

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 6.10pm on Monday 18 January 2021.

PRESENT

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

In Attendance

Anna Walker (Minute Clerk)
Mrs S Mollett (Deputy Head Teacher)

11. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence and no declarations of interest.

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

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

13. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2020**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair at a future meeting.

14. **MATTERS ARISING**

Any Other Business – Football Training Group (Minute 8 (b) refers)

Governors noted that parents had been informed (via the Newsletter) about other groups using the School and this had been discussed at the Full Governing Body meeting in September 2020.

15. **FINANCE AND PREMISES REPORT**

Governors had been sent the reports prior to the meeting.

(a) **Finance**

Governors noted that the financial monitoring report showed that the budget was broadly in line with the forecast. Governors asked to be notified if the budget started to deviate from this position. Mrs Farrell said that it was possible to circulate the budget monitoring report on a monthly basis but Governors agreed that this level of scrutiny was not required and that, between meetings, they only needed to be notified by exception.

Reference was made to some areas of expenditure which had been required to cover health and safety works, including light fittings and vinyl flooring.

It was highlighted that the cleaning budget would continue to be overspent due to the hygiene requirements necessitated by the pandemic.

Mrs Farrell suggested that, once pandemic restrictions had eased, Governors would be welcome to come into School to talk through finance processes in more detail.

Q: There are various lines in the report which are overspent. Some of these will be items that are paid up front at the beginning of the year. Is there an overall overspend?

A: The budget is in line with the forecast. The School is due to receive some additional income over the year, including a payment from the Local Authority (LA) in respect of the children's centre; student teacher income; and Covid income. The overspend shown in the report is a timing issue and the report includes commentary for all areas of overspend/exception. There remains an £18k contingency.

Q: Not all copying paper and photocopier leases appear to be budgeted for. Is that right?

A: The costings for the photocopier are covered within the general resources budget.

Q: Will there be a contingency in place at the end of the year?

A: It is hoped that the School will not need to use any more of contingency than was originally budgeted for.

Q: At the beginning of last year, the contingency was £35k, what are the reasons for the reduction in contingency?

A: Some of the contingency budget was allocated to the staffing budget.

Q: Is the cost of caretaking going to increase because this is being covered by a contractor?

A: This will not increase as the fee has been paid for the full year. Cleaning costs have increased because of the additional hours required during the day. This was initially being covered by the savings made over the summer from not having caretaker cover over this period. However, these savings have now depleted.

Q: Are there any risks around cashflow, for example, if the School was required to pay for something before it received the income to cover it?

A: This is not an issue for the School and it can be up to £50k 'overdrawn' with the LA. A large proportion of outgoings are to the LA for services.

Q: The universal free School meals and catering budgets do not appear to balance. What is the reason?

A: The income and expenditure are reconciled on separate lines.

Q: We are getting closer to the budget setting process for the next financial year. Is there any indication of the funding position for next year and how this will be impacted by Covid?

A: There was an update sent to Governors today with a breakdown of Covid costs. There will continue to be additional costs of hygiene and this impacts the resources budget, for example, soap and paper towels. Indications are that the School will be unable to claim back these costs.

The first Covid claim was £2,369, but there will be additional spend of £10k that the school will not be able to claim. It is not clear how free School meals will be dealt with (although this is a separate issue to Covid). The Kirklees finance team did provide the School with an indicative three-year budget and this predicted a slight increase in School funding, in line with inflation, but factors, such as, pupil numbers will also affect the budget. The three year budget will be updated as part of the budget setting process.

Q: When was the last three year budget projection undertaken?

A: This is done every year at budget setting.

ACTION: Mrs Farrell to share the three year budget projections with Governors and provide an update to the full governors meeting on this position.

Q: Does the budget monitoring report cover the period to the end of November only?

A: Yes, it is a report to the end of that quarter.

(b) Premises

It was noted that the substantive caretaker was not on site but would be undertaking some online training at home, in line with the recommendation in the recent health and safety inspection. The School had previously planned to commission external support in reviewing the role and responsibilities of the caretaker, but this had been postponed due to the circumstances of the pandemic.

Q: Is a peripatetic caretaker in place?

A: Yes, but they are not available to undertake all caretaking duties as they are also covering at other Schools. They have undertaken the gritting and other urgent jobs.

Q: Is it reasonable for the School to grit the full external premises?

A: The advice from Kirklees is to grit the main access routes only. The one way system within School has increased the length of the access route. The advice was not to grit the car park but ice is a particular issue and so the school undertakes this also. The highways department has been contacted for assistance and they confirmed that it might be possible for them to grit the car park, but this will be on an ad hoc basis, if they have sufficient time. The school is unable to secure a more definite response as highways do not offer gritting as a traded service.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY

An update was provided on the recent health and safety inspection which had been commissioned from the Local Authority to support the School with health and safety compliance. It was agreed that the health and safety Governor would review the inspection report and that this would form the basis of future health and safety monitoring visits, focussing on progress against actions.

ACTION: Mrs Farrell to share the health and safety inspection report with the health and safety Governor.

Governors had previously discussed the installation of a soft floor in the early years outdoor play area. It was noted that this had not been progressed, but the work was still planned and would be scheduled. There had been no accidents in this area and it was not deemed to be a hazard. There was an issue with one of the external wooden poles in the School ground and this would be removed before it became unstable.

Q: Are there any actions outstanding from the health and safety inspection report?

A: The actions were ranked by priority - red, amber, green (RAG) - and there are some red actions to undertake.

Q: Can you give a summary of the red actions from the health and safety report?

A: The actions include addressing gaps in health and safety policies, updating maintenance records for the lawnmower and power tools, inspecting ladders annually and keeping records of these, rolling out working at height training and general health and safety training, updating risk assessments, checking all fire extinguishers and removing plug safety sockets.

Q: Will any of the actions from the health and safety inspection have a significant cost implication?

A: There will be some costs in rolling out staff training. Work is also needed to provide a solution for storing reception class coats and this will have a cost implication.

Q: Were there any actions relating to the Health and Safety Policy?

A: Yes and this will be a priority. There is some update required, for example, in updating named contacts.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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

18. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee take place on Monday, 22 March 2021 at 5:00 pm.

The meeting would focus on the budget.

Mrs J Leighton had previously sent apologies but confirmed she would be in attendance.

19. 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.

The meeting closed at 6:55 pm