



Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting
Monday 7 October 2024 at 17:00 – 19:30
via Teams

Directors present		
Gill Askew	Nexus MAT Director	GA
Tina Havenhand	Nexus MAT Director	TH
Sue Shelley	Nexus MAT Director	SS
Also present		
Warren Carratt	Nexus MAT CEO	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Nexus MAT Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs	JH
Rebecca Horne	Nexus MAT Governance Clerk	RH
James Kelly	Advisor to the Committee	JK
Karen Smith	Nexus MAT CFO	CFO
Apologies		
Naveen Judah	Nexus MAT Director/Chair	NJ
Ray Palmer	Nexus MAT Director	RPa
Apologies not received		
Mark Greenwood	Nexus MAT Director	MG

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
1.1. To receive but not accept apologies for absence.	
Apologies were not received from MG.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence.	
Apologies were received from RPa and NJ.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered.	
In NJ absence, SS chaired the meeting.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda.	
None to discuss.	
4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES	
4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: Finance & Infrastructure held on 8 July 2024	
The minutes for the Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting which was held on 8 July 2024 were agreed as a true and proper record.	
4.2. REVIEW OF ACTION TRACKER	
<p>The outstanding items on the Action Tracker were reviewed and updated.</p> <p>5.2 CFO provided an update on the Trust's budget monitoring for June 2024. The report initially had a significant number of missing pupil premium figures, which have since been rectified.</p> <p>However, there are still ongoing issues with data from Kenwood and the separation out of the West Riding campus budget, as the necessary figures are yet to be finalised.</p> <p>ACTION – CFO to provide updates on Kenwood and West Riding figures.</p> <p>CFO reported on a review of the accounting officer approval process, specifically focusing on the descriptions attached to credit notes. Concerns were raised about the clarity and accuracy of these descriptions, prompting further discussions with the Deputy CFO and the Transactions Team Leader.</p>	CFO 03/02/25
4.3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
None raised.	

5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED

5.1 Finance and Infrastructure Committee Delivery Plan 24-25

The CFO noted that this year's delivery plan does not significantly differ from the previous year. Its primary function is to outline the key areas to be covered in each of the termly meetings.

Each termly meeting follows a standard delivery plan that includes several key standard components. In addition to these standard items, term-specific topics or issues relevant to that period are also included to ensure the agenda is comprehensive and responsive to ongoing priorities.

5.1a Statutory Returns Checklist 24-25

This report, a standing item at each meeting, includes a comprehensive list of all required returns for the year. It also confirms that key submissions have been completed.

Notably, the CFO confirmed that the End of Year Certificate for the Teachers' Pension Audit has been submitted on time, as well as the Payment Practice Report. Both submissions were made within the required deadlines.

5.2 P12 Trust Budget Monitoring Report

The CFO presented the P12 Budget Monitoring Report, which serves as the end-of-year financial report. Typically, monthly reports focus on how forecasts have changed from one month to the next. However, the P12 report compares the draft year-end positions with those from the P11 report, highlighting any significant variances.

The CFO noted that the figures indicate an improved financial position, with a larger in-year surplus than originally forecast. This improvement in the surplus reflects a more positive financial outcome for the year than previously forecast.

In the context of risks and assumptions, the CFO reported that the Support Staff pay award remains undecided. Although a final offer has been made, there is still a possibility that this offer could change as unions have rejected it.

GA – As a Trust we are aiming for carbon net zero by 2030. Although this is a huge saving, I wondered about our usage levels and whether we are starting to make any difference to actually how much we are using as opposed to the price of what we are using to drive even further efficiencies and savings? JH stated it was too early to tell what difference was being made despite the positive steps the Trust has taken to reduce carbon emissions.

SS – Do Headteachers know surpluses have to move centrally? Is there going to be a process for people to bid for this money in the reserve. When will we know more about that in terms of how it works and the process? CEO – It is about the relationship and how we manage this with Headteachers. A policy was agreed at Board in July therefore we have a policy and process in place and this was discussed with Headteachers at the Heads Meeting in September.

JK – Just to go back to GA’s question in relation to carbon net zero. How likely are we to hit that target? JH – In answer to the 2030 question, if we follow on the current trajectory, the answer is clearly no.

A comprehensive discussion took place among the committee members regarding the Trust’s commitment to achieving carbon net zero by the target year of 2030. The CEO outlined the current 5-year plan, which is due for renewal in 2025. This plan includes the Trust’s strategic objectives, with the carbon net zero targets specifically falling under Strategic Objective 3. The CEO suggested it would make sense to reassess this target when the strategic plan is reviewed and refreshed. The committee agreed.

