

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

**Held on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 18.00**

**Present:** Di Dean, Michael Smethers, Jane Walker-Smith, Niro Mendonca, Simon Walsh, Peter Tarry, Tim Moss, , Jez Farmer, Annie Thomson, Richard Sullivan, Sharon Roberts

**Apologies:** Rebecca Lonsdale

**In attendance:** Jo Wiles (Governance Professional)

<b>1. Apologies for absence</b>	Apologies were received for Rebecca Lonsdale.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>2. Declarations of interest</b>	Mr Walsh declared a conflict of interest.	
<b>3. Confidentiality</b>	Colleagues are reminded that minutes remain in draft until they are signed off at the next meeting and should therefore not be shared before signing off, nor the content discussed outside of the meeting.	<b>ALL</b>
<b>4. To receive any other business</b>	No items were declared.	
<b>5. To receive any correspondence</b>	No items were declared.	
<b>6. Minutes of the previous meeting</b>	The minutes of the meeting held on <b><u>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024</u></b> were unanimously approved as an accurate account of the meeting.	
<b>7. Matters arising from the minutes</b>	<p><b><u>Training Confirmations</u></b></p> <p>Reminders to be sent for governors to confirm they have read the Academies Trust Handbook and completed the GDPR and Cyber Security online Training.</p> <p>Mrs Dean updated that RPA, the school's current insurance provider, will now only recognise the cyber security training provided by the National Cyber Security Centre. As staff completion of the NCSC's course is a condition of the cover governors agreed that they should also complete the online course. <b>Action: Mrs Dean to send</b></p>	

	<p><i>Governance Professional training details and to then be shared with governors for completion.</i></p> <p><b><u>CCTV Policy</u></b> Mrs Dean informed that this policy is still being updated and will be brought to a future meeting for review.</p> <p>The policy was covered in item 8 – Policies</p> <p><b><u>Procurement Tendering</u></b> Mrs Dean to provide an update on what other schools are currently doing in relation to email approval for urgent contracts.</p> <p><b>Ms Thomson gave feedback that in her role as a trustee of another academy governors are emailed about urgent approvals and asked to comment/approve. The issue was then covered in item 8 – Policies.</b></p>	
<b>8. Policies</b>	<p>The following policy was circulated to all governors for review prior to the meeting:</p> <p><b><u>CCTV Policy</u></b> Mrs Dean provided an update on the proposed changes to the policy and highlighted those in relation to the retention of CCTV footage, which would be retained for 1 month or longer for any legitimate purpose.</p> <p><i>Will footage need to be deleted on a daily basis for the rolling period?</i> Mrs Dean informed that footage will be deleted routinely, only items that need to be kept and used for a legitimate purpose would be retained beyond the 30-day limit.</p> <p><b>The amended policy was unanimously recommended for ratification at the next FGB meeting.</b></p> <p><b><u>GDPR Policy</u></b> Mrs Dean explained the proposed changes shown in the draft that was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>The amended policy was unanimously recommended for ratification at the next FGB meeting.</b></p>	

	<p><b><u>Procurement Policy and Schedule of Delegation</u></b></p> <p>This policy was carried over from the last meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Dean provided feedback received from other local schools on what process they use when urgent contract approval decisions are needed.</p> <p><b>The amended policy, and the resulting changes to the schedule of delegation were unanimously recommended for ratification at the next FGB meeting.</b></p> <p>Privacy Impact Statement has also been updated following the CCTV policy updates. This needs to be completed alongside the policy to show why we have this and what is the need.</p> <p>Mrs Dean to send through amended policies to be circulated for approval at the FGB Meeting. <b>Action: Mrs Dean to send Governance Professional policies to be shared prior to the FGB Meeting</b></p>	DDN
9. Finance Update	<p>Mrs Dean circulated the latest management report prior to the meeting. She also took the meeting through the document and explained the school's current financial position together with where she is currently forecasting it will be at the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Mrs Dean advised that she is still waiting for information on what funding the school will receive in relation to the increase in employer's NI contributions which will rise in April.</p> <p>The meeting discussed options for reports pending information on funding for the NI increase and agreed that it would benefit from reports showing different scenarios in relation to differing levels of funding and that in any event it would be prudent to show actual figures in relation to the known increase in expenditure from April 2025.</p> <p>Governors also emphasised the need to monitor cashflow requirements in light of the increased expenditure,</p>	DDN

	<p>particularly while there was no definitive amount to offset that extra spending. <b>Action: Mrs Dean to report</b></p> <p>With the imminent increase of employer NI contributions, Mrs Dean informed that contractors have also got in contact and will be looking to pass the impact of the costs on by increasing their prices. The current caterers have advised that they will be increasing their prices but awaiting confirmation as to what they will be increased to, information will be shared once received.</p> <p><b><u>Staffing</u></b></p> <p>Mrs Dean advised that staffing is very moveable and the school is scrutinising where savings can be made.</p> <p>No formal figures have been received with regards to next year's budget but there is feeling amongst local schools that there will definitely not be an increase in income that matches increased the expenditure. Mrs Dean reported that she expects information on funding for next year by the end of March 2025.</p> <p>Mrs Dean reported the implantation of new 'sweeping' arrangements agreed with Lloyds bank after she asked whether the bank offered such an account. As a result, the school is now receiving a better interest rate that could deliver an additional £20-30k a year in income (dependent on day to day balances and any additional grants received).</p>	
<b>10. Contracts Register</b>	<p>The register was shared prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Mrs Dean informed that the school is currently researching on using 'Every' asset management software to support with contract management and compliance tracking.</p> <p><i>Is there a cost involved?</i></p> <p>Mrs Dean confirmed that it would be £1,800 per annum.</p> <p><i>Could we also use the software for policy reminders?</i></p>	

	<p>Mrs Dean confirmed that this is something that can also be set up.</p> <p><b>Photocopying</b></p> <p>Mrs Dean reported that the school is meeting with Sharp to review and discuss the possible use of MFDs and a print management solution that could replace local printers and help reduce costs.</p>	
<b>11. Internal Audit</b>	<p>Mrs Dean confirmed that the internal auditors are currently auditing the website and that she is waiting for the results of this.</p>	
<b>12. New Build Update</b>	<p>Mrs Dean confirmed that no decision has been taken on the application for planning permission and reported that the local authority has asked for a section 106 agreement in relation to the school's travel plan and its subsequent monitoring. She confirmed that SA Law has been instructed to deal with the agreement; Mr Walsh declared his interest in SA Law.</p> <p>Mrs Dean also reported that four companies have been invited to tender for the build and that she is hopeful that they will be in the position give presentations in the next few weeks. Mr Tarry will take part in them in due course.</p> <p><b><u>Health and Safety</u></b></p> <p>Mr Tarry confirmed that he will be meeting with Mr Paice next week to review progress of the new build and for a health and safety review.</p>	
<b>13. Premises and Health and Safety Report</b>	<p><b><u>Premises</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Computerised Heating System</u></b> – Following the successful CIF bid the school will have a computerised heating system installed. There have been delays in receiving the funding meaning that the project has been pushed back but work should now start in April 2025.</p>	

	<p><b><u>M Festival</u></b> - All plans for the festival have taken the new building and site into account, and the event will be on the far field this year</p> <p><b><u>Front of school security</u></b> – The security at the front of school has been reviewed and Mrs Dean advised that some quotes have been requested for additional fencing and security gates. Mrs Dean also informed that a meeting has been scheduled with a Senior Health and Safety officer from Herts County Council to discuss options.</p> <p><b>Have you received any costings?</b> Mrs Dean responded that no costs have been received just some ideas have been circulated.</p>	
<b>14. Risk Register</b>	<p>The Risk Register was circulated for review prior to the meeting.</p> <p><i>Do we need to increase the risk because of the lower birth rate predicted for future years?</i></p> <p>Ms Thomson suggested not because of the expected uplift of independent students moving to the state sector following the introduction of VAT on private school fees. She also pointed to the Chiswell Green development and the impact of students that have home elected or who are missing in education that are expected to return to education; Ms Thomson also reported assurances regarding demographic trends and related matters that she has received from the Local Authority which point to numbers being sustained.</p>	
<b>15. AOB Items</b>	No items declared.	
<b>16. Date and time of next meeting</b>	<b>Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 6pm</b>	
<b>17. Close of meeting</b>	The meeting ended at 7pm.	

