



# Northern Arch

## LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Finance and Resources Committee  
held at 6.00pm, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form  
College, Vane Terrace, Darlington,

### Minutes

Directors present:	Emma Chawner (Chair), Tim Fisher (CEO) and Mavis Lord Geoff Liddle (Joined the meeting remotely via Teams)
In attendance:	Lisa Marron: Chief Operating Officer (Northern Arch Learning Partnership) Glen Hart: Chief Financial Officer (Northern Arch Learning Partnership) Nikki Wade: Strategic & Development Officer (Northern Arch Learning Partnership) Laura Hawksby: Trust Governance and Policy Officer (Northern Arch Learning Partnership) Chris Beaumont (Clive Owen Accountants LLP)

#### DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION

#### ACTION BY

##### 1. Election of Chair

The Governance and Policy Officer sought nominations for the position of Chair of the Finance & Resources for the ensuing Academic Year.

Governors **RESOLVED** that Director Emma Chawner be appointed Chair of the Finance & Resources for the ensuing Academic Year.

*(Note: Director Emma Chawner in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.)*

Governance &  
Policy Officer

##### 2. Election of Vice Chair

Nominations were sought and received for the position of Vice Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee for the ensuing Academic Year.

Governors **RESOLVED** that Director Geoff Liddle be appointed Vice Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee

Governance &  
Policy Officer

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**Company Registration Number 07533271**

**3. Welcome, introductions and confirmation quorum present**

Directors and those present were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee. The Governance & Policy Officer confirmed that a quorum was present.

**4. Apologies for absence and their acceptance**

There were no apologies for absence.

**5. Notification of items of urgent other business**

There were no items of urgent other business.

**6. Declaration of personal and pecuniary interests**

**a) complete / review the Register of Interest**

Directors and those present had completed their annual Register of Interests to declare any relevant business or pecuniary interest and close family relationship between members and / or other trustees and / or employees. Registers would be updated during the academic year should circumstances change.

**b) To declare any personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting.**

Directors and those present were reminded that they should declare any personal or pecuniary interest in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting. It was noted The Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer had included Longfield Trading as part of their annual declarations of relevant business or pecuniary interests. No further interests were declared in relation to the meeting.

**c) Code of Conduct**

Directors were reminded they had signed the 'Directors Code of Conduct, upon appointment. It was confirmed that signed Directors' Code of Conduct were held on file for all Directors presents.

**7. Approval of Minutes / review of agreed actions / matters arising**

The draft Minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting. A copy would be retained on file.



With reference to Minute 10 (Finance & Resources Committee 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024) the Chief Financial Officer confirmed that the Teacher's Pension Grant had been fully received and accounted for this financial year.

It was noted that all actions had been completed.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance & Resources Committee on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 be approved as an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.

Governance &  
Policy Officer

## **PART B: Annual Report and Financial Statements**

### **8. Presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statements for Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College – Period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

#### **a) Audit findings report period ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reported on the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College's Audit Findings Report for the period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Directors noted that it was a clean unmodified audit, with no issues identified.

#### **b) Annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reported on the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College's annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Directors carefully scrutinised the report and noted that the final balance was strong and there remained a surplus.

Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The audit findings, annual report and financial statements for Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College – Period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 be received, noted and recommended for approval to the Full Board of Directors at their meeting to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- b) The staff across the Trust involved in producing the reports and financial statements be thanked for all their hard work

COO/CFO/  
Chair of F&R

COO

### **9. Presentation of Northern Arch Learning Partnership Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**

#### **a) Audit findings report period ending 31 August 2024**

Chris Beaumont (Clive Owen Accountants LLP) reported upon the Northern Arch Learning Partnership audit findings report for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. He

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advised that it was a clean unmodified audit. It was noted that the Trust was looking to consolidate the fixed asset register and a credit card procedure has been implemented.

**b) Annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**

Chris Beaumont (Clive Owen Accountants LLP) reported upon the Northern Arch Learning Partnership annual report and financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. He advised that the Trust remained a going concern with no fraud or breaches of regulations. Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College held the largest reserves, with a current focus on the schools to build up reserves to ensure every school was operating well within its own right.

Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The audit findings, annual report and financial statements for Northern Arch Learning Partnership – Period ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 be received, noted and recommended for approval to the Full Board of Directors at their meeting to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- b) The staff across the Trust involved in producing the reports and financial statements be thanked for all their hard work.

COO/CFO/  
Chair of F&R

COO

**c) Report of the Directors and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2024 for Longfield Trading Limited**

Chris Beaumont (Clive Owen Accountants LLP) reported upon the report of the Longfield Trading Directors and financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 for Longfield Trading Limited. The Finance & Resources Committee noted that a new business strategy was currently being developed for the consideration of Longfield Trading Directors.

Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The report of the Longfield Trading Directors and financial statements – Period ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 be received, noted and recommended for approval to the Directors of Longfield Trading Limited to be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024.
- b) The staff across the Trust involved in producing the reports and financial statements be thanked for all their hard work.

COO/CFO/  
Chair of F&R

COO

**PART C: Business Items for Discussion**



## 10 SRMA Report

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reported upon the recent SRMA (School Resource Management Adviser) Finance report. The SRMA visit had been a positive experience for the Trust and a very useful management support tool.

Directors were pleased to note that it was a good report that had provided an independent review of the Academies in the Trust.

Directors noted that QE was already rated as outstanding regarding its balances. Areas to focus on going forward included continuing to review required staffing levels whilst maintaining the education/pastoral care received by the pupils. Directors requested that actionable points be provided to the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the report be noted, and actionable points be provided to the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee.

COO/CFO

## 11 Risk Registers

The current Academies and Trust Risk Registers were noted by the Finance and Resources Committee. Directors requested that risk management and the registers be considered in further detail at the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that risk management and the registers be considered in further detail at the next meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee.

COO/CFO/  
Strategic  
Development  
Officer

## 12 Annual Internal Assurance Report and Internal Audit Areas for Focus

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reported upon the internal assurance annual report for the year ended 31st August 2024. Directors noted that it was a good report providing assurance to Directors and that it would now be duly submitted to the ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency).

Directors requested that amber risks as identified in the external audit plus at least two other areas should be included in the internal audit areas for focus going forward. These risks do not need to be financed based but have an element of potential risk and/or assurance to Directors of compliance.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the:

- a) The internal assurance annual report for the year ended 31st August 2024 be duly submitted to the ESFA.
- b) That the internal areas audit for focus be considered further by the Board and be advised back to the Finance & Resources Committee.

CFO

COO/CFO

### 13 ADEMSS Report

**Money:** The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) reported upon the management accounts position as of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The Chair sought assurance if there were any current financial risks and the CFO confirmed that there were none. The budget was currently in a break even position.

Directors agreed that whilst the new report format was helpful a full pack of management accounts information including Debtors/Creditors/cash flow etc...) should continue to be forwarded to the Finance & Resources Committee and Chair of Trustees.

**Environment:** The Chief Operating Officer (COO) provided key updates regarding the Trust's estates and health and safety. A copy of the report is held on file.

Set out in the report were the next round of CIF (Condition Improvement Fund) bids for 2025/26 which would require approval prior to the next Board meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2024. After careful consideration the Finance & Resources Committee approved, subject to the Board of Directors approval, for Northern Arch Learning Partnership to submit CIF bids with match funding from the Trust as set out in the COO's report.

Directors **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) The Finance & Resources Committee approved, subject to the Board of Directors' approval, for Northern Arch Learning Partnership to submit CIF bids as set out in the COO's report with match funding from the Trust. It was agreed that the Governance & Policy Officer would email the Board for their approval as the next Board meeting was after the deadline date for submission of CIF bids.

COO/  
Governance  
Policy Officer

### 14 Fraud Statement/Data Breaches

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) advised there were no incidents of fraud to be reported. There had been 1 minor data breach in the Summer Term, which was now closed with the ICO and no further action was required. Directors requested that any learning points be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the above be noted and any learning points be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

COO/  
OBM

### 15 Terms of Reference Finance & Resources Committee

The Committee reviewed the Finance & Resources Terms of Reference. After carefully reviewing the terms of reference Directors requested the following be added/amended:



- Removing reference to 'developing & monitoring' the Business Continuity Strategy and instead Committee to 'receive reports as appropriate.'
- Finance: point 5 add '**Receive**' reports from the Executive Team in relation to Trust estate planning. Add at point 8 '**seek assurance**' that information submitted to DFE and ESFA that affects funding is accurate and in compliance with funding criteria.
- Include reference to the Pay Review Committee in in the terms of Reference.

Directors **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Resources Committee be approved subject to the above amendments.

Governance &  
Policy Officer

## PART D: CONCLUDING ITEMS

### 17 Approval of Documents for Inspection

Directors **RESOLVED** that the agenda, supporting documents and approved minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of the audit findings reports at items 8, 9 in accordance with Article 125 c.) as the reports had been prepared solely for the use of Trustees, management and others within the Trust and item 10 in accordance with Article 125 c) due to commercial sensitivity.

Dates, times and venue of future meetings

- Thursday 27th March 2024 at 5.00 pm
- Tuesday 17th June 2025 at 5.00 pm

These Minutes were approved by the Finance & Resources Committee of Northern Arch Learning Partnership as follows:

27/03/25 (date)

signature (chair):

name:

E. L. CHAWNER

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Page 7 of 8

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APPROVED

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Page 8 of 8

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