

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 Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 27 January 2021 at 5.00pm.

Present:

Mr P Taylor (chair), Mrs P Curtis, Ms R Horry, Mr P Hudson, Mr M Osborne-Town, Mr M Prescott, Mr R Pye.

Mrs J Rudge (Headteacher)

Also in Attendance:

Mrs A Maingay, (Deputy Headteacher)

Mr A Storer (Business Manager)

Mr R Sheldon (Clerk to the governing body)

Apologies:

The clerk reported that no apologies for absence had been received.

207. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interests relevant to agenda items.

208. Report of Committee Chair's Action:

The committee chair reported that, in consultation with the chair of governors, approval had been given for the hire of marquees to provide an additional area for students when not allowed in school due to the cleaning programme. The headteacher confirmed that students were making use of the marquees.

The committee chair also reported that the possibility of the purchase of fixed shelters should be reviewed later in the year when the continued need could be assessed.

It was resolved –

That governors support the committee chair's action.

209. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee held on 13 October 2020 had been previously made available to governors in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved.

210. Matters Arising:

a) Back Lane (Minute 194(b) refers

Mr Hudson reported that at a recent meeting of the Town Council a report had been received to indicate that Staffordshire County Council were unwilling to fund the suggested changes to the road lay-out in Uttoxeter, including Back Lane. However, recent social media reports from Cllr Brookes seemed to suggest otherwise.

It was resolved –

That the headteacher be requested to write to Cllr Brookes to seek clarity on proposals to change the road lay-out in Uttoxeter.

b) Climate Change (Minute 194(d) refers)

Mr Osborne-Town reported that he was now liaising with the Town Council's Biodiversity committee and gave an update on the work it was doing to encourage the local community to support a range of environmental projects. This would include a pamphlet to be sent to all households to outline future plans for environmental change, and a questionnaire also to be sent to Uttoxeter schools. Good progress continues to be made by the Environmental committee and further initiatives will be developed once students return to school. Governors will be kept informed of developments.

c) Student Laptops (Minute 194(e) refers)

The headteacher was pleased to report that, in addition to the laptops previously made available, a further 21 had been provided through the Government scheme and a further 10 purchased by the school.

d) Free School Meals (Minute 194(f) refers)

The headteacher was pleased to confirm that free school meal vouchers would be sent to families to cover the half-term break.

e) Safeguarding Incident (Minute 194(g) refers)

The headteacher reported that the safeguarding incident had been resolved.

f) IT Support (Minute 195(c) refers)

The headteacher reported that the IT support given across schools in the Trust continued to be of concern to her, given the implications for the school's IT support team. The current arrangements were no longer sustainable and discussions continued with the chief executive officer to seek a solution as soon as possible. The Trust Board was currently undertaking an IT review to help shape future arrangements but a completion date for this was not known. The business manager further reported that some changes had been made to the central IT team at Thomas Alleyne's, including the appointment of a temporary part-time (0.6) technician. Governors were also advised that changes in the Trust's IT support across all schools could result in an increase in the top slice funding for central services.

It was reported that a similar situation has also arisen on the finance team. The proposals by the MAT to reform both the IT support and the finance team have been talked about for a considerable time but very little progress appears to have been made.

Full discussion followed and governors again expressed concerns regarding this situation and the chair of governors was requested to raise this matter at the next meeting of the School Representation Board.

It was resolved –

- i) That the chief executive officer be requested to attend the next meeting of the full governing body to give an update on both the IT review finance team review and proposed timeline for its completion. Additionally, the proposed changes in costings from the review should be shared with governors.

