

Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter

Minutes of a meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee which, due to the Coronavirus lockdown, was held remotely (via Zoom) on Tuesday, 5 May 2020 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Mr P Taylor (chair), Mrs P Curtis, Mr J Davey, Mr B Egerton, Mr P Hudson, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mr M Prescott.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mr A Storer (Business Manager)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the Governing Body)

159. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda items.

160. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee held on 12 November 2019 had been previously made available to governors in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved as presented.

161. Matters Arising:

a) Back Lane (Minute 147(a) refers)

Mr Hudson reported that a consultation paper had been published seeking views on proposed changes to the current road junction of the A552 and Smithfield Road which, if implemented, would impact on the future use of Back Lane. The Town Council had submitted a response to offer alternative options but was awaiting clarification of the final scheme that had been approved. Mr Hudson undertook to keep governors updated.

It was resolved –

That the situation around Back Lane continues to be kept under review.

b) ULT Redundancy Scheme Consultation (Minute 147(b) refers)

The business manager referred to an email received from the CEO of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust to confirm that process to revise the redundancy scheme had been paused due to the impact of the coronavirus. Trustees had been made aware of TAHS staff concerns regarding the proposed changes.

c) Exam Fees (Minute 147(c) refers)

The headteacher confirmed that a report on the cost of exam fees had been prepared as requested and a copy made available in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the report on the cost of exam fees be received and noted, with thanks to the headteacher.

d) Apprenticeship Levy (Minute 147(d) refers)

The business manager reported that the report on the apprenticeship levy funding was still to be shared with trustees. Once this had been done then it would be shared further with the governing body.

e) New School Pavilion (Minute 147(f) refers)

Governors noted that the new school pavilion had been officially opened and fully in use.

f) All-Weather Sports Pitch (Minute 147(g) refers)

The committee chair reported that he had been contacted by the company responsible for the rejuvenation of the all-weather pitch and a request made for the school to contribute towards the cost and future maintenance. Having carefully considered the benefits and cost implications the committee chair further reported that he had given approval to the request. The business manager confirmed that all work had now been completed and that the pitch was looking considerably better.

It was resolved-

That governors fully support the decision of the committee chair to fund the improvements to the all-weather pitch.

g) Fire Alarm (Minute 147(j) refers)

The headteacher reported that the fire alarm had been re-connected to all areas of the school and was working fine.

h) Student Transport (Minute 147(k) refers)

The headteacher confirmed that parents were now able to purchase a seat for their child on the school bus if they so wished.

i) CIF Bids 2020/2021 (Minute 149(c) refers)

The business manager confirmed that the school's CIF bids were for the replacement of windows and the refurbishment of Dove House. An announcement was expected shortly regarding the bids.

j) Governor Training Course (Minute 151 refers)

The headteacher reported that a training course was still to be arranged for governors to give them a better understanding of their responsibilities to ensure the well-being of staff and to address workloads. This would be arranged as soon as governors were able to again meet under normal circumstances.

k) Safeguarding (Minute 155 refers)

The headteacher outlined the recent changes made to the school's safeguarding team and confirmed that it continued to meet on a regular basis.

162. Financial Report:

The business manager reported on a number of financial matters with details of all having been previously made available in Office 365.

a) 6 Month Financial Review (September 2019 to February 2020)

A copy of the 6-month financial review had been made available and the business manager went through the detail of it, with particular reference to income and expenditure. He reported that the income from student numbers and the various grants were in line with what was expected although income from the letting of the school's swimming pool was not as high as anticipated. The headteacher further reported, however, that the use of the swimming pool by outside users was at its maximum and should not be increased further.

The business manager also referred to areas of expenditure and outlined in particular the following matters:

- Staffing costs – although there would be an increase in the cost of supply teachers employed through agencies there would be an overall saving in teaching staff costs and the reasons for this were outlined. A saving of around £12K was anticipated by the end of August 2020.
- Energy costs – savings would be achieved in gas costs and governors noted that this was due to a change in how VAT was paid and a refund given from the climate levy.
- Staff advertising costs – these were slightly higher than predicted primarily as a result of the successful assistant headteacher recruitment process. In response to a governor question, the headteacher confirmed that the DfE portal was occasionally used for staff adverts but that advertising through the TES or the West Midlands vacancy bulletin remained the most successful for staff recruitment.
- Exam costs and capitation expenditure – as previously reported the expenditure on exam fees remained under review. Capitation was higher than forecast although this was offset through savings made in other areas of the budget. The headteacher reported that regular checks were now being made on capitation expenditure and discussions held with department leaders as necessary.

