

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

Held on Thursday 13th March 2025 at 18.00

Present: Di Dean, Michael Smethers, Jane Walker-Smith, Niro Mendonca, Simon Walsh (from item 8), Peter Tarry, Tim Moss, , Jez Farmer, Annie Thomson, Richard Sullivan, Sharon Roberts, Rebecca Lonsdale, Costa Vaggas and Karen Francis

Apologies: Annie Thomson, Jez Farmer

In attendance: Jo Wiles (Governance Professional)

1. Apologies for absence	Apologies were received and approved for Annie Thomson and Jez Famer.	ALL
2. Declarations of interest	Mr Walsh declared a conflict of interest.	
3. Confidentiality	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.	ALL
4. To receive any other business	No items were declared.	
5. To receive any correspondence	No items were declared.	
6. Minutes of the previous meeting	The minutes of the meeting held on <u>Wednesday 27th November 2024</u> were unanimously approved as an accurate record of the meeting.	
7. Matters arising from the minutes	<p><u>Training Confirmations</u></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</p>	

	<p>condition of the cover governors agreed that they should also complete the online course. Action: Mrs Dean to send Governance Professional training details and to then be shared with governors for completion. This action has been completed.</p> <p><u>Finance Update</u></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. Action: Mrs Dean To be discussed in Item 9 Finance Update.</p> <p>Governors also emphasised the need to monitor cashflow requirements in light of the increased expenditure, particularly while there was no definitive amount to offset that extra spending. Action: Mrs Dean to report To be discussed in Item 9 Finance Update.</p>	
8. Policies	<p>The following policy was circulated to all governors for review prior to the meeting:</p> <p><u>Health and Safety Policy</u></p> <p>Mr Tarry, Health and Safety link governor advised that he has scrutinised the policy and procedures.</p> <p>Governors confirmed that they were happy with the procedures document and agreed that Mr Tarry would undertake a detailed review of the policy document which took account of questions and comments governors had submitted prior to the meeting and also liaise with Mrs Dean and Ms Thomson to produce an updated draft for recommendation at the full governing body's next meeting.</p>	
9. Finance Update	<p>The management report was circulated to all prior to the meeting.</p>	

	<p>Mrs Dean presented the management report and for the benefit of new parent governors, explained the report's columns, how to interrogate them and the reasons for the variances to the original budget shown in current version. Main changes to the income were around the additional Core Schools Grant that was announced last September, an insurance payout for the damaged floor in Pascal Hall and additional funding received from the LA for Special Needs.</p> <p>Mrs Dean confirmed that the expenditure report included increased employer NI contributions for the period from April to August, however the overall forecast (for now while we await details of the actual funding) was on the basis of a nil government contribution to fund the increase.</p> <p>After taking the meeting through the whole report, and dealing with the school's contingency fund, Mrs Dean explained the predicted year end surplus of £49K shown in it and confirmed that that figure could improve if government funding for NI increases is received.</p> <p><i>How do reserves compare against reserves for previous years?</i></p> <p>Mrs Dean explained that the reserves have actually increased slightly over previous years. The increase in our PAN has helped with this, and we are once again full for September with a waiting list. Other schools have seen lower numbers in year 7.</p> <p>We are also focusing on our post 16 numbers and ensuring that we carry through to year 12 as many students as possible.</p> <p><i>Is there a threshold where sixth form courses are not viable due to low uptake?</i></p> <p>Mrs Dean responded that this is carefully monitored and recruitment needs both from a student and teacher perspective are considered as early as possible.</p>	
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	<p><i>Would the government ask for any surplus funds to be returned?</i></p> <p>Mrs Dean responded that the government has not made any requests for surplus to be returned.</p> <p>Mrs Dean reminded all that the budget is moveable and teachers have until the 31 May to submit resignations and that staffing changes could have a significant impact on the year end position.</p> <p>Mrs Dean also reported that the new wellbeing benefit package has been really well received by staff.</p> <p>Mrs Dean spoke to the KPI tab on the report and confirm that she would start to compare against national benchmarking although reminded all that the government data used is a year out of date.</p> <p>Mrs Dean reported that the cash flow forecast was not available because it had not been completed in time for the meeting. She also confirmed that she had no concerns on the current cash flow position, and in answer to a question on the impact of NI increases, that the additional expenditure flowing from these would not give a negative cash position in the current financial year.</p> <p>The balance sheet and aged debtor and creditor reports were circulated prior to the meeting and scrutinised.</p>	
10. Internal Audit	<p>The Internal audit report which focussed on the school's website was considered and the substantial assurance given was noted.</p> <p>Mrs Dean confirmed that the reports advisory action for the scheme of delegation to be added to the website has been completed.</p>	
11. School Resource – Self-Assessment Checklist	<p>Mrs Dean reported and confirmed that the updated annual School Resource Self-Assessment checklist had been updated and filed with input from Mrs Walker-Smith and Mr Walsh.</p>	

<p>12. New Build Update</p>	<p>A planning decision is expected by 15th April. SADC is being regularly chased to ensure timely progress.</p> <p>Mrs Dean updated that a meeting was held with the Highway Agency to address concerns about parents parking outside the school during pick-up and drop-off.</p> <p>Tenders from five builders have been received by the 6 March deadline, and the school hopes that work can begin in May subject planning consent being issued shortly.</p> <p>Lessons from previous new build projects will inform the management of the current project.</p>	
<p>13. Premises and Health and Safety Report</p>	<p>New catering kiosk ready for the summer with works being completed over Easter.</p> <p>The school secured Condition Improvement Fund support for zonal heating installation which will support in reducing utility costs.</p> <p>Mrs Dean advised that there is some structural damage at the back of the hall which is awaiting assessment by a structural engineer.</p> <p>Additional barriers will be installed at the back of the school following an agreement with HCC.</p> <p>One of the defibrillators will be relocated to the front of the school to allow public access.</p> <p><i>Why do we need to move the unit to the front of the school?</i></p> <p>Mrs Dean responded that it is community spirited to ensure that units are strategically placed and to enhance community access in an emergency. She also confirmed that there will still be four other units inside the school after the move.</p> <p><u>Lettings</u></p> <p>Spring term invoices have now been paid. To date we have invoiced for £113,764 as opposed to £107,044 for the same period last year, making an increase of £6,720.</p> <p><i>What is the status on the need for additional gates at the front of the school?</i></p>	

	Mrs Dean reported that the school has received two quotes for new gates to be installed which are too expensive to be viable. The school is reviewing how it could raise funds to support changes to the gates.	
14. Risk Register	<p>Mrs Dean gave feedback that other local academy schools are using 'risk appetite' as part of their approach to risk management. This entails board level agreement for an appetite risk against specific topic headings which then feeds into risk registers.</p> <p>Governors asked if they could review a template at a future meeting. It was noted that the benefits of this process would ensure that all committees are consistent in their approach.</p>	
15. AOB Items	No items declared.	
16. Date and time of next meeting	Thursday 15th May 2025 at 6pm	
17. Close of meeting	The meeting ended at 7.10pm.	