JH highlighted that several schools within the Trust successfully achieved the ECO School Award at the end of the last academic year. The accomplishment reflects the efforts made by both students and staff to promote eco-friendly practices and raise awareness about environmental issues within the school community.

5.2a P12 Balance Sheet Report

This report was circulated to the Board for information. No questions were raised.

5.2b P12 Cashflow Report

This report was circulated to the Board for information. No questions were raised.

5.3 Infrastructure Strategy – 2024-25 Delivery Plan

JH provided key highlights from the Infrastructure Strategy, noting that Enterprise Works is now fully operational. The facility is currently serving over 100 young people each day, which has been met with positive feedback.

JH reported that e-Sports is an integral component of the ongoing efforts related to the Digital Education Plan.

It was identified that schools across the network often lack a clear leadership point in digital education and ICT. To address this challenge, it was agreed that the Central Trust would take a more proactive role in guiding these efforts.

The leadership team for this initiative will consist of Darren Dickinson, Executive Assurance Partner, along with JH and Nathan Bingham, Head of Digital Technologies.

JH elaborated on the Trust’s partnership with the British e-Sports Governing Body and Barnsley College.

Barnsley College has successfully developed Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications in e-Sports; however, there is currently no entry-level qualification available. This presents an opportunity for the Trust to introduce something new in this area, potentially expanding access and engagement for students interested in e-Sports. This partnership would not only provide access to young people already using the facility but also extend opportunities to other schools and community partners. Additionally, there is significant potential to integrate the e-Sports initiative with the upcoming café. JH highlighted that Enterprise Works has a large room available that would be ideal for e-Sports activities and curriculum delivery.

Looking ahead, JH stressed the importance of developing a specific curriculum tailored to the e-Sports initiative.

JH provided feedback on the Hilltop School big build project. The initial phase will focus on demolition, which is set to commence during the October half term.

Currently, the overall construction programme is scheduled to occur in phases throughout this academic year.

JH reported that the Trust continues to receive a steady stream of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Subject Access Requests (SARs), which are being managed by the Corporate Governance Manager (AC). In recent weeks, AC has been benchmarking the Trust's processes against those of other public authorities, including other MATs and the NHS.

GA – We mention the digital action plan. Do we have Cyber insurance given the amount of personal data we have? JH – We are insured through the RPA, which was updated a few years ago to include cyber. There is a mandatory requirement on this that every employee of the Trust must have completed the Government Cyber Security training, which is a ½ hour online video. We have confirmation from every school and every member of the Central Trust for the end of September.

JH reported on Meersbrook Hall, a Grade II listed building located, which has been unused for approximately 6-7 years. The council has allocated £15,000 to the Trust to explore feasibility funding for the building's potential refurbishment.

In principle, the council has agreed that the sale proceeds from two buildings, Moncrieffe and Clifford, could be redirected towards the refurbishment of Meersbrook Hall.

Additionally, JH expressed intentions to collaborate with the Local Development Trust to submit a heritage lottery bid for matched funding.

5.4 Record of Accounting Officer Financial Decisions

The CFO explained that a document was circulated for informational purposes, detailing a list of all purchase approvals made by the CEO since the last reports were distributed.

5.5 Summary of Write-Offs for the 23-24 Year

The CFO reported that there have been three write-offs this year, which include: Dinner money debt and one write-off involves a historic payroll debt from 2021.

5.6 Transformation Board Minutes/Action Points

These were circulated for information purposes. No questions were received from the Committee.

5.7 Changes to Academy Trust Handbook and Letter to Accounting Officers

The CFO provided a summary of the changes made to the Academy Trust Handbook for the 2024/25 academic year. It was noted that overall, there were not many significant changes this year.

5.7a Letter to Accounting Officer

The CEO reminded Directors that the ESFA (Education & Skills Funding Agency) will be decommissioned by September 2025. As a result, there will be a transfer of responsibilities back to the Department for Education from which they were originally separated.

While the exact structure of this transition is currently unclear, there appears to be a movement towards a regionalisation of functions, which would fall under the oversight of Regional Directors. However, this has not yet been confirmed.

6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair

None raised.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK

7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting.

None raised.

7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed during the meeting

None raised.

8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Monday 3 February 2025	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday 7 July 2025	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE