



Audit & Risk Committee Meeting
Focus: Finance & ICT
Monday 7th February 2022 at 17:00 – 19:30
via MS Teams

Those Present:		
Sue Shelley	Nexus MAT Director – Chair	SS
Steve Booth	Nexus MAT Director	SB
Warren Carratt	Nexus MAT CEO	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Nexus MAT Assistant CEO – Strategy & Partnerships	JH
Naveen Judah	Nexus MAT Director	NJ
James Kelly	Advisor to Committee	JK
Ray Palmer	Nexus MAT Director	RPa
Rachel Potts	Nexus MAT Director	RP
Cath Sands	Nexus MAT CFO	CFO
Barry-John Simmons	Nexus MAT Clerk	Clerk
Philip Allsop	BHP	PA
Nathan Bingham	Nexus MAT Head of Digital	NB
Apologies:		
No Apologies:		

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
1.1. To receive 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 2.1.1. None.	
3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business or other governance interests on any item on the agenda None.	
4. AUDIT & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES	
4.1. To approve the minutes of the following meeting: The minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee Meeting held on 15 th November 2021 were received and the following amendments agreed: SS requested a change from internal to external auditors under item 6.1.1.	
4.2. Review of Action Tracker The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.	
4.3. Matters arising from the minutes None.	
5. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED	
5.1. Presentation from BHP on Data Analytics tool PA gave an overview of the tool, the way it operates, and the potential benefits. SB asked how it compared to what the Trust is currently doing. PA answered that he did not believe the current audit processes incorporated data analytics and therefore it was a complete additional tool. CS described some of the processes were available through the current system in terms of the ability to search on terms, but this would be for an internal officer to determine what and when. SS asked how often the work is undertaken. PA replied that it could be done with whatever frequency was helpful and this could be worked out between BHP and the finance team, as directed. PA left the meeting. The committee discussed the tool and considered whether it would add significantly to the tools available and determined not to proceed at this stage.	

<p>5.2. Free School ICT Procurement</p> <p>JH updated on progress with procurement of ICT for Discovery. A working group is up and running between Nexus, SoftCat (ICT provider), and Tilbury Douglas (construction contractor); Linford Njie has picked this project up successfully and taken a lead for the Trust alongside the overall project lead.</p>	
<p>5.3. ICT Information Governance and Strategic Update</p> <p>JH gave an overview of the report and highlighted the appointment of Nathan Bingham, Head of Digital, who joins the call on his first day at Nexus, some of the recent opportunities given to ICT staff across the trust, and the move of all but one school to the Bromcom management information system.</p> <p>RP asked about any resistance to the cross-trust opportunities. JH replied that the work had developed from Abbey's engineer doing trust-wide work to Kelford more recently and it was headed in the right direction. SS asked about the Portal. ACTION: JH confirmed that a demonstration of the Nexus Portal could be offered on the next ICT meeting. JK asked if the SAR/FOI levels were similar to what the Trust would expect and in comparison, to previous years. JH and the CEO confirmed that this was the case and described the nature and frequency of the requests. RP asked about the procurement process for Bromcom, given the timescales outlined. JH and the CEO outlined the extensive procurement process that had taken recently around Bader that had chosen Bromcom and that the contracts were for 1 year in order to allow for a process to determine the provider beyond that single year.</p> <p>NB was welcomed to Nexus and left the meeting.</p>	<p>JH 09/05/22</p>
<p>5.4. High Level 12-month Delivery Plan</p> <p>CS gave an overview of the report and confirmed that Forrester Boyd have submitted the report to the ESFA. The committee were content with the plan.</p>	
<p>5.5. Record of Accounting Officer financial decisions</p> <p>SS asked for clarification about the decision around S&LT. The CEO confirmed it was 1 day per week of speech & language therapy. RP asked about the North Ridge playground decision and the 2 quotes. The CEO confirmed only two contractors had been able to meet the requirements. The committee were content with the record of decisions.</p>	
<p>5.6. Trust Budget Monitoring Report December 2021</p> <p>CS gave an overview of the report and described the individual school positions and some highlights. SS commented on the volatility of the funding, particularly relating to cover needed during COVID. SB asked about the two-month trend in deficit and the extent to which reserves were needing to be used to support in-year budgets. CS confirmed that the reserves being used were the individual school surpluses and the committee discussed the current pressures, the picture over time, and the whole-trust picture. SS asked about the Health & Social Care Levy and the Schools Supplementary Grant. The</p>	

<p>CEO advised on the latest responses from local authorities and that the financial risks outlined remain.</p> <p>SB asked for a clarification on the percentage on the overall trust reserves. ACTION: CS to amend the position of the percentage (2%) in the report.</p>	<p>CS 07/03/22</p>
<p>5.7. External Audit Management Letter</p> <p>CS gave an overview of the letter and confirmed this was reported at Trust Board.</p>	
<p>5.8. Audit Tracker</p> <p>CS gave an overview of the tracker and updated on each of the items. JK congratulated CS on the overall position and improvement over time, particularly around areas such as petty cash.</p>	
<p>5.9. Management of school-level historical and in-year surpluses</p> <p>The CEO gave an overview of the issue and the paper submitted and requested that the committee endorse the proposal to the Trust Board.</p> <p>SS agreed with the issues raised and reflected the meeting so far had reiterated some of those issues – the Schools Supplementary Grant, the COVID support funding, and the volatility of special school funding. RP asked for further clarifications on the likely expenditure needs of schools and how that relates to the £150k level proposed. SB asked for clarification on how this would be reflected on the balance sheets of each individual school. CS described how the proposal would be reflected in both individual schools and at the whole-trust level accounts. NJ asked if there was anything in the regulations that could make the proposal concerning to auditors. CS confirmed there was not. JK asked if there were any additional pressures for the trust in terms of the current cost of living pressures, such as utilities, or the knock-on impact on staffing. The CEO confirmed that there were pressures in this area and risks that were being assessed and mitigated as far as possible – including the work described earlier to secure grant funding from LAs’ High Needs blocks around the Schools Supplementary Grant. RPa asked about the visibility and control of the surpluses/deficits in school budgets below the £150k limit. The CEO described the controls and visibility of those individual budgets and how it would remain in line with the current processes.</p> <p>The committee agreed to endorse the proposal at this stage to go forward to Trust Board.</p>	
<p>6. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</p>	
<p>6.1. To consider any other urgent business agreed by the chair</p> <p>None.</p>	
<p>7. CONFIDENTIALITY & RISK</p>	
<p>7.1. To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>None.</p>	

7.2. To consider any area new risks identified during the meeting	
Risks identified will be discussed at the next meeting.	
8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	

Monday 7 th March 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Via MS Teams	Audit & Risk
Monday 9 th May 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ	Finance & ICT
Tuesday 28 th June 2022	16:00 – 19:00	Crags Community School	Leadership Summit
Monday 11 th July 2022	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ	Audit & Risk

Minutes approved

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE