



**Finance & Infrastructure Committee Meeting**  
**Monday 9 October 2023 at 17:00 – 19:30**  
**via MS Teams**

<b>Directors present</b>		
Naveen Judah	Nexus MAT Director/Committee Chair	Chair
Sue Shelley	Nexus MAT Director	SS
Steve Booth	Nexus MAT Director	SB
Tina Havenhand	Nexus MAT Director	TH
Rachel Potts	Nexus MAT Director	RP
<b>Also present</b>		
Warren Carratt	Nexus MAT CEO	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Nexus MAT Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs	JH
Karen Smith	Nexus MAT CFO	CFO
Rebecca Horne	Governance Clerk	RH
James Kelly	Advisor to the Committee	JK
<b>Apologies</b>		
Ray Palmer	Nexus MAT Director	RPa

<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>1.1. To receive but not accept apologies for absence.</b>  Apologies were received from RPa.	
<b>1.2. To accept apologies for absence.</b>  Apologies were accepted from RPa.	
<b>2. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
<b>2.1. Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered.</b>  None to discuss.	
<b>3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
<b>3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda.</b>  None to discuss.	
<b>4. APPROVAL OF COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</b>	
<b>4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: Audit and Risk Committee held on 10<sup>TH</sup> July 2023</b>  The minutes are for the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting which was held on 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2023. This new Finance & Infrastructure Committee agreed these minutes would need to be carried forward and signed off at the next Audit & Risk Committee Meeting which will be held on 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023.	
<b>4.2. REVIEW OF ACTION TRACKER</b>  NJ suggested that the Action Tracker be discussed at the next Audit & Risk Committee Meeting on the 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2023.  CEO – Technically this is a new committee with no constitutional predecessor committee, so agreed these should be carried forward to the meeting in November.	
<b>4.3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</b>  None raised.	
<b>5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>5.1. High Level 12-month Delivery Plan</b>  CFO gave an overview of the draft 12-month delivery plan for the Finance & Infrastructure Committee and also the separate list of statutory returns. The 12-month	

delivery plan that was for Audit & Risk has been split into the two different documents, for both this committee and the Audit & Risk committee.

There are a lot of statutory returns that officers are required to produce regularly which the CFO tries to keep separate. Obviously, this is just a draft for the next 12-months and if there are any issues related to any item that committee members would like to discuss, they are able to do so. CFO stated that if anyone would like to add or discuss anything in the meeting please let her know. The agenda is currently as it is and CFO was really looking for the committee's thoughts on what has been already circulated.

**SS – I understand what you have circulated here, once people have agreed this are you going to do a visual format as we have done previously?**

CFO informed committee members that she could recreate the Excel spreadsheet but hasn't due to it being quite difficult to update in terms of formatting and rolling it forward. The format of the document was discussed in depth due to some liking the old format as opposed to the new one. Due to mixed reviews, NJ agreed the new format would stay in place for a few months to see how this went.

**CFO – Are people happy with the content against each of the meetings? Are there things on there that members would like to see in the October and February meetings?**

NJ stated he would have expected everything that should be done would appear on the list anyway, as these are statutory items so should be on there. CFO stated when she is looking at the year ahead, every year there will be new things to look at.

CEO informed the committee that, in his view, what is helpful here is setting out the agendas for each business year at the start of each new year. This is a new step and is a positive and progressive move for directors. This makes it clear for directors knowing what officers intend to bring to the committee. This makes it much clearer as well as for the Audit & Risk committee, giving the directors a sense of ownership and understanding about the year ahead and also provides a reference point later down the line, should an agenda appear without one of the discussed items.

NJ suggested, from a personal point of view, that the previous version of this document effectively told directors whether they were meeting certain statutory deadlines or not. The new sheet 5.1 actually gives an idea of the sort of items that directors will be discussing at the next Finance & Infrastructure Committee meeting. NJ stated this is very positive change.