Discussion also took place regarding the financial implications of the school remaining partially open for vulnerable children and children of NHS staff and other key workers during the coronavirus lockdown. The business manager reported that a spread sheet had been received from ASCL and was being used to record the various levels of expenditure as appropriate. The headteacher further reported that necessary spending decisions were taken before Government advice was received and that the initial additional costs had been mainly due to the provision of free school meals, graphics reproduction and purchase of laptops for some students to support distance learning.

It was resolved –

- i) That the 6-month financial review for the period September 2019 to February 2020 be received and noted.
- ii) That governors support the headteacher's decision not to accept further lettings for the swimming pool.

- iii) That governors fully support the initial expenditure necessary to ensure that the school could remain partially open for vulnerable children and children of NHS staff and other key workers.

b) Draft Budget 2020 2025

The draft 5-year budget had been previously made available in Office 365 and the business manager went through the detail of it and the various assumptions that had been made when projecting finances. He referred in particular to the following:

- Student numbers – the business manager was pleased to report that the impact on student numbers to the change of admission arrangements at JCB academy had not been as great as originally anticipated. The DfE's revised aged-weighted pupil funding had also been taken account. Discussion followed and governors sought further clarity around the increased age weighted pupil funding as the overall school funding appeared to be decreasing despite this. The business manager agreed to have a look at previous budget predictions to see how they compared against the current actual figures and to prepare a further report for governors.
- Housing development – this had not been taken into account when determining the draft budget and the headteacher also reported that the latest information from the local authority stated that the projected numbers from planned housing development were now lower than originally anticipated. The headteacher agreed to prepare a report outlining the latest predictions for the next meeting and to also provide details of the number of students opting for JCB academy rather than Thomas Alleyne's.
- Top Slice – the trust board had recently approved an increase of the top slice to 3% from April 2021 and this had been factored into the draft budget.
- Staffing levels – no adjustments had been made to the staffing levels although this would remain under review.
- Employers Pension Grant & Teachers Pay Grant – it had been assumed that both of these income streams would cease (in 2023/24 and 2020/21 Respectively). These grants total over £200K pa and their loss would make a significant impact on the budget.

In summary, the business manager reported that school funding would likely fall during the 5-year period due to the anticipated fall in student numbers, although this would likely be offset by the various DfE funding grants. The headteacher confirmed that the budget remained under constant review and that appropriate savings could be identified as and when they became necessary.

Discussion also took place regarding the financial implications for the school due to the coronavirus. As previously reported, a record was being kept of all related expenditure and it was hoped that Government funding would be provided to offset this. The headteacher reported, however, that this was not yet guaranteed as it was not clear if funding would be re-imbursed to those schools holding funding reserves. Governors would be updated as soon as confirmation was received regarding this matter.

It was resolved –

- i) That the draft 5-year budget be received and would be kept under review, although it was recognised that no immediate actions were necessary.

- ii) That the business manager be requested to prepare a further report to make clear how the current actual budget compares to the previously projected budget for the same period.
- iii) That governors look forward to receiving reports from the headteacher to outline projected student numbers.

c) Update on Pupil Premium Funding and 6th Form Bursary

Updated reports had been previously made available in Office 365 to show the income and expenditure for pupil premium funding and the 6th form bursary for the period September 2019 to February 2020. The business manager confirmed that everything was in-line for both funding programmes and no concerns to highlight.

It was resolved –

That the updates on pupil premium funding and 6th form bursary be received and noted.

d) Service Level Agreements

The business manager reported that the impact of the coronavirus on the school and other business services across the country made it difficult to go out to tender for a renewal of the various service level agreements. He was therefore recommending that approval be given for all service level agreements to be extended for a further one-year period. He confirmed that there were no concerns with any of the current service providers.

It was resolved –

That governors approve the renewal of all appropriate service level agreements for a further one-year period.

163. Premises:

The business manager reported on a number of premises matters with details of all having been previously made available in Office 365.

a) Update on proposed work for 2019/2020 from the maintenance budget

The business manager reported that he was working closely with Entrust to ensure that all compliance work was being undertaken and to ensure the safety of any contractors on site. No other work was currently being undertaken. Consideration was, however, being given to maintenance work that could be carried out during the summer holidays and this programme of work would be presented at the next meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee.

