



Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting
Monday 6 October 2025 at 17:00 – 19:30
via Teams

Director's present		
Gill Askew	Director/Chair	GA
Tina Havenhand	Director	TH
Sue Shelley	Director	SS
Also present		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs	JH
Rebecca Horne	MAT Governance Clerk	RH
James Kelly	Advisor to the Committee	JK
Karen Smith	Chief Finance Officer	CFO
Lana Stoyles	Executive Director Business Transformation	LS
Apologies		
Ray Palmer	Nexus MAT Director	RP
Apologies not received		
Mark Greenwood	Nexus MAT Director	MG

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
1.1. To accept apologies for absence.	
Apologies were received from RP. Apologies were not received from MG.	
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 7 July 2025	
The minutes for the Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting which was held on 7 July 2025 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. SS queried the Risk Register and Cyber Security actions. CEO clarified that the Risk Register is owned by the Board of Directors, with updates proposed by Officers based on Directors' direction. The Risk Register is scheduled for review at the Board of Directors meeting on 22 October 2025, after which it will be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Standards Committee. JH confirmed there is a small amendment to the Risk Register regarding Cyber Security which will be presented to the Board, completing previous actions for Directors to review the register at the Finance and Infrastructure Committee. Directors agreed this is action is now complete, with the understanding that future updates will be managed through the appropriate committees and reported to the Board.	
4.3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
No matters arising for discussion.	

5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
<p>5.1 Finance and Infrastructure Committee Delivery Plan 25-26</p> <p>The CFO provided a summary of the 2025–26 delivery plan and outlined the topics expected to be covered in each of the Finance and Infrastructure meetings. The CFO asked Directors if they were happy with the proposed coverage and they confirmed their agreement.</p> <p>It was highlighted that there was some confusion between Finance and Infrastructure and Audit and Risk work plans in terms of land and buildings condition return. CEO confirmed this was to be discussed at Finance and Infrastructure and not Audit and Risk as this is not an Audit and Risk matter. This will be discussed at the February Finance and Infrastructure Meeting.</p> <p>GA queried if there should be any merger conversations over the coming Finance and Infrastructure meetings.</p> <p>The CEO proposed that Directors continue to work through the joint committee established between Ebor and Nexus MAT boards. The Directors discussed the governance implications of the proposed merger, and the CEO explained these.</p> <p>A query was raised about the reporting of Hallamshire, and how Directors have oversight of risks and uncertainties. The CEO reminded the committee that Hallamshire is reported on in monthly management accounts, a report which also includes risks and mitigations.</p>	
<p>5.2 P12 Budget Monitoring Reports</p> <p>CFO gave a summary of the P12 report.</p> <p>5.2a P12 Budget Monitoring Report</p> <p>The CFO confirmed that there are no significant changes to report. The Trust remains in a strong and positive financial position, with an improved in-year surplus. The estimated in-year revenue stands at £2.3 million, which is £1.2 million above the original budget. This surplus represents approximately 3.2% of total income.</p> <p>One notable issue discussed was ongoing utility billing discrepancies, with some schools having not received a water bill for up to three years. These issues are still being investigated and addressed.</p> <p>In addition, SS raised questions regarding the Trust's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). A discussion followed between SS and the CFO covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The use of average numbers for special school places in KPI reporting.• The exclusion of top-slice income to avoid double counting.• The rationale behind reporting methods at both Trust and school levels. <p>It was clarified that the number on roll is based on actual figures, which can vary month to month. For reporting purposes, this figure is averaged over a 12-month period.</p>	

TH raised detailed queries in relation to:

The Balance sheet Payroll Control creditor balance states £1.9 million, which feels significant. What is the breakdown of this? **Action – CFO to provide a breakdown of the £1.9 million payroll creditor balance.**

Action
CFO
02/02/26

Bank and Cash Reconciliation – There is an approximate £94k difference to cash figures in the balance sheet and cash flow report. TH asked for an explanation for the difference. **Action – CFO to send a reconciliation to TH explaining the £94k difference.**

Action
CFO
02/02/26

There is a significant Trade Debtor balance (£88k) related Sheffield City Council which also includes a £131k credit note. Additional context and explanation would be useful.

CFO provided the breakdown of the debt (bespoke income backdated for one pupil, and set-up cost reimbursement for Stocksbridge Hub and Hallamshire). She also explained that there have been quite a few purchase order issues with Sheffield City Council over the last 12 months which has resulted in credit notes and re-issuing of new purchase orders. The team have been working with the Sheffield finance lead to improve the way purchase orders are raised for the 25/26 academic year.

The £280k accrual for Hallamshire, had the value been specifically mentioned in the letter. Is there unconditional entitlement to the money? CFO responded she was unsure whether the figure was referred to in the letter but confirmed that they had an email from the LA finance lead that referred to the figure and an expectation of payment.