**5.2. Trust Budget Monitoring Report - July 2023**

CFO provided an overview of the P11 report, as of the end of July 23, which was circulated at the start of September. The Trust had a slight reduction in its in-year surplus position compared to P10. However, the Trust is still showing a consolidated positive carry forward of around 10.4% of annual grant income. The deterioration in the position is predominantly due to changes at Hilltop and higher central revenue contributions to capita projects. CFO also provided a breakdown of the local authority capital grants and the latest school capital expenditure forecast.

A detailed report on the Hilltop position is going to the full Trust Board of Directors on 18 October, and that will be circulated later this week.

CEO has already sent an email to all directors, who to give an explanation as to what has been drawn out of the P11 report. There is a detailed report which directors will be receiving tomorrow ahead of the Board Meeting next Wednesday 18th October. CEO suggested that directors read the detailed report prior to next week's meeting to allow them to raise any necessary scrutinising questions, from a more informed position

**NJ – The forecast that we are currently seeing, does this mean that the forecast will be adjusted post next week's meeting? Or do you stand by the forecast?**

CFO is about to circulate some P12 forecasts which will be coming out in the next couple of weeks.

### **5.3. Medium Term Financial Plan**

CFO has circulated an updated report.

**SB – is this a draft or a final document?**

CFO stated this is the draft that would be the final document unless anyone has anything they would like to change in it.

**SB – on point 1.6, is the Trust is required to return a certain level of reserves?**

CEO outlined the different definition of our reserves and suggested that this text be left as it is.

**SB – on point 2.3 of the document it says we must appoint an Audit & Risk Committee. Should we mention that we have now got a Finance & Infrastructure Committee as well or should we leave it?**

CEO suggested it would be useful to add a sentence at the end of 2.2 stating the Trust has a separate committee to scrutinise finance and infrastructure which will then make it clearer.

**RP – asked 4.6.1, inflation at 0% and the assumption that the procurement savings will offset as well as a reduction in spend, is that realistic? And is it linked clearly with a plan in the procurement plan?**

CFO thinks at this high level it is realistic, given other, separate assumptions that fall within the broad definition of inflation (i.e. pay) and the expectation the procurement will drive down costs. As a whole these are budgets we can live within.

### **5.4. Payroll Provider Re-Tender**

CFO thanked Lana Stoyles and Debbie Ireland, who have done all the work on looking at the different payroll provider options. This paper is summarising what officers have

done thus far and is seeking to inform Directors of the process, rather than seeking a decision, as the contract value falls within the CEO's delegated financial authority.

**CFO stated the question to the committee is are you supportive of us going down this route?**

SS is fully supportive of this.

TH is fully supportive of this.

**TH asked is if there is a contract length on this?** CFO stated it was a 3-year minimum.

RP is fully supportive of this. Are there any negatives with the preferred supplier? CFO – There has been a lot of talk on payroll providers on the finance directors forum and was mainly negative. However, the preferred provides were the only ones who had consistent positive feedback. CFO will ask them if there are any issues to be aware of.

JK is fully supportive of this.

**JK asked is there any break in the 3-year contract?** CFO – was unsure and would have to check this.

**CEO – ACTION – JH to provide a note to directors outside of this meeting on what our standard provision is in our contracts, and/or what the CCS provision is for break clauses or terminating contracts early.**

**JH  
05/02/24**

**5.5. Update on Finance System Moves**

CFO stated the Trust went live with SAGE on the 26<sup>th</sup> August. CFO feels there are both positive and negative points regarding the new system. The feedback from schools has generally been positive. There was a lot of planning into the training for schools with the Executive Heads giving great feedback. CFO stated some things are slightly disappointing, and it is not as user friendly as officers hoped it would be. These points will hopefully disappear in the next few months. The main problem highlighted is officers were told that the integration with the new budgeting system was being built and a test would go live in September. There has been a delay with this work between the 2 companies. The live link between the two won't be live until November.

SS informed the committee that this was a huge task and credit to everybody for getting over the line the way you did.

**SS asked if we are capturing the lessons that we have learned? We want to make sure we learn from it and really capture in the spec next time.** JH stated that, as part of the Transformation Board project review remit, officers will definitely be pulling together all the lessons learned.