The headteacher made available a copy of the essential check-list that had been sent to all schools to take account of the impact of the coronavirus, whilst remaining open as a key worker school. Governors were informed that all guidance was being closely followed and work undertaken as necessary. A copy of the check-list would be made available in Office 365 for governors to access.

In response to a governor question the headteacher confirmed that the management of the farm was currently separate to that of the school but that everything was fine and no concerns to report.

It was resolved –

That governors receive and note the current maintenance programme for the school.

b) Update on current building projects

The business manager gave an update on the following projects:

- CIF Bid 2019/2020 (Roofing) – as reported at the previous meeting, the headteacher confirmed that new contractors (Midland Roofing) were now on site to complete the second stage of the re-roofing programme. A timeline for the work was being finalised but it was expected that it would be completed by the end of August/early September, subject to good weather.
- Sports hall changing room refurbishment – funds had been received for this work to be undertaken but it had not yet started.
- Internal door replacement – work had been postponed but it was hoped to undertake and complete the work during the summer holidays.

It was resolved –

That the update on current building projects be received and noted.

164. Health and Safety:

As previously reported, the headteacher confirmed that a copy of the essential checklist for schools closed due to the coronavirus and for those partially open for key workers on site would be made available in Office 365. The headteacher again assured governors that all guidance was being followed and that all staff were clear on their role. Working arrangements were being updated as necessary and all staff and students on site were aware of evacuation procedures. The site supervisor was responsible for the necessary fire alarm checks.

It was resolved –

That the health and safety arrangements be received and noted and governors satisfied that all necessary procedures were being followed.

165. Risk Register:

The business manager reported that he continued to discuss the finance risk register with the committee chair and both were of the view that the register was now user-friendly and easier to understand. The register included the opportunity to show the accepted level of risk, as previously requested by governors, but it was now necessary for those levels of risk to be determined as appropriate.

It was resolved –

That the clerk be requested to arrange for the risk register to be included as a governor training exercise at the next meeting of the governing body to be held in school rather than remotely.

166. Policies:

The following two policies had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher confirmed that both continued to meet requirements without the need for further revision.

- Freedom of Information Act and Publication Scheme
- Revised fire evacuation in light of coronavirus

It was resolved –

That both policies be received and approved as presented.

167. Chair's Power to Act:

As previously reported, the chair confirmed that he had given approval for the school to part-fund the rejuvenation of the all-weather sports pitch.

It was resolved –

That governors fully support the chair's action.

168. Disposal of Items:

The business manager reported that there were no items to be considered for disposal.

169. Safeguarding:

The headteacher confirmed that safeguarding would remain a key focus for the school but that there were no specific safeguarding issues to report.

170. Any Other Business:

a) Climate Change

The committee chair reminded the clerk that it had been agreed to include this matter as a standard agenda item for all future meetings of the Managing and Resourcing committee. The clerk undertook to ensure that it was included on future agendas.

b) SEND Governor

The chair of governors reminded the committee that Mari Jary was resigning as a governor at the end of the school year and that this would be formally acknowledged at the next meeting of the governing body to be held in June. Mrs Curtis had kindly agreed to take on governor responsibilities for SEND and the headteacher agreed to ask Mr Godwin, assistant headteacher, to contact them both to arrange a meeting to facilitate a handover.

171. Consideration Given to KPIs:

KPI 6 – Governors ensure solvency and probity, and that financial resources are made available to the school and are managed effectively

- Evidenced through ongoing review of the school's income and expenditure with appropriate reports sought from the headteacher and business manager to evidence

reasons for budget decisions. The business manager had also been asked to provide clarity around the pupil aged-weighted funding. (Minute 162)

- Evidenced through governors requesting that consideration be given to the use of the DfE portal for advertising teaching posts, as a cheaper alternative to the TES. (Minute 162)

KPI7 – Governors operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved

- Evidenced through various discussions throughout the meeting regarding the implications of the coronavirus and governor assurance sought that all safeguarding guidance was being followed to ensure the health and well-being of staff and students. (Minutes 162, 163, 164)

KPI 9 – Governors use pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics

Evidenced through discussions around the level of pupil premium funding available to the school. (Minute 162)

172. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors were reminded that the next meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee would again likely be held remotely on Tuesday, 16 June 2020 at 5.00pm.

P. Taylor

Signed.....

23 June 2020

Date.....