

THE GOVERNING BODY OF HOWARD PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Finance and Premises Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee held **remotely** at 1:00 pm, on Tuesday 21 April 2020.

PRESENT

Mr O Bryden, Mrs V Farrell, Mr R Jeffrey, Mr J Pickles (Acting Head Teacher), Mr G Muir,

In Attendance

Mrs D J Calverley (Minute Clerk)

126. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Mr O Bryden took on the role of acting chair at last meeting, pending the nomination and election of Committee Chair. Mr O Bryden confirmed that he was happy to continue as Chair, was duly nominated and elected by Governors.

RESOLVED: That Mr O Bryden continue as Chair of the Finance and Premises Committee.

127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Mrs J Leighton (with consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

128. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT UP UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items notified to be brought up under any other business.

129. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2020 be approved by the Chair as a correct record and signed at a future meeting.

130. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

131. BUDGET REVIEW

The final budget monitoring report had been circulated prior to meeting and Mrs Farrell invited questions from the Committee.

Q: Does the budget you have pulled together include the £30,000?

A: No it does not, we will return to the School with a small contingency, plus the carry forward.

Mrs Farrell made it clear that although the financial position is in hand, the School cannot afford to make a loss for many more years before serious problems arise.

The biggest cost to the School is staffing and a full complement of staff would mean 0.6 FTE overstaffed. This overstaffing has been mitigated in recent years by maternity leave absences.

Q: At the last meeting we discussed doing all of the carpets at a cost of £3,818, what does the budget include?

A: Just the staircase which had become a Health & Safety issue.

Q: Have you pulled out another £11,000 that is at risk?

A: We have been asked to keep a record of losses because there is the potential to claim some of that back, but this is not known yet.

The Bradford City provision in School is not included in the budget. They do a significant amount in PPA cover, lunchtime cover and maintaining the level and profile of sport in School. A full staff complement would mean that covering PPA wouldn't be a problem, but the quality of PE provision would be affected. Mrs Farrell recommended to the Committee that the Bradford City provision should continue.

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommended the continuation of the Bradford City provision.

Q: How can we quantify that financially?

A: The approximate cost is £13,400 gross for the year, which includes all curricular and extra-curricular activities. The provision from Bradford City is very good value compared to other providers. Something to bear in mind is that in the current circumstances, the School would not be using that provision again until September 2020 and would need to be mostly considered in the 2021/22 budget projection.

Although the contingency money would cover the loss, it was recommended that Governors begin to look at where extra income can be generated or costs reduced in future years.

With regard to the surplus 0.6 FTE staffing, the recommendation is to address this through non-recruitment, should existing staff retire or leave the school. It was mentioned that it is teaching staff rather than support staff where this saving needs to be made.

Q: If we have SEN children, do we still need to pay the first £6,000

A: Yes. Of the children we are expecting into School in September, one of them has an EHC around speech and language and we have also been named on another child's EHC draft as the School they want to attend. That would take us to 31 in reception in September. One of the children is not within catchment and has visited their local School and was told that it could not meet their child's needs. Although we will get the money for both of these children we will have to look at employing at least one member of staff. The second child has a key worker at nursery that will transfer over at a cost to the School.

Q: Are able to use the large number of SEN children already in the School and/or out of catchment as a valid reason in an appeal?

A: Yes we can say that we have a large number of children with SEN, but probably not with regard to out of catchment. This has been discussed with the SEN contact in the LA, and she will be invited into the School by the Head teacher once the school reopens fully.

The committee reaffirmed the School's commitment to supporting children with SEN but recognise that sometimes the support can be spread very thinly and affect results over the School. It was proposed that a conversation with the LA be brought up, regarding why similar Schools are unable to take particular children in because they cannot meet their needs.

RESOLVED: That a discussion be arranged with the LA regarding SEN provision.

Q: Are any savings or increased costs becoming apparent during shutdown?

A: Heating and resource costs are obviously less, but it is minimal. The majority of costs are staffing which remain.

Q: When we did reorganisation it was aimed at 75% of the budget on staffing. We appear to be way over that?

A: It is about 90%. The vast majority of our staff are also on the upper pay scale so we have a costly staff cohort at the moment. It is a benefit in terms of stability in the school but a negative budget pressure.

RESOLVED: That Governors approve the full budget for sign off at the next Full Governing Body meeting.

132. FINANCE AND PREMISES REPORT

The report was circulated to the Committee members prior to the meeting, which they all read. Mrs Farrell had also sent an email to the Committee members regarding the carry forward. Questions were then invited.

Q: Does £1164 include our carry forward, which we have carried forward again?

A: Yes that's correct. It was budgeted to spend £26,000 on improvements throughout the School. It is hard at the moment to quantify the loss, but this is just a heads up of what it could look like when we get back to the School in terms of the revenue we may lose. This will of course be the 2021 budget.

There were no further queries and the Committee observed that where there is overspend, this appears to be compensated by something that is under. The carry forward has helped.

RESOLVED: That once Mrs Farrell gets the go ahead for the budget, it be signed off by Mr Muir and then ratified at the Full Governing Body meeting.

The Committee thanked Mrs Farrell for her work on this.

133. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Health and Safety Governor involvement on the Committee – (to be deferred)

Q: Who is coming in on site at the moment?

A: Mr Pickles is in the School and Mrs Farrell is coming in also to ensure things are kept on top of, for example a minor leak in the boiler room which was spotted and fixed. Upstairs is mostly shut off due to the small number of children that are in the School and this makes cleaning easier too.

134. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That future meeting dates be agreed at the next Full Governing Body meeting on Tuesday, 5 May 2020.

It was mentioned that as it is not yet known when Schools will return, it may be June but this would inevitably bring difficulties too.

135. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School, in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.