- ii) That a request again be made for governor representation at meetings associated with the reviews.
- iii) That governors accept in principle the possible need to increase top slice funding for a revised IT support system, but this should be kept to a minimum.

g) External Audit (Minute 195(h) refers)

A question was raised regarding a number of financial irregularities that had been identified following the external audit. The business manager clarified that the irregularities had been identified in the external audit for the year ended 31 August 2019 and that the letter submitted by trustees to confirm actions taken had been previously made available to governors. The business manager undertook, however, to circulate a further copy of that letter.

h) School Trees (Minute 197(a) refers)

The business manager reported that discussions were taking place with planners regarding appropriate action that could be taken to reduce the possible risks from some of the trees in the school grounds. Costs for this work were being obtained.

i) Sports Pavilion (Minute 197(b) refers)

The business manager reported that most of the snagging repairs had been completed and arrangements were in hand for the remaining work to be undertaken as soon as possible.

j) Dove House (Minute 197(b) refers)

The headteacher reminded governors that the CIF bid to renovate Dove House had been unsuccessful and that it therefore remained closed. A further CIF bid would not be submitted as advice had been received that it would again likely be unsuccessful and its future use therefore remained under review. The school did not currently have the necessary funding to undertake a renovation to enable it to re-open.

It was resolved –

That the future use of Dove House should remain under review.

k) Health & Safety Audit (Minute 198(c) refers)

The business manager reported that the Staffordshire County Council health and safety audit had not yet been undertaken due to the impact of Covid-19 and a revised date was awaited.

l) Well-Being Survey (Minute 198(d) refers)

The headteacher reported that, given the detail required for the well-being survey staff had requested that, due to current workloads, the survey not be undertaken at this moment in time. The headteacher further reported that this had been agreed but gave an assurance that staff-well being remained a key issue for the school.

Discussion followed and governors questioned if an alternative, simpler, well-being survey could be used particularly if the current one was impacting on workloads. Mr Pye referred to the well-being survey used by his company and would seek permission to make it available for possible adaption for use by the school, if suitable.

It was resolved –

That governors agree to keep the well-being survey under review.

211. Finance Report:

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

a) ULT Audit of Financial Statements (year ended 31 August 2020)

The business manager reported that trustees had recently approved the ULT's financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2020 and they had been submitted to the ESFA. There were no specific issues to bring to the attention of governors.

b) Financial Report September 2020 to December 2020

A financial report to show expenditure between September 2020 and December 2020, in comparison with the budget for the 2020/2021 financial year, had been previously made available in office 365. The headteacher and business manager outlined a number of issues within the budget expenditure that required further consideration by governors. Confirmation was given that the budget had been revised to take account of pupil premium and Covid-19 catch-up funding. Not all of the catch-up funding had yet been received and this was reflected in the statement. The headteacher reported that the school had set the budget with an anticipated surplus of approximately £155K. Due to additional unexpected expenditure to prepare the school for the situation regarding Covid 19, if spending continues at the current rate the projected year end surplus would be reduced by £140k to an approximate year end position of £15k in year surplus.

The headteacher outlined in further detail the reasons behind the additional expenditure in staffing costs and informed governors that this had been increased due to various appointments made to support remote learning programmes and for Thomas Alleyne's to remain open as a key worker school. Some of these additional costs would be reimbursed through Government grants, although the level of school reserves could also restrict the support given. The headteacher further reported that school income had been significantly reduced due to the closure of the swimming pool and no school lettings. There had also been no income from school trips as they were not currently taking place. Governors were informed that the current overspend against the original budget headings in these areas would be in the region of £65K and the headteacher proposed that changes were made to other budget headings to account for the difference. The proposed changes included:

- Teacher training – this could be reduced by £15K and Mrs Maingay confirmed that an appropriate level of teacher training could still be offered with this reduced figure.
- Pupil premium funding – the school received around £25K to support additional staffing as a key worker school and this could be added to pupil premium funding to allow current staffing costs in that area to be re-allocated. The headteacher gave an assurance that this would still enable the school to meet its pupil premium requirements in supporting students.

The headteacher also informed governors that she was not proposing to re-allocate building maintenance funding as this may be required should the CIF bids be unsuccessful. This may be reviewed when the results of the CIF bids are known. The headteacher also reported that she proposed to leave the contingency funding at its agreed level.

