

**Minutes of Operations Committee
GEMS LEARNING TRUST**

Tuesday 23rd June 10am

Attendees	Role
Jodie Croft	CEO
Danielle West	Director, Chair
Jason Murphy	Director
Rowena Duff	Director

Item	Agenda	Questions/Comments	Action
1	Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed the committee. There were no apologies.	
2	Review of last meeting's minutes and arising matters not on today's agenda	<p>The minutes were reviewed and approved.</p> <p>JC noted an intention to move forward with re-brand and will update the committee with cost comparison and strategy in due course. JC noted intention was to avoid opening a 4th school under the GEMS brand and that shortens the window to 1 year from now. JC will consult the full board before starting the rebrand process.</p> <p>DW noted her resignation from GEMS and her intention to remain with GLT as an independent member in the future. JC confirmed this was possible and that her term of office is not due to end until 2021. JC noted under the re-brand there would be no requirement for a GEMS nominated director.</p>	JC to add GLT re-brand to Full board agenda.
3	Recommendation of approval for Academy Budgets	JC noted implication of Harpur Vs Brazel court action August 2019 in relation to support staff pay. Both TPA and DPA to update budgets with implications of ruling for 2019/20 accounts and 20/21 forecast budget. Annual leave no longer to be pro-rated. Support staff entitled to 5.6 weeks paid leave regardless of weeks worked per annum. Cost implication circa £10k for 19/20 DPA and £7k for TPA. All support staff to	JC to issue amended WPA, DPA and TPA budgets with cost of Brazel ruling to Operations Committee for review before recommending approval to full board.

		<p>receive back pay for the additional entitlement from September 1st 2019.</p> <p>RD asked whether the financial impact of COVID-19 had been included in 19/20 budgets and whether any adjustment was needed for 20/21 budgets, especially in light of shielded staff unable to come to work.</p> <p>JC noted all budgets had been reduced in terms of expected additional income for 19/20 and slightly reduced catering costs. JC noted only 1 member of staff shielding and off work. JC checked to see whether an ongoing absence would be covered by absence insurance. UPDATE – shielding staff now returning to work and reason for shielding is no longer applicable.</p> <p>JC noted budgets do not yet include promised additional funding to support children to catch up due to missed schooling. This will be added when amounts confirmed by DFE.</p> <p>DW asked whether there was an increase in PPE costs due to COVID-19.</p> <p>JC confirmed additional cost minimal as schools not advised to wear full PPE. UPDATE: OCC have issued free PPE to all schools in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>JM asked whether schools are continuing to purchase expensive absence insurance.</p> <p>UPDATE – JC noted DPA setting aside £10k to cover staff absence and not purchasing insurance, TPA purchasing cover at a cost of £9k for 20/21.</p> <p>RD asked for a rationale in the changes in job descriptions in the GLT budget. JC confirmed that the forecast budget allowed for changes in job types including the Director of Education role, the Trust Business Manager role and the Trust Clerk role.</p> <p>RD asked why SEND funding drops after 20/21 at DPA. JC confirmed that the LA reviews funding annually so we base some funding on indicative amounts and some on confirmed amounts.</p> <p>RD asked for clarification as to why 19/20 is still showing on TPA and GLT financial</p>	<p>JC to issue back payments to support staff with adjusted annual leave entitlement from September 2019</p>
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		<p>forecasts. JC confirmed just a technical hitch with the software and that it will get pulled through and updated in due course. JC confirmed the requirement for schools is a 3 year financial forecast so nothing is amiss.</p> <p>JM asked why TPA has allocated £50k to agency staff in 20/21 and then it drops the year thereafter. JC confirmed TPA have hired an agency teacher and will pay through the agency for 1 year to avoid expensive agency fees. The staff budget is reduced accordingly.</p> <p>JM asked whether pension deficits will impact our revenue budgets. JC confirmed that our pension contribution rates are set in line with our deficit. Deficits can change for external factors too but the school will not need to make any other adjustment other than recommended employer contribution amounts. DPA LGPS has a reduced contribution rate from 01/04/2020 from 19.4% to 18% and TPAs remains the same at 24%</p>	
4	Review ICT Continuity and Recovery Policy	JM asked whether the ICT Continuity and Recovery Policy ensures compliance with GDPR. JC confirmed both schools use GDPRIS which records how external software backs up and holds our data securely. GLT schools now using DPIA to ensure any new software is GDPR compliant before purchasing.	ICT Continuity and Recovery Policy Approved
5	Report on internal audits	The committee reviewed the action points from the internal audit 2020 and noted they were minor. JC noted thorough and professional audit carried out by UHY. JC noted internal audits should no longer be carried out by external firms of auditors to ensure more independence. JC noted external audit being tendered for 19/20 and possibly to continue with UHY as internal auditors for 20/21 due to value for money.	
6	Review Directors Expenses and Finance Manual	<p>DW asked whether we have limits on how much mileage directors can claim for. JC confirmed not and would ensure the expenses budget could come with the amount of travel expenses incurred by directors who live further away to ensure affordability.</p> <p>JC encouraged all directors to claim for mileage as it is budgeted for and there is no expectation for directors to bear the cost personally.</p>	Directors expenses policy and Finance Manual were approved