## 5.6. School Resource Manager Assessment (SRMA) Update

CFO, CEO and JH met with the SMRA a few weeks ago. They talked through the specifics of special educational needs, funding and volatility. The SMRA approach is more around benchmarking of the schools within the Trust. CEO – just to remind directors that this came from a trust capacity fund award.

### **SB – what is the format of the follow through? Do we get a report? Is there a time scale?**

CEO - the times scales are still unclear and the SRMA has asked the CFO for information to enable him to complete his desktop analysis. CEO will then want to arrange visits with key personnel in the Trust. CEO is still currently waiting for that timetable. Hopefully the visits will be this side of Christmas.

## 5.7. Infrastructure Strategy – 2023-24 Delivery Plan Update

JH discussed some highlights from the Infrastructure Strategy update report. The first page of the report gives a brief description of the completion of the Year 1 condition projects. This is year one of our partnership with Ryder Levitt Bucknall (RLB) who were appointed as the Trust's asset partner and carried out all the condition surveys across Nexus MAT sites. JH went through the initial projects. The Heatherwood roof and the boiler were raised and solar panels have now been added as part of the scheme. There was also the Kelford fire alarm which is highlighted in the same scheme. The general consensus from the Heads who have been involved in these schemes has been really positive about RLB. Good communication, timescales have been met and projects are on budget.

Some of the other asset projects that the Trust has taken on, such as the new modular projects - were not taken on by RLB as they charge a project management fee. JH is really pleased with the modulars that were installed over the summer. The timescales that staff were working to were really short. Again, the feedback from schools has been really positive. All have been achieved to timescale.

Forest View – again, officers were working to a very short time scale but this project has had a very positive outcome. An opening ceremony has been planned for this.

Connect the classroom project – this is a DfE funded broadband scheme. The wireless systems across all Nexus MAT Doncaster schools were upgraded.

Hilltop - following the appearance on the "SEND Help" BBC documentary, the school was contacted by the Yorkshire Children's Charity who do identify an annual big build scheme. This is a charity that draws together the major construction companies across Yorkshire and puts them together, and essentially get donations and funding to undertake one project per year. Hilltop is their chosen project this year.

SS praised the team in what has been a phenomenal job and what has been achieved this summer. Fantastic work.

The Committee thanked JH for all the hard work.

<p><b>5.8. Record of Accounting Officer financial decisions</b></p> <p>CEO stated this was sent to the committee for information. No questions were asked about the content of the report.</p> <p><b>5.9. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)</b></p> <p>JH gave the committee an update in terms of the surveys and the work across eligible sites. The report outlines the work undertaken with RLB initially to do desktop assessments across eligible sites which identified which sites where there was any possibility of RAAC. So far everything has come back clear but the issue that was highlighted in the report was the Kelford hall roof. This was simply due to when, on the site, assessments couldn't be completed as assessors couldn't get into the ceiling space to double check. Everything tells them that it is highly unlikely but they are still doing the on-site assessment to rule this out completely. This is due to take place shortly.</p> <p>JH reported that the Trust is still awaiting on reports from Willows and Forest View, both of which transferred to Nexus MAT as sites on the 1 September 2023. JH was hoping that confirmation would be provided from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and that they had done their own surveys. As they haven't, The Trust has commissioned its own surveys to take place just to make sure.</p> <p>NJ is happy with the approach we have made to ensure we can be as safe as can be.</p> <p><b>5.10. Transformation Board minutes</b></p> <p>CEO – these are for information. No comments or questions. <b>ACTION – to be put on the agenda for each meeting.</b></p>	<b>CLERKING SERVICES</b>
<b>6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
<p>6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the Chair</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
<b>7. CONFIDENTIALITY &amp; RISK</b>	
<p>7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting.</p> <p>None raised.</p> <p>7.2. To consider any areas of risk discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
<b>8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</b>	

Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	17:00 – 19:30	MS Teams	Finance & Infrastructure

**Minutes approved**

<b>CHAIR</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>