Full discussion took place and governors questioned expenditure levels in other areas of the budget, particularly where expenditure to December 2020 was significantly lower than the original budget forecast. This included the exam fees allocation and the headteacher reported that this was being kept under review due to possible funding implications as a result of the cancellation of external exams. Reference was also made to energy costs and governors asked why they were less than anticipated particularly given that the windows were always open, as required due to Covid-19, and heating increased to account for this. The business manager reported that differences were likely due to the timing of energy bills and also that the closure of the swimming pool resulted in significant savings in energy costs.

The business manager reported that a record of additional costs due to Covid-19 continued to be maintained and, although the level of school reserves could impact on any Government reimbursement of funding, any claims were in future to be judged against the level of reserves held by the Trust as a whole and the situation was therefore being monitored. The headteacher confirmed that the overall current school budget was not of concern although a deficit was forecast in around three years' time. As such an updated budget would be prepared for the next meeting to account for this.

It was resolved –

- i) That the financial report for September 2020 to December 2020 be received and noted, with thanks to the headteacher and business manager for highlighting the key issues.
 - ii) The governors support the headteacher's proposals to re-allocate budget headings to cover the increased staffing costs.
 - iii) That governors await the updated budget report for discussion at the next meeting.
 - iv) That the headteacher be requested to arrange for an updated Pupil Premium report to show evidence that the re-allocation of funding from this area would not impact on school responsibilities.
- 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 governors noted the support packages in place to make use of the funding available. The 6th form bursary report was also made available to show examples of support given to students and expenditure to 31 December 2020. The headteacher confirmed that there were no specific issues to raise from either report.

It was resolved –

That the pupil premium and sixth form bursary reports be received and noted.

- d) KS3/KS4/post-16 Catch-up Funding
A report had been previously made available in Office 365 to show plans that had been put in place to make use of the Covid-19 premium catch-up funding available to the school. The headteacher confirmed that a copy of the catch-up premium report was available on the school's website as required.

It was resolved –

That the Covid-19 catch-up premium report be received and noted.

212. Premises:

The headteacher business manager reported on a number of premises matters, with details of all having been previously made available in Office 365. Reference in particular was made to:

a) Maintenance Work on Site (September 2020 to December 2020)

The headteacher reported that all statutory compliance checks had been undertaken as necessary and a report had been made available to confirm this. No other significant premises work had been undertaken during this period and nothing planned for the immediate future. The report also highlighted various equipment that had purchased in response to Covid-19 requirements.

It was resolved –

That update on maintenance work be received and noted.

b) Update on 2020/21 CIF Bids

The business manager confirmed that CIF bids for windows and fire reforms had been submitted and a decision was expected around April 2021.

It was resolved –

That the CIF bid update be noted and that governors hope for a positive outcome.

213. Health and Safety:

The headteacher and business manager reported on the following health and safety matters:

a) Covid-19 Update

The headteacher reported that there were around 40/50 members of staff on the school site each day, mainly comprising site supervisors, support staff and cleaners. The headteacher was pleased to confirm that no member of staff, or students, had tested positive for Covid-19 since opening as a key worker school in January.

b) Lateral Flow Antigen Testing (LAT) Centre

The headteacher reported that the LAT centre was now open in the Ede Studio and a copy of the associated risk assessment had been previously made available in Office 365. The headteacher further reported that following the decision for schools not to open in January (other than for children of key workers and vulnerable children) the decision was taken to release all trained testers, with the exception of three staff. The three staff included one person who turned up daily on a voluntary basis. They were responsible for testing staff and children each week but the headteacher reported that even with this commitment the centre was over-staffed. The three members of staff cost around £340 each day. A decision was necessary regarding the continued employment of those three members of staff.

Discussion followed and governors referred to an announcement earlier that evening to suggest that schools could possibly re-open from 8 March 2021. If so, testers would be required. The headteacher reported that the initial recruitment had not been an issue but could prove to be more difficult once all schools re-opened and also looking to recruit testers. The retention of the current three testers could therefore be important.

In addition to the three testers, the headteacher further reported that three members of the school staff also gave of their time in support of the Test centre and this support was invaluable.

It was resolved –

- i) That the report on the LAT centre be received and that governors agree to retain the three testers currently employed in the centre, subject to ongoing review.
 - ii) That the chair be requested to write, on behalf of the governing body, to the tester volunteering on a daily basis and the three members of school staff supporting the centre, to thank them for the work that they were doing.
- c) Health and Safety Incident
The headteacher reported that there had been a recent flood in the coronavirus waste disposal unit and that the incident had been dealt with in accordance with protocols for contaminated waste.

It was resolved –

That the headteacher be thanked for bringing this matter to the attention of governors and fully support the actions taken to resolve it.

- d) Revised Fire Evacuation Procedures
The headteacher reported that, due to the reduced numbers of staff and students on site, the fire evacuation procedures had been revised in accordance with updated Covid-19 guidance. A copy of the revised evacuation procedure had been previously made available in Office 365.

It was resolved –

That the revised fire evacuation procedures be received and approved.

214. Risk Register:

The headteacher reported that there had been no changes to the current risk register. The headteacher further reported that the school's risk assessment had been considered at the recent meeting of the Learning and Standards committee but that there was nothing specific to report.

It was resolved –

That the risk register update be received and noted.

215. Policy:

A copy of the revised ULT Staff Code of Conduct had been previously made available in Office 365 and the headteacher reported that her views had been taken into account before being approved by the Trust Board. The Code of Conduct was to be discussed with staff the following week.

It was resolved –

That the revised Staff Code of Conduct be received and noted.

216. Disposal of Equipment:

The business manager reported that there were no items of equipment to be recommended for disposal.

217. Safeguarding:

The headteacher reported that the Safeguarding Board continued to meet under the guidance of Mrs H Majors, assistant headteacher, who had replaced Mrs Maingay as the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL). There were no specific safeguarding incidents to report and the headteacher confirmed that she was confident that the safeguarding team was taking any necessary actions.

It was resolved –

That the safeguarding update be received and noted.

218. Consideration Given to KPIs:

KPI 4 – Governors provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for the improving quality of teaching and the behaviour and safety of pupils.
Evidenced through ongoing discussions around the impact of covid-19 and challenge to the headteacher to ensure that all necessary measures were in place to ensure the safety and well-being of students whilst in school and to identify alternative teaching and learning arrangements to support those students not able to attend school. Continued recognition of the work undertaken by the headteacher and leadership team to achieve this was noted by governors. (Minutes 211 and 213).

KPI 6 – Governors ensure solvency and probity, and that financial resources are made available to the school and are managed effectively
Evidenced through the financial review of income and expenditure and challenge to headteacher and business manager to ensure value for money. Challenge also to ULT trustees to ensure best use of central support staff and to lessen the impact on TAHS. (Minutes 210 and 211).

KPI 9 – Governors use pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics
Evidenced through discussion around the school's finances and changes to recording of pupil premium to part-fund staffing costs. Headteacher was requested to prepare a report to show that any changes did not impact on school responsibilities for pupil premium funding. (Minute 211).

KPI 10 – Governors are taking appropriate action to ensure their responsibilities towards staff well-being are being met

Evidenced through discussions around the staff well-being survey and concerns that it could impact on stress levels due to complex nature of the survey. Governors are to consider implementing a revised survey. (Minute 210).

219. Any Other Business:

Record of Thanks

On behalf of the governing body, the committee chair wished to place on record thanks to Mrs Rudge, Mrs Maingay and Mr Storer for all of the work that they were doing in response to the impact of Covid-19 and which was over and above what was expected of them.

220. Date of Next Meeting:

Governors were reminded that the next meeting of the Managing and Resourcing committee was to be held on Tuesday, 30 March 2021 at 5.00pm. (The meeting would again likely be held through Microsoft Teams).

P. Taylor

Signed.....

30 March 2021

Date.....