7	Asset management and capacity review	<p>JC noted all assets have been logged into new software system – Parago and lifecycles have been estimated. Both schools now have an indication of the total cost of replacement for ICT and FFE. Both DPA and TPA have budgeted for refresh and replacement at a percentage of 5% FFE total replacement cost and 10% ICT total replacement cost. RD asked whether this was enough for ICT? JC confirmed both schools have additional budget for new ICT too. RD suggested unspent budgets should accumulate to cover the likelihood of replacing expensive laptops/student devices in years to come. JC noted both schools to develop a policy to accompany the asset management data.</p>	<p>GLT to develop an asset management policy to encompass strategies and economies of replacing and refreshing school assets, as well as maintenance of other items such as boilers, central heating, alarm systems etc.</p>
8	Review of EFA capital funding and procurement	<p>JC noted DFC grant awarded for 20/21 financial year, with a 3-year limit for spending on repairs, refurbishment and improvements: TPA £6,103 DPA £7,051</p>	
9	Management Accounts – receive	<p>The Committee received management accounts and financial reports for May 2020.</p> <p>JC noted 2nd PNA of £31,290.45 due to large in-year expansion in pupil numbers. JC added that it is rare to be awarded 2 PNA payments in one academic year so this is good news for TPA.</p> <p>JC noted DPA now predicting a non-deficit position for 19/20 and GLT reporting a slightly reduced position in relation to the removal of the Employers National Insurance allowance of £3k</p>	
10	Review and approve expenditure over £10k	<p>WPA FFE Tender – Findel selected based on price and accuracy of meeting our brief. No need for full board approval as matched by capital income from OCC</p> <p>WPA Catering Tender – Edwards and Ward selected based on price and good service across both DPA and TPA</p>	
11	Review of Trust Premises	<p>DPA update – some major works complete and underway. Roof works ready to start on July 16th. Contactor and scaffolding in place. Contractor working with DPA to ensure we are able to re-open on time in September 2020</p> <p>WPA update – builders making good progress, on schedule for handover on 14th September and opening on 21st September. Parents aware of delayed opening date.</p>	

		<p>TPA update – TPA ready to go to planning committee to close off last planning condition. LBRUT planning authority are recommending our plans for approval. Once approved acoustic planting will get underway, funded by the ESFA.</p> <p>SPA update – JC met with DfE and Technical Advisor to discuss GLT’s requirements for the schedule of accommodation. Indicative timeline – planning permission to be sought early 2021. No concerns on timeline at present. Building to be modular which can save time and money.</p>	
12	Health and Safety matters to review	<p>TPA and DPA risk assessments both need to be updated in relation to guidance for full return to school when issued by DfE. WPA to construct Risk assessment for school opening in relation to latest DfE guidance about full re-opening of schools in September 2020</p>	<p>TPA and DPA risk assessments to be updated in relation to guidance for full return to school when issued by DfE.</p> <p>WPA to construct Risk assessment for school opening in relation to latest DfE guidance about full re-opening of schools in September 2020</p>
13	Review of Trust Risk Registers	<p>There were no comments on the risk register.</p> <p>JC to update GLT risk register when new DfE guidance about full re-opening of schools in September 2020 is issued</p>	<p>JC to update GLT risk register when new DfE guidance about full re-opening of schools in September 2020 is issued</p>
14	Kingston Community School update	<p>JC noted GLT meeting with KCS parents on 25th June to present GLT proposal for KCS. JC noted GLT has not been presented with enough information from DfE or Chapel Schools Trust to make a proposal based on actual financial assumptions. JC to ensure parents are made aware of this if information not assessed prior to the parent meeting on the 25th June. JC noted short time frames are now making the GLT proposal for KCS very difficult and increasingly risky. GLT board to take decision under full due diligence at board meeting on 8th of July if parents are willing to support the proposal to open the fourth GLT school two years ahead of schedule.</p>	<p>JC to update Directors with outcome of KCS parent meeting and their reaction to GLT proposal.</p>
15	AOB	None	

Standing agenda items

September	November	March	June
Appointment of Chair	Review External Auditors management letter and agree management response	Review LGPS Discretions policy	Recommendation of approval for Academy Budgets
Receive policy review schedule	Approve annual report & accounts	Review and appointment of External and Internal Auditors	Review ICT Continuity and Recovery Policy
Review Reserves Policy	Review Staff Appraisal Policy Review and approval of staff salaries	Review Investment Policy	Report on internal audits
Bank signatories review	Review lettings and charging policy & FOI Charges	Review Data Protection Policy	Review Directors Expenses Policy and Finance Manual
Review of EFA capital funding and procurement		Agree schedule for internal audit	Asset management and capacity review
Review of Academies Financial Handbook & Accounts Direction		Update Equalities Statement	Review of EFA capital funding and procurement
		Review outcomes of benchmarking exercise	
Management Accounts – receive			
Review and approve expenditure over £10k			
Review of Trust Premises			
Health and Safety matters to review			
Review of Trust Risk Registers			

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;
- Scrutinise and approve on behalf of the Board each GEMS Learning Trust academy's detailed Pupil and Sports Premium spend, review annually in terms of impact and outcomes on intended children
- 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 31st December).
- Ensure that each Academy has suitably trained staff for the operation of financial systems;
- Ensure that annual accounts are accurate
- Ensure the MAT complies with GDPR

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

Policy Review delegation

Policy Name (statutory in bold)	Owner	Approver	Review Frequency
Governing body - TOR	CEO	Board	Annual
SEND Policy	Principals	Board	Annual
Supporting Children with medical needs	Principals	Board	Every 3 years
Administering Medicines	Principals	Board	Every 3 years
Admissions	CEO	Board	Annual
Safeguarding/ Child Protection	Principals	Board	Annual
Pay	CEO	Board	Annual
GLT Equality statement, objectives and policy	CEO	Board	Annual
Directors Expenses/Governors allowances	CEO	Operations	Every 4 years
Data Protection	Business Manager	Operations	Every 2 years
Charging & Remissions	Principals	Operations	Every 3 years
Staff Appraisal, capability, Grievance and PM	CEO	Operations	Every 3 years
Investment	CEO	Operations	Every 6 years
Finance Manual	CEO	Operations	Annual
Reserves	CEO	Operations	Every 3 years
Risk Register	CEO	N/A	Termly
ICT continuity and recovery	CEO	Operations	Annual
Staff complaints	Business Manager	CEO	Every 2 years
Maternity, paternity and adoption leave	Business Manager	CEO	Every 6 years
Sickness and Absence	Business Manager	CEO	Every 3 years
Stress Policy	Business Manager	CEO	Annual
Redundancy and Re-structuring	Business Manager	CEO	Every 5 years
Health & Safety	Principals	CEO	Every 2 years
Persistent or Vexatious Complaints	Business Manager	CEO	Every 3 years
Privacy Notices	Business Manager	CEO	Every 2 years
GLT Safer recruitment (cover all schools)	Principals	CEO	Every 2 years
GLT Whistle Blowing	Principals	CEO	Every 3 years
Document Retention Schedule	CEO	CEO	Every 3 years
Subject Access Request	Business Manager	CEO	Every 4 years
Register of business interests	Clerk	CEO	Annual
GDPR Induction Policy	Business Manager	CEO	Every 2 years
<i>Mini-Bus Management - TPA planning condition</i>	TPA Principal	CEO	Every 3 years
<i>Car parking/car use - TPA planning condition</i>	TPA Principal	CEO	Every 3 years
<i>Service Management - TPA planning condition</i>	TPA Principal	CEO	Every 3 years
<i>Travel - TPA planning condition</i>	TPA Principal	CEO	Every 3 years
Assets and Disposals policy	Business Manager	CEO	Every 3 years
Complaints	Business Manager	CEO	Every 3 years
LGPS Discretions	Business Manager	CEO	Every 6 years
Parent Forum Policy	Principals	Principals	Every 4 years
SEND report	Principals	Standards	Annual
Behaviour	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Exclusion	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
3 Yr accessibility Plan	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Equality statement and objectives	Principals	Principals	Every 4 years
Sex and Relationships	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Allegations of abuse statement	Principals	Principals	Annual
British Values Policy	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Anti-bullying	Principals	Principals	Annual
Collective worship	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Home Learning	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Infection Control	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Uniform	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Volunteer	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Attendance policy	Business/office managers	Principals	Every 3 years
EAL	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Acceptable use of ICT	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
E-safety (including EYFS computing)	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
EYFS (not needed if covered in other policies)	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
First Aid	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Intimate care	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Lost child & uncollected child	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Off site visits etc	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
SMSC	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Gifted & Talented	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
CCTV	Business/office managers	Principals	Every 3 years
Assessment, marking & reporting	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Curriculum	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Looked after children	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Teaching & Learning	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Transition	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Whistle Blowing	Principals	Principals	Every 2 years
Crisis management & business continuity	Principals	Principals	Every 2 years
Risk Assessments	Principals	Principals	Annual
Lone Working	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Arson Prevention	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Fire Policy	Principals	Principals	Every 2 years
Community use/lettings	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Staff handbook	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Parental use of social media/internet sites	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Code of Conduct	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years
Induction	Principals	Principals	Every 3 years

