



Minutes of a meeting of the ESPO Management Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire on Wednesday, 13 November 2024.

### PRESENT

Cllr. M. Jamil – Peterborough City Council (in the Chair)

Leicestershire County Council  
Mrs. M. Wright CC

Norfolk County Council  
Cllr. J. James

Lincolnshire County Council  
Cllr. S. Rawlins

Peterborough City Council  
Cllr. C. Hogg

Warwickshire County Council  
Cllr. P. Butlin

### Apologies

Apologies were received Cllr. A. Hagues (Lincolnshire County Council), Cllr. J. Bensly (Norfolk County Council), Mr. J. Poland CC (Leicestershire County Council), Cllr. N. Shailer and Cllr. S. Ferguson (both of Cambridgeshire County Council).

### In Attendance

Cllr. R. Baxter-Payne (Warwickshire County Council) - online

### **ESPO**

Kristian Smith – Director  
David Godsell – Assistant Director  
Gary Tapp – Acting Commercial Financial Controller  
Maurice Campbell – Assistant Director  
Gary Ford – Assistant Director

### **Leicestershire County Council**

Lauren Haslam – Consortium Secretary  
Simone Hines – on behalf of the Consortium Treasurer  
Anna Poole – Democratic Services Officer

#### 25. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 were taken as read, confirmed, and signed.

#### 26. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

27. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

28. Items referred by the Finance and Audit Subcommittee.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that three items had been referred by the Finance and Audit Subcommittee, as follows:

- Item 5 - 2023/24 Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement
- Item 6 - Contract Procedure Rules Update.
- Item 7 - Review and Revision of the Constitution of the Management Committee.

29. 2023/24 Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement.

The Management Committee considered a joint report of the Director and Consortium Treasurer which sought approval for the 2023/24 Financial Statements, the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement and the payment of a dividend pool of £6.1m in December 2024. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 5', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the following be approved:

- a. the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement;
- b. the 2023/24 financial statements;
- c. the dividend pool of £6.1m to be paid out in December 2024

30. Contract Procedure Rules Update.

The Management Committee considered a report of the Director which sought approval for the revised ESPO Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs). A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 6', is filed with these minutes.

In response to a member question, the Director explained that the Procurement Act 2023 would necessitate a fundamental update of the ESPO CPRs. As the Procurement Act 2023 would apply only to procurements commenced on or after 24 February 2025, and the previous CPRs would continue to apply to procurements commenced prior to this date, officers would be operating under two different CPRs and all had been trained in doing so.

RESOLVED:

That

- a. the proposed amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules, in line with Leicestershire County Council's Rules, detailed at Appendices A, B and C of the report, be approved; and
- b. authority be delegated to the Finance and Audit Sub-Committee to approve such changes as are required to be made to the Contract Procedure Rules before 24 February 2025 in compliance with the Procurement Act 2023.

31. Review and Revision of the Constitution of the Management Committee.

The Management Committee considered a report of the Consortium Secretary which sought approval for the proposed changes to the ESPO Constitution. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 7', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed changes to the ESPO Constitution, summarised in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved.

32. Director's Progress update.

The Management Committee gave consideration to a report of the Director which provided an update of the actions and progress made since the previous ESPO Management Committee held in September 2024. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 8', is filed with these minutes.

In presenting the report, the Director explained that competition in the marketplace was fierce, but it was expected that the full year's budget with a £7.2m surplus would be achieved. He added that sickness cases detailed in the report were not caused by work related issues and were being managed by the HR Business Partner.

Arising from discussion, the following points were raised:

- i. The new warehouse extension was expected to improve stock availability and pick rates as all stock was in one location rather than on separate sites.
- ii. Whilst there was pressure within the schools market, there were pockets of opportunities such as breakfast clubs, which would be followed up.
- iii. The development programme for managers and aspiring managers was discussed with staff at 1-2-1s and performance discussions. ESPO was keen to grow its own talent, and people were encouraged to get involved. However, the level of commitment required from staff was recognised.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided on the actions and progress made since the last update provided to Members in September 2024 be noted.

33. Date of Next Meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 19 March 2025 at 10.30am.

34. Exclusion of the Press and Public.

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100 (A) (iv) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business on the grounds that it would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Act and that in all circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

35. Supplementary Information Informing the Progress Report of the Director's Progress Update.

The Management Committee considered an exempt report of the Director which set out further supplementary information regarding the Director's Progress Update. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 12', is filed with these minutes.

The exempt report was not for publication as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Director responded to a question related to potential future business opportunities.

RESOLVED:

That the update provided by the Director be noted.

36. Finance Update on Grove Park Warehouse Extension.

The Management Committee considered a joint report of the Director and Consortium Treasurer which provided an update on the Grove Park warehouse extension project. A copy of the report, marked 'Agenda Item 13', is filed with these minutes.

The exempt report was not for publication as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Committee commended officers for bringing the project in on time and within budget.

RESOLVED:

That the latest financial position of the Grove Park warehouse extension project be noted.