



Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting Monday 5 February 2024 at 17:00 – 19:30 via Teams

Directors present		
Naveen Judah	Nexus MAT Director/Chair	Chair
Sue Shelley	Nexus MAT Director	SS
Steve Booth	Nexus MAT Director	SB
Tina Havenhand	Nexus MAT Director	TH
Ray Palmer	Nexus MAT Director	RPa
Rachel Potts	Nexus MAT Director	RP
Also present		
Warren Carratt	Nexus MAT CEO	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Nexus MAT Assistant CEO – Strategy & Partnerships	JH
Karen Smith	Nexus MAT CFO	CFO
Rebecca Horne	Governance Clerk	RH
James Kelly	Advisor to the Committee	JK
Apologies		
None		

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
1.1. To receive but not accept apologies for absence. None.	
1.2. To accept apologies for absence. None.	
2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS	
2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered. None to discuss.	
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 9th October 2023 The minutes for the Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting which was held on 9 th October 2023 were agreed as a true and proper record.	
4.2. REVIEW OF ACTION TRACKER The outstanding items on the Action Tracker were reviewed and updated.	
4.3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES None raised.	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
5.1. Trust Budget Monitoring Report (December 2023) CFO presented an overview of the Trust Budget Monitoring Report, focusing on providing additional information regarding individual capital forecasts compared to the previous year. The CFO elaborated on the forecasts and summarised the headline figures in detail. CFO noted that there hasn't been much change in the capital forecasts compared to previous months. This consistency is attributed to the significant deficit incurred in the current year due to expenditure of the carry-forward from previous years on large projects and modular builds. T	

CFO highlighted two notable changes in the Trust's financial position. Firstly, there has been a slight improvement in Hilltop School's position, primarily attributed to confirmed bespoke income.

Secondly, there has been a change in Coppice School's in-year surplus. This change is attributed to the removal of a teaching vacancy and a Teaching Assistant (TA) post, which are now being covered internally.

RP – the increase of pupils at Hilltop, are they all Rotherham local authority or from more areas? CEO – yes, it is likely Rotherham, however we are exploring further growth, which would likely be Sheffield pupils.

During the meeting, discussions were held regarding the significant difference in figures related to the brought forward and carry forward amounts. The CFO provided an in-depth explanation regarding the reasons for this disparity. However, it was acknowledged that more context is needed to fully understand and address the differences.

As a result, it was decided that further discussions would take place outside of the meeting with CFO, NJ and TH. **Action – to be completed by the next meeting.**

**CFO/NJ/TH
13/05/24**

TH – Could there be some narrative in future reports to explain to Directors why there is the significant difference between brought forward and carry forward? CFO – yes of course, commentary can be added to explain what the causes are when there are significant variances between the numbers. **ACTION – CFO to look into further.**

**CFO
13/05/24**

5.2. Aged Debtors and Creditors Report

This report was distributed to the Directors before the meeting, providing an overview of aged debt creditors based on information recorded in the system. During the meeting, the CFO elaborated on this report, discussing its contents with the Directors in more detail.

TH – Would it be possible to get a breakdown of debtors and creditors on the balance sheet? This would be helpful. Perhaps an extract from the balance sheet. CFO – yes this can be done. **ACTION – to be added to the agenda for the next meeting to discuss a more detailed report.**

**CFO/
CLERKING
SERVICES
13/05/24**

5.3. Pupil numbers update (High Needs Place Change/October pupil census)

CFO presented a report, consolidating various sources of data regarding pupil numbers. This report included current pupil numbers on roll for each school as of January 2024, as well as the October census pupil figures. By providing this information, the Directors were able to compare and contrast the proposed published numbers for the 2024/2025 academic year with the actual present numbers.

SS – I am quite intrigued by the lack of increase in numbers for Craggs? Would we have expected more children to have chosen Craggs? CEO –nationally, there has been a trend of declining birth rates. In response to this trend, the Trust consulted on reducing the planned admission numbers for Craggs from September 2024, scaling down to a planned 1.5 form entry, from a two-form entry, to align more closely with actual enrolment figures.

Despite the national trend, Crags has experienced an increase in numbers compared to what was initially anticipated. This increase has contributed to the stability of enrolment figures at the school. Reassurance was provided by the CEO that there are no concerns about Crags becoming a less preferred choice for the local community.

CFO provided an update on pupil number reporting, indicating that it will now be conducted on a termly basis rather than annually. In response, the CEO suggested integrating this updated info into existing reports for efficiency and consistency.

All members of the committee agreed with these recommendations.

5.4. Draft KPIs for inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

NJ asked the Directors for any comments or questions on the report. TH expressed satisfaction with the suggestions provided and expressed confidence that any necessary amendments could be made in the future. RP acknowledged the usefulness of the supporting document, particularly the examples provided, but suggested that further discussions on their utilisation might be needed.

CEO suggested initiating action based on the current reports, and to evolve them over time.

Overall, Directors expressed contentment with the report. NJ clarified that the document is a work in progress, indicating a recognition that improvements and refinements may be made over time.

All members of the committee agreed with these recommendations.

5.5. Infrastructure Strategy Update

JH highlighted the ongoing efforts related to digital professional learning communities and digital planning in education. One key highlight mentioned is the Digital Professional Learning Community's role in advancing digital education tools and curriculum development. JH hopes that the Professional Learning Community will continue to drive this forward to increase engagement from schools.

JH discussed challenges in engaging with schools which was revealed in the Autumn term meeting. Subsequently, a full heads meeting where these issues was discussed. During this meeting, solutions were explored and will be progressed by the executive management team.

JH explained there is on-going and significant work at Holgate Meadows, which Nexus is actively supporting. Due to issues with fire doors, certain cohorts of students have had restricted access to the main site at different times. This ongoing work is expected to continue for most of the academic year. JH explained that funding for this project will come from the existing school budget.

JH provided an update on Enterprise Works, indicating that there is an ongoing project group comprising key stakeholders. These meetings focus on planning and coordinating the provision of services at Enterprise Works starting from September 2024.

Additionally, discussions have taken place regarding the café at Enterprise Works, including the possibility of partnering with an individual experienced in projects related to young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Specifically, there have been talks about collaborating with Blend Kitchen in Sheffield, a well-known establishment that provides valuable work experience for young people with SEND.

RP – how many places are likely to be available at Enterprise Works? JH – we anticipate that in September there could be 151 young people. However, this figure isn't certain.

5.5.1. DfE Capital Advisor Programme Report

JH provided an update on a pilot scheme that has been implemented with several trusts. While Nexus was not part of the initial pilot, the outcomes of the pilot have served as a valuable audit tool for consideration.

Lana Stoyles and Kevin Oxborough have taken the lead on analysing the outcomes of the program and assessing how Nexus aligns with these outcomes. Specific areas requiring attention were identified, and work has commenced to address these issues.

Praise was given to JH, Lana Stoyles, and Kevin Oxborough for their dedication and efforts in coordinating this initiative. Their hard work and commitment have been recognised as instrumental in moving the project forward.

5.6. Land & Buildings Condition Return

JH explained that the annual return for the department regarding Land and Buildings is a mandatory requirement. This process involves using an online tool with dropdown menus that need to be completed. For each site, a series of questions are asked, making it a straightforward tick-box exercise. The purpose of this return is primarily to report on completed activities and ensure compliance with regulations. It's essentially a routine administrative task that must be completed annually to fulfil reporting obligations.

5.7. Transformation Board minutes/action points

The CEO clarified that the most recent Transformation Board meeting occurred after the papers were issued. Despite this timing, the minutes of the December meeting were still presented to allow Directors the opportunity to review them thoroughly and raise any questions or concerns they may have.

RP – Holgate aiming for 1st April conversion, is this correct? CEO – No, this was correct at the time of the meeting.

RP – the payroll procurement, are we on track with this? Do we have the capacity? CEO – yes this is on track and we do have a Payroll Manager in the organisation who is leading on this alongside Lana Stoyles and the HR Manager. CEO feels the transition to the new system will be successful.

5.8. Statutory Returns Checklist

CFO provided an update, stating that the circulated version of the document has been revised to reflect the submission of the annual accounts return. Additionally, the CFO is

in the process of updating the document with additional returns. The next report on the list is the Gender Pay Gap report, which is prepared for submission and will be presented at the next Audit & Risk Committee Meeting.

CEO confirmed that the Gender Pay Gap report is scheduled to be presented at the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting in March. Upon approval at this meeting, the information from the report can then be uploaded onto the Government portal.

5.9. Record of Accounting Officer Decisions

CFO explained that before the transition to Sage, the information presented in reports was compiled manually through individual forms. However, with the implementation of the new system, this information is now automatically generated by the system itself.

CEO reminded the directors that this report is primarily for informational purposes. While it will continue to be presented at Board meetings, it may not necessarily prompt any questions or discussions.

The Board agreed that the report will be presented at all Finance & Infrastructure Committee meetings as a standing item, moving forward.

5.10. Summary of Write-Offs

The CFO reported that there were not many write-offs, with the only new one for this year being a £5 petty cash difference. This discrepancy was attributed to a delay in closing down the petty cash in the system, despite it not being used since Autumn 2023. CFO acknowledged that this closure should have occurred earlier but was delayed.

CFO reassured that there are no petty cash funds in schools anymore, indicating that similar issues are not expected to arise in the future. This update indicates proactive steps taken to address discrepancies and improve financial management practices within the organisation, ensuring greater accountability and efficiency moving forward.

6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

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

There was some misalignment between report numbering of documents for the meeting and the numbering used on the agenda, as well as one report included in the pack which shouldn't have been. Additionally, the printed copies were not correct and excel spreadsheet documents had not been provided in full. The CEO apologised for these errors, and JH will ensure this is reviewed and corrected for the next meeting.

SS queried why all reports weren't in the standard format, with some reports also not having report author details on them. CEO apologised for this oversight, and will ensure all reports in future are included on the specified template.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK

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

<p>None raised.</p> <p>7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed during the meeting</p> <p>CEO stated that the Risk Register is to be reviewed and refreshed ahead of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting in March. ACTION – CEO to apply any points raised or learning from the discussions at this Committee meeting to the Risk Register.</p>	<p>CEO 13/05/24</p>
<p>8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</p>	

Monday 13 th May 2024	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure
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Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE