

GLADSTONE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL
"Learning, caring, growing together"

MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

DATE: Tuesday 6th March 2018

TIME: 6.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Mrs Andrea Cowley
Mr Shaun Marshall
Mr Ray Williamson

Mr Keith Wright
Mrs Sarah Stuart
Miss V Lewis (Clerk)

Additionally Present:

Mrs Caroline Sarney (School Business Manager)
Mrs Helen Halliday

MINUTES

1. Welcome from Committee Chairperson

As EJB was absent it was agreed that AC would act as Chairperson for this meeting. She welcomed governors to the meeting. Governors discussed that it has been some time since the last resources committee meeting, a provisionally scheduled January meeting was planned but deemed unnecessary at the last Full meeting on 5.12.17 and therefore cancelled. KW advised that the Governance Review had looked at the frequency of meetings and suggested the use of smaller working parties which then feed into the full committees (in order to avoid extra pressure on governors/committees). This will be further discussed at the Full GB meeting on 20.3.18.

Action: None required.

2. Apologies for absence; consider acceptance of apologies

Clerk had no information re the absences of EJB, PS and JJ. She will enquire with them and update the Minutes accordingly.

Helen Halliday was also present to speak at Agenda Item 7.

Action: None Required.

3. Confidentiality

An item to be discussed in Item 7 was identified as confidential.

Action: None Required.

4. Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item

An item to be discussed in Item 7 was identified as being of interest to school staff and they will retire from the meeting for the duration of discussions.

Action: None Required

5. Minutes of the previous meeting (03.10.2017) / Matters Arising

The Minutes from the meeting on 03.10.17 were presented. Minutes were signed by KW in the absence of Committee Chair EJB and returned to the Clerk for filing as per procedure.

7. RR/RB Playground: CS informed governors that contractors have visited and quotation has been received. She will follow this up so that works can be booked in, as planned, for the Easter Holidays. RW queried whether it would be worth applying to the Big Lottery Fund for funding for playground works; if not this project (so as not to delay its completion) but perhaps another area of the grounds etc? CS said that this project would be unlikely to get funding as it involves removing equipment rather than installing. She added that at the time of the new build in the Upper School she did get quotes for KS2 playground equipment, gazebos etc but it was felt that due to the frequency of destructive intruders that a) the money would be wasted as anything installed would get ruined and b) school didn't want to encourage intruders by making the area too welcoming and interesting. HH said that she had spoken previously with Northstead who had also had similar issues with intruders from the local area but that through vigilance and improved security etc they managed to dissuade issues.

New whiteboards have been installed in Y1 and Y6 classrooms which are making a significant difference. The school achieved better value on the investment as we bought 8 in bulk.

Action: Minutes from meeting 03.10.17 to be filed as per procedure **By: Clerk**

Action: Arrange for RR/RB playground works to be booked for Easter **By: CS**

6. Correspondence

A letter of resignation has been received from Philippa Leighton as she wishes to take early retirement. She is moving to Spain with her husband to be closer to their daughter who works there. KW advised that the school will be very sad to see her leave at the end of April but that this is a positive departure for excellent reasons following 14 years at Gladstone Road in Years R and 1. The SLT is currently looking at options to fill the vacancy until end of school year.

Action: None required.

7. Staffing Update & Proposals (KW/CS)

Discussions within this Agenda Item were recorded within the Confidential Minutes.

Action: Any actions identified are detailed within the Confidential Minutes

8. Finance, Premises, Health & Safety : SBM Mrs Sarney

The Section 251 funding document has now been received. This shows the majority of the funding allocation for 2018/19. The income figures used for the start budget and revenue forecast may be subject to some fluctuation re further Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) calculations. There is the possibility of £20k more MFG plus some fluctuations to Pupil Premium and Special Needs funding. This is not to be

relied upon and therefore numbers used are the worst case scenario to ensure we don't over inflate or think ourselves better off.

The financial model (Model 1) circulated includes expenditure incurred from extending the contracts of fixed term support staff until 31.8.19. If this remained in place for 5 years the projected deficit is £1.1m. The Finance team says that we will need to make extremely harsh cuts from 19/20 in order to avoid this situation.

CS circulated further financial forecasts (Model 2) which does not retain fixed term staff beyond 31.8.18. Though taking out the extended FT contracts improves things financially there will be a significant effect on teaching and pupils. The FMS Officer is visiting on 12.3.18 to discuss the start budget and the LA's (likely) response. The cumulative in year position is worsening but the balance brought forward will ensure we are 'ok' until 20/21.

AC asked what the result would be for the children if these fixed term staff were not retained. HH said that there would be issues re staffing adequately and would mean significant changes to the way classes are supported. We cannot refuse pupils, particularly difficult ones, as we are an LA school. Reducing staffing will have an enormous impact on pupils' learning, school experience etc.

If we don't make savings then county will step in and make indiscriminate changes to staffing – we wouldn't necessarily get to choose where the saving were made and which staff would be lost.

We are trying to be as creative as possible but the savings needed are £300k. RW commented that if nothing changes re funding then it seems inevitable there will need to be an extensive staffing review in the future.

Governors were asked to consider which model they wished to recommend to the Full GB at the meeting on 20.3.18. ***They opted for Model 2 which is more favourable financially but will pose issues re staffing.***

Following the passing of Mr Wake we decided to try and manage ICT network support with our current technician and 3 hours per week of bought in ICT technician support. This is not working successfully for the school and it has been identified that we need to appoint an ICT Network Manager. Rather than appointing the proposal is to access an appropriate professional through SICT which, whilst slightly more expensive, would only require a 6 month notice period to end the agreement and would avoid the possibility of a redundancy situation. The member of SICT staff who is proposed to take up this role is currently in school on a trial basis and is working out very well, particular as Mrs Herrington the in house ICT support is now on long term sick leave.

Governors were asked whether they would support the ending of the 3 hours bought in technician support agreement and to begin ICT Network Manager support for 15 hours per week. ***Governors agreed to this proposal.***

SENCO Amy Rhodes would ideally like a specialist teacher to provide teaching time for pupils who are not accessing the classroom due to behaviour or SEND. This is not an affordable or sustainable option. An alternative is to appoint two senior ATAs with an overview of current behaviour and SEND support team members as a median measure on a trial year basis then reviewed. This would cost an extra £3k annually. CS is not sure whether there may be some resentment of people currently at the same level who would then be 'promoted' above to 'manage' them. HH said there are a significant number of very high need pupils about to enter KS2 and they will find this challenging. The correct provision needs to be in place which means staff will need guidance and support to work effectively with these pupils. We do have some staff who have this knowledge and skill set who are currently in 1:1 roles. If they move to be Senior ATAs this leaves an issue re supporting their current 1:1 pupils. HH not sure whether this can be supported as such at present, needs further discussions with the SLT and SENCOs.

The current plan for September involves some changes to support alternative staff deployment. Eg. Year

R will get 2 TAs per class to deploy as appropriate including all needs such as 1:1 support. Year 1 will move to only have morning TAs.

Governors were asked to consider the proposal for Senior SEND ATAs. *A decision was deferred until further discussions could take place between the SLT. Will be revisited at a subsequent meeting.*

The start budget does not need to be submitted until May but as there is a chance that it will not be approved it was discussed that it be submitted immediately so that if this is the case further measures can be discussed at the Full meeting on 20.3.18. *Governors agreed.*

There are other changes and savings which will save small amounts on areas such as training courses, visits and resources but there will have to be more drastic changes made to achieve a £300k saving.

CS proposed that Teachers Absence Insurance remain at Day 6. Day 11 would save money on the premium but would not necessarily catch the shorter term absences as well as the longer term ones. *Governors agreed to retain Day 6 cover.*

CS proposed that Support Staff Absence Insurance remain at Day 16. *Governors agreed to retain Day 16 cover.*

It is proposed that staff be informed at a meeting after Easter the current financial situation and to ask them for further assistance with helping to only spend where necessary in order to assist with managing the budget constraints moving forward.

Governors also discussed making parents aware as a community that school is in financial hardship, involve them in creative fund raising or ask for ideas of how to improve things.

CS advised that at present there are two different TA job roles, it is hoped to modify these into one merged role/job description to give school greater flexibility in staff deployment. Due to a slight difference in pay scales it is proposed to offer 12 months' salary protection to the relevant GTA with SEN postholders to balance things when aligning salaries. There will need to be a consultation process as there would be changes to expected duties. HR will be involved with ensuring the new job description is appropriate, though another local school has also adopted this TA model. *Governors agreed and CS will begin the consultation process.*

Absences due to sickness are still high and CS has been working closely with HR advisers. She has asked for some statistics to try and track any improvement or causes. Will possibly need to look at enforcing the absence /illness policy more actively, ie following the process through and if necessary ending contracts. HH said that at present some are returning from long term absence and being given a less stressful or difficult job which isn't necessarily in line with what the school needs, and is therefore actually costing school financially. She said that returning after absence should be targeted by the improving performance procedures. There can be delays when dealing with long term absence cases due to HR adviser availability not falling in line with that of union reps, staff, SLT etc. Moving forwards HR seem to be realising that these things cannot drift now and is being more active. Staff need to be made more aware that there will be real and more immediate consequences.

Action: Submit Start Budget

By: CS

Action: Begin TA roles/job description consultation

By: CS

Action: Arrange ICT Network Manager hours/service

By: CS

9. Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The SFVS is the annual return completed by the school and agreed by governors using the Financial Controls Checklist as guidance. Governors were asked to consider the document before the next Full meeting on 20.3.18 when RA will sign off as Chair of Governors to ensure that there is no issue with submitting by the deadline of 31.3.18.

Governors identified that in Section B: Setting the Budget No 12. needed to be altered to represent that school is currently not operating a balanced 3 year budget within limits as we are predicting a deficit by Year 3. It was agreed to add that '*Governors are aware that long term projections currently show a cumulative in year deficit. School is working to address this*'.

Action: Make identified change and forward to Governors for formal agreement at the next full meeting 14.3.17 **By: VL/CS**

10. Financial Benchmarking

NYCC benchmarking data is difficult for Gladstone Road as we are quite unique within the county and therefore comparable data is not readily available. The DFE benchmarking data is more useful as there are obviously more schools to compare against, though selections can be adjusted to exclude London schools which makes the data more relevant for us.

CS outlined the most significant features within her SBM report and invited governors to ask questions or make comments as appropriate.

Action: None required.

11. Opportunities Area Funding Bid Possibilities / Proposals – Ray Williamson

Vicky Gill and the SLT have drawn up a grant application from the NYCC Essential Life Skills Fund which has been submitted 5.3.17. The outcome of the application will be known by 30.3.18. The bid is for approx. 10% of the available money. Ms Gill also wished to pass on her thanks to RW who had made input into the application. Clerk will inform governors of the outcome in due course.

RW also advised that the Sirius Community Fund will open shortly for applications. There is likely to be approx. £300k available for the next year so it will be worth having a look at this.

Action: None required.

12. Discuss Lockdown Procedure (non statutory)

This is a non statutory procedure which some schools are choosing to draw up in the light of the current climate. It involves procedures for if there is an incursion to the school or an incident in the local area. There is no model LA policy at this stage. Further discussions were deferred to the Full meeting on 20.3.18 due to time constraints at this meeting.

Action: Put Lockdown Procedure on Full agenda 20.3.18 **By: Clerk**

13. Review, agree and adopt policies:

- **HR005 Statutory Attendance Management Policy** CS to send staff guidance document to AC. This document is in addition to the Guidelines for staff which gives exhaustive information.
- **HR018 Leave Policy**

- **FMS009 Counter Fraud Strategy**
- **FMS010 Counter Fraud Arrangements**
- **FMS011 Anti Money Laundering Policy**

All of the above policies are model LA policies. *Governors agreed to approve and adopt.*

- **GOV001 Governors Allowances & Expenses Policy £10.**
This is a new LA model policy. Governors were asked to consider the hourly care allowance rate to support members in attending meetings. This allowance is targeted more at smaller governing bodies where governor absence may have consequences such as making meetings inquorate. Therefore governors opted for a nominal £10 per hour allowance. *Governors agreed to approve and adopt.*
- **Schools Visits Policy**
This policy was received earlier today (6.3.18). It is a model LA policy. *Governors agreed to approve and adopt.*

The Capability Policy/Developing Performance Policy has already been adopted by the governing body and is in use re teaching staff. However moving forward it is to be considered to aid support staff as necessary.

Action: File policies as per procedure

By: Clerk/CS

14. A.O.B.

Fundraising: AC said that the Rainbow Centre is looking to appoint a voluntary fundraising manager to join their board which she is interested in applying for. This prompted her to think whether a similar post would be beneficial for GRPS. A volunteer could have a single remit of coordinating and planning events, fundraising, awareness of grant opportunities etc for school. Governors agreed this seemed like a good idea and can be explored further at a subsequent meeting.

New Start/End Day Procedures: AC commented that the new staggered times and different entry/exit procedures at the start and end of the school day were working very well, easing congestion and making the experience much more positive for parents and children.

Action: None required.

The Meeting was closed by the Chair at 9.15pm

Signed _____ Dated _____