



**An Daras Trust**  
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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CEO: W. T. Hermon

30/9/19

### Minutes

**Finance and Strategic Development Committee Autumn 2019**  
**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office**

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

**Present:** Graeme Barriball, Claire Paul, Peter Hague, Will Hermon

**Apologies:** Tim Woodward

**In Attendance:** Governance Officer, Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow

The Chair welcomed everyone and apologies were accepted from TW.

**2. Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda**

None declared.

**3. Confirm minutes of previous FSD Spring Meeting (4<sup>th</sup> February 2019) and Matters Arising**

- Plan for CG staffing review and restructure (WH). *Plan for review circulated by email and approved in August/September. Currently out at consultation. Governors are meeting to discuss on 7 Oct 19. TAs are on permanent variable contracts to any necessary adjustments will be made and school secretary hours will be adjusted.*
- LT Budget required further work (WH/EG). *Complete.*
- SC final review of budget required (WH/EG). *Complete.*

Committee agreed the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting and the Chair signed a copy.

**4. Confidential Agenda Items**

None.

**5. Review Financial Documentation**

**a. Academies Financial Handbook Update**

Note update document sent by Governance Officer by email on 30 June 19 and was discussed during the review process last term. WH highlighted new direction regarding a Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool – a mandatory requirement. From Autumn 2019, all academy trusts will have to complete the school resource management tool and submit to ESFA by 14 Nov 2019 and each year thereafter. Finance team, CEO, Heads and Governance Officer will be involved in this return.

**b. Funding Agreement Updates (MFA/SFA)**

Revised (but little amendment) MFA has been issued due to Princetown joining the MAT on 1 Oct 19.

**6. Review MAT Improvement Plan**

- **Priority 1** – all finances now centralised and standardised, it is known by schools and is followed up at central. **GB challenged whether decisions such as over time are now being managed properly so that previous issues don't re-occur?** WH confirmed that everything is now done through central and there is tighter control than before.
- **Priority 2** – central functions have been re-organised but now needs to be checked that it can be funded for the next 3 years.
- **Priority 3** – financial systems are much more efficient now and the systems are being utilised properly. WH noted the mechanism for dealing with debts at school levels and the committee discussed the issues concerned with collecting debts from parents.
- **Priority 4** – WH updated on central reserve pooling and that clear direction from DfE has still not yet been received. The issue is keeping the schools financially secure while sensibly controlling the funds. The direction seems to be pooling reserves but this still has to be reported on individually per school.
- **Priority 5** – staffing structures around the schools has been addressed and is being managed, but the committee agreed that it is very tight and is having an impact on the teaching & learning across the MAT as evidenced in the latest data. The ability to deliver excellent teaching and learning has now bottomed out, and improvements cannot be made without further funding or resources. Leadership costs have been looked at but there are some schools that are heavier on leadership costs than should be the case for the number of pupils.

## 7. Review Income and Expenditure Against Planned Budget

### a. Income and Expenditure Against Planned Budget

The use of the finance systems, the staff restructuring and the targeting of resources such as improvement support has enabled the budgets to be managed much more carefully. The CFO talked through the finances for central and each school, highlighting any deficits (central, CG) and small surpluses (LT, NP, SC, SSCA, Wer, WHA). The detail is covered in the accounts paperwork and the committee discussed various aspects of the accounts. The committee noted that JC, HoS at NP&W and the governors have done really well to keep the school functioning well within budget but it was noted that there is not much room for manoeuvre. SC budget is looking much healthier than last year following the staff re-structuring. It was noted that through a lot of hard work and change, the finances across the MAT are much healthier than they were 2 years ago.

### b. Measure Budget Against Financial KPIs

Covered and individual schools have met KPIs; this will be highlighted in the audit.

### c. Virements and other transactions in accordance with the MAT Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation

None.

### d. Approval of Expenditure of Sums over agreed Financial Regulations

None.

## 8. Finance Directors Report

This will made available at the Audit committee and placed in the full Board reading.

## 9. Future Finance

### a. Income Generation

Income has started to be generated by conducting training and charging other schools for it. This will be built upon in future.

WH noted the DfE Trust Capacity Fund to support school improvement and explained the process. The criteria do not seem to favour our MAT because it seems to favour larger MATs that are already doing well, but WH will look to submit a bid anyway.

**b. Manage Investments**

No investments at present as any spare funds are used a reserves only.

**10. Capital Projects**

WH updated on the sewage issue at NP. WH updated on the CIF bid process, and CFO updated on the emergency bid process for the NP sewage project as the work really needs to be completed during half term while the area is still accessible. The funding has not yet been received. Committee agreed that work should be completed in Oct half term and the funds reimbursed from the emergency CIF bid.

One boiler at SSICA has now broken and the CIF bid was not successful. WH will obtain some other quotes as the first quote was in excess of £40K. This will be discussed at the RSS committee on 9 Oct 19.

LT fencing is an issue that will require funding.

Damp issue and toilets in year 1 at Wer are still an issue but CIF bids have continuously been rejected. Toilets are doable but the damp issue will be very expensive to resolve and will certainly need additional funding. The committee agreed that it is a health and safety issue, specifically a health issue and does need to be resolved.

**11. Strategy**

New IT suite is in schools and being used; phase 1 is complete. Phase 2 for the next year or so in terms of IT will be looking at ipads and other equipment for use in the schools. Internet at NP is better than it was.

**12. Policy Review**

Governor and Director Allowances – approved.

Procurement and Tendering – approved.

Reserves – approved.

**13. AOB**

Committee has been made aware of and are familiar with the new DfE guidance on Anti-Fraud checklists for academies. Committee was also made aware of the Accounting Officers checklist that WH will complete.

TM noted that Carol Green will be joining the Board of Directors, and will be a member of the RSS and Audit committees.

Following the governance review in the summer term, and the production of the new detailed cyclical plan, the scheme of delegation has now been amended to reflect the responsibilities of each committee in line with new direction from ESFA, DfE, HSE et al. Although it is noted that the actual delegations have not changed. Directors approved the 2019 version of the Scheme of Delegation and this has been published on the website.

**14. DONM**

Next FSD meeting is on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 9.30am at central office.

Meeting closed at 11am.

TJH Martin  
Governance Officer

**Distribution List:**

G. Barriball – Director (Chair) T. Woodward – Director (Vice) Claire Paul - Director P. Hague - Director	W. Hermon – CEO Director E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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