In light of the above query with purchase orders and Sheffield City Council the CEO confirmed that previous discussions with himself and the CFO had taken place to highlight if and when to raise the issues with Sheffield City Council more formally.

The CEO added that a more detailed headline presentation of KPIs similar to the Dashboard format could be beneficial. If Directors wish to see month-on-month variation, this can be compiled and provided.

SS and GA queried the Teaching Assistant (TA) costs and the percentages allocated to each school.

LS explained the operational reasons for variation in TA costs and outlined internal monitoring and intervention processes to manage and reduce reliance on agency staff and explained due to the schools within the Trust it is really difficult as no school is the same in relation to what they rely on for agency staff and trends themselves are really difficult to compare.

GA queried whether the TA cost figures should simply be accepted and how Directors can identify when such figures warrant concern.

The CFO explained that the TA data was included as a dedicated tab in the document for transparency and had also been shared with Executive Regional Directors, showing comparative percentages of TA costs across all schools. The CEO suggested that a separate report will be prepared for the Committee's February meeting, providing a 24-month overview of trends, root cause drivers, the ongoing need for supply, and proposed strategies for managing TA costs going forward. **Action – CFO to prepare a**

Action
CFO
02/02/26

report for the February meeting outlining the last 24 months of supply and contingent workforce trends, root causes, interventions and future strategies for agency TA spend.

Action: Clerking Services to add TA supply – Analysis Report to the February agenda.

**Action
CS
07/10/25**

GA queried the absence of water, gas, and electricity bills for some schools, as mentioned earlier in the meeting and asked about the potential financial risk relating to accruals. GA also asked whether any action was being taken with the utility providers and if there was any associated financial exposure.

The CFO explained that there will be some financial risk, but it will be difficult to quantify the exact amount at this stage.

LS described the persistent difficulties in obtaining accurate water, gas and electricity bills, the use of accruals to estimate costs and ongoing efforts to resolve issues with suppliers and frameworks, including the installation of smart meters to better tracking.

5.2b P12 Balance Sheet Report

As discussed above.

5.2c P12 Cashflow Report

As discussed above.

5.2d P12 Aged Debtors

As discussed above.

5.2e P12 Aged Creditors

As discussed above.

5.3 Infrastructure Strategy Update

JH presented an update on the Infrastructure Strategy and reported on the successful completion of major IT projects including broadband updates across all sites and the timely delivery of capital works with only minor delays and all projects completed within budget.

JH reported on new opportunities and potential sites for partnerships. He highlighted a building in central Sheffield, Harmony Works, a Grade II listed property, outlining its potential uses, current uses, opportunities, and associated costs. These discussions are at an early stage, and JH will provide updates as the project progresses.

JH reported that Subject Access Requests (SARs) and Freedom of Information (FOIs) requests continue to rise. He confirmed that, to date, all requests have been processed within the statutory timeframes. Benchmarking with other public authorities has been conducted to identify more efficient handling methods, but so far, no organisation appears to be managing these requests more effectively than the Trust.

GA asked whether there are any general themes emerging from FOI requests. JH responded that there are no clear trends. The CEO added that the Trust's experiences with SARs over the last six months will be reflected in the proposed update to the Complaints Policy, which is scheduled to be taken to the Board in October.

LS explained that over the summer, the Transformation Delivery Framework has been embedded, providing a unified system to manage all projects. She highlighted that the IT team, in particular, has been able to respond effectively to the volume of capital works projects delivered.

5.3a Draft Infrastructure Strategy 2025/27

JH outlined the refreshed Infrastructure Strategy, which now places greater emphasis on digital curriculum, cyber security, and social value, with asset management plans becoming increasingly data driven. LS added that sustainability has been incorporated across all areas of the strategy.

The committee received the draft strategy and requested no proposed changes.

5.4 Record of Accounting Officer Financial Decisions

The CEO explained the approval process for expenditures above £7k. LS added that most high-value transactions are conducted with preferred suppliers or through established frameworks.

5.5 Summary of write-offs for the 24-25 year

The CFO reported that only a small number of write-offs have been approved since the last meeting.

5.6 Transformation Board Minutes/Action Points

These were circulated for information to the Directors.

SS queried the Crags School playground and asked about plans for the site, as well as the PFI school asset handover.

LS confirmed that proactive asset condition monitoring and contractual due diligence are underway, with a two-year lead time planned before the hand back date. LS also noted that the Trust attends regular PFI contractor meetings, maintains detailed asset records and works with external partners to ensure the buildings' condition is documented and maintained ahead of handover.

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.	
7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed during the meeting.	
The CEO noted that the Risk Register has been completed and will be updated to reflect the contingent risk of merger and cyber security considerations, based on issues raised at this committee. These updates have been made, and the revised Risk Register will be submitted to the October Board Meeting.	
8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	

Monday 2 February 2026	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday 6 July 2026	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE
Gill Askew		