and KS	Agreed by all
<b>4. Review capital expenditure and procurement</b>	<p><b>Didcot Primary Academy</b>            FFE £60,301 spent (£4,399 remaining)            ICT £22,177 spent (£48,921 remaining)            JC confident the school is fully furnished and remaining ICT budget will cover the rest of the school's requirements</p> <p><b>Twickenham Primary Academy</b>            FFE £43, 235 spent (£121, 668 remaining)            ICT £14,525 spent (£120, 536 remaining)            Construction £571, 100 spent (£97,888 remaining)            JC signed off final construction works with ESFA in September and confident the remaining budget will cover the rest of the school's requirements.</p>	<p>Noted by the committee</p> <p>AC commented that schools should be aware of the Condition Improvement Fund in due course.</p> <p>JC noted if there are surpluses in capital funds the schools must plan refreshes for ICT and FFE in long term budgets</p>
<b>5. Review finance manual and scheme of delegation (nb Business rates procedure)</b>	The committee discussed how to approve business rates invoices over £50k and agreed that if the sums are in the annual budget and covered entirely by expected income then they are pre-approved by the full board	<p>Approved by the committee</p> <p>DW requested for clarity over who fills each financial role in the Finance manual</p> <p>AC requested the Finance Manual reflect the latest changes to the AFH 2017</p>

<p><b>6. Review risk register</b></p>	<p>JC discussed risk of deficit budget in 17/18 at Twickenham due to low pupil numbers in Reception. The school took the decision to hire two teachers for two small classes of 17 to avoid parents withdrawing their children and possible legal problems if we have a class of 32 and refuse entry to any children transferring in-year. The additional teacher is from a supply agency so can have employment ended if the numbers drop below 30</p> <p>JC noted that although Kingston Primary Academy has now secured planning permission the project remains at risk of not completing in time for opening if the tender for the building contractor is delayed.</p> <p>JC commented on continually late management accounts which present a risk to tight financial control</p>	<p>The committee noted the risk and are happy with the mitigating strategy to avoid a potential deficit.</p> <p>AC noted that the EFA might help as well with an advance of GAG or a longer payment period for any PNA.</p> <p>JG requested a programme schedule from LocatEd and to join the KIT meetings when they commence. He requested information as to which framework the contractor will be selected from.</p> <p>The committee agreed that all other risks are captured on the risk register and should remain under review as planned.</p> <p>JC suggested that if the Trust is successfully awarded additional PDG that it would be prudent to hire a part time in-house accountant. This was agreed by all.</p>
<p><b>7. Review internal audit report</b></p>	<p>UHY has not yet issued their internal audit report and recommendations despite months of chasing by JC.</p> <p>JC confident that any issues arising from the audit process became immediately apparent and steps have been taken to deal with them and prevent them from reoccurring.</p>	<p>AC and DW requested that the internal audit be carried out by a different company in 17/18 (as recommended by UHY as well) to eradicate any potential conflicts</p>
<p><b>8. Dates for external audit pre-meeting</b></p>	<p>JC held a pre-audit meeting with UHY on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and is prepared for the full audit on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October</p>	<p>Noted by the committee.</p>
<p><b>9. Approve pay policy</b></p>	<p>JC noted she has responded to comments raised by DW in her review of the pay policy and has added a section on performance related pay for support staff.</p>	<p>DW asked if our conditions are competitive for support staff in comparison with other schools. JC noted that our standard working week is 35 hours compared with 37.5 in maintained schools</p>

		and that it is better for staff management and development.  The committee agreed and approved the pay policy.
<b>10. Approve sickness and absence policy</b>	DW and JG noted they had made some comments they would like circulated before the policy is approved	JC to amend policy as required and circulate to the committee for approval by email
<b>11. Approve Data Protection policy</b>	JC noted that the new policy reflects changes to data protection law and needs to be implemented by May 2018. The trust needs to ensure the newly appointed DPO is adequately trained to implement and manage the changes	DW requested that the governor handbook and school induction processes reflect the new data protection requirements on schools.  The committee approved the data protection policy.
<b>12. Review 17/18 budget changes</b>	JC noted two large changes to the 17/18 annual budgets:  <b>Didcot Primary Academy</b> The POG is spread back over 3 years rather than 6 to cover the cost of bringing forward the appointment of two teaching assistants to 17/18  <b>Twickenham Primary Academy</b> The school is hiring a second reception teacher from an agency in reflection to the scenario in item 6 above	The committee noted and approved the changes to the annual budgets
<b>13. Review impact of Pupil and Sports Premium expenditure 16/17 and 17/18 plans</b>	JC requested that this item be removed from the remit of the Operations Committee to the remit of the Standards Committee where they are better placed to discuss the impact of the resource on attainment	Agreed by the committee
<b>14. Barclays sort code change</b>	JC commented that the GLT bank account is undergoing a sort code change and that she will ensure this is rolled out successfully.	Noted by the committee
<b>15. Hatching Dragons Lease TPA</b>	JC commended that the ESFA has given approval for a 4 year sub-let of premises at	AC asked how their numbers are looking and urged for the school to

	TPA to Hatching Dragons. The nursery has opened and are working well with the school	support their growth as it may also be an option to sublet premises in the new Kingston school
<b>16. Building works TPA &amp; DPA</b>	<p>JC noted the following progress:</p> <p><b>Didcot Primary Academy</b> Substantial remedial works took place over the summer but there are still many defects to remedy. The full 125 year lease will not be signed until they are complete. JC to monitor progress until complete.</p> <p><b>Twickenham Primary Academy</b> Asbestos has been found in the external brick planters and safely contained. It presents no risk to children or staff. City Axis are appealing the planning condition to reduce the impact of the noise during external playtimes as they believe the target is unattainable. Decision not yet known</p>	Noted by the committee
<b>17. Health and Safety audits 17/18</b>	JG commented that it would be better for staff members at the school to conduct the audit and for him to meet with the schools staff to discuss the report findings and make recommendations	JG requested that the premises manager at Didcot conduct the survey at Didcot and Twickenham and meet with him to discuss findings and recommendations
<b>18. Approval of KPA and timeline for opening</b>	<p>As discussed in item 6</p> <p>JC noted challenges of the site in terms of no staff parking</p>	DW agreed that it would be an incentive to offer senior staff a car park allowance if affordable.
<b>19. AOB</b>	Date for next meeting 22/11/17 – focus on external committee	Noted by all.

## 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;

### Risk management

- Ensure that a framework is established and maintained for the identification and management of risk; finance, staffing, standards, reputation etc.
- Intervene quickly and effectively when required

### 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.

### **Health and Safety**

- Ensure that the Trust complies with statutory requirements for the management of Health and Safety;
- Approve and monitor Health and Safety and Accessibility policies
- Receive and consider any reports and audits completed by Health and Safety officers and Trustees from annual inspection of each Academy, and monitor recommendations

