

**MINUTES OF THE 89TH FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 16.15**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW - Chair), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEN), Tony Bothwell (TBO), Keith Wilson (KWI).

Observing: Stewart Harris (SH)

Absent: Rachel Jarvis (RJA)

In Attendance: Richard Perry (RJP), Conor Hewitt – Minutes (COH)

Meeting Started: 16:30

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were passed on from Rachel Jarvis and shared with the Committee.

2. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting (11/10/2017)

The minutes of the previous meeting (October) were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chair as the scheduled December meeting did not take place.

4. Matters Arising

RJP noted that the CCTV upgrades, which were planned to take place in December, will now take place at the end of February. RJP also informed the Committee that the previously discussed pay review for staff was now in place and backdated to 1st September.

5. Annual Report & Financial Statements 2017

The annual report and financial statements have been approved and signed off and are now available via the Academy website. DW asked RJP whether or not we publish an abnormally large amount of information in comparison with other Academies. RJP confirmed that he believed we shared an above average amount of information, and that since the information was generally positive he therefore had no issue sharing it with the public. KWI questioned a sentence within the report that related to the management of teacher pay, which he felt may be construed negatively. DW noted that we must continue to think about how public information such as the annual report can be perceived.

RJP noted that the Academy had a relatively successful year financially as well as academically- however it should be noted that we still incurred a deficit of £1,100,000 when factoring in depreciation. Excluding this, the Academy incurred a small deficit in the year which RJP had alerted members to as a possibility in previously meetings.

RJP informed the Committee of the Academy's fund balances. 8.5% of our GAG provision was bought forward from the previous year. The maximum allowed is 12%. We also have £1.7 million of public funds currently available, and our unrestricted funds have increased slightly over the last 12 months. There is essentially £4.7 million of reserve funds which are available to offset future in-year deficits. RJP noted that the Academy is in a good financial position compared to other educational establishments. This remained important as it is predicted that budgetary overspends now remain forecast based upon maintaining current levels of operation - and increasing over the next few years.

RJP shared a number of graphs detailing the comparisons of staff costs with other Academies. Last year's figures for other Academies have not been released. Staffing costs have increased over the past

12 months; however, it is estimated that we will be in line with the majority of other Academies once the full statistics are released and likely to fall in the coming year through efficiencies.

RJP noted that general educational funding is declining or at best standing still, whilst costs are rising. The fact that we run a longer school day does have its costs, as does running the IB, ICAS and all of the extra provisions we offer.

Our pension liability is approximately a quarter of GAG income. RJP noted that the year-end accounts also had to be produced in a different format in order to satisfy the DfE requirements.

6. Capital Developments

As previously discussed, the planned CCTV upgrades will go ahead this month. RJP is currently receiving proposals from companies to resolve the ventilation problem in certain blocks. This information will be shared at the next meeting. Over the course of the next year there will also be some IT upgrade work throughout the Academy.

DW asked for more information regarding the CCTV upgrades – what was deemed necessary as opposed to desirable? RJP informed the Committee that only the most essential upgrades will take place at this current moment. These will include the reception area cameras as well as the external cameras which cover the perimeter of the building. This will be an on-going project with around 50% of the cameras throughout the Academy expected to be upgraded over the next few years. RJP informed the Committee that the recordings of each camera are held for 28 days and that the system is closely monitored by the Building Services team.

7. Revenue Funding (2017/18 and onwards)

RJP shared the annual funding comparison data with the Committee, which highlighted the decrease in funding. The deficit is expected to continue to grow; however, the Government are to make changes to school funding within the coming years, introducing a new funding formula next year. This is likely to produce a standstill budget at best for the Academy. RJP noted that a large number of schools have made cuts to staffing, reduced hours and taken out loans to deal with rising operational costs. This scenario is likely to escalate.

DW then quoted from the Bishop Fleming Academies Benchmark report, which was circulated to members of the Committee. The quote highlighted the number of schools that are actively requesting parental donations. KWI confirmed that he had heard reports of many schools having to seek funding this way.

8. Trading Company including Annual Report & Financial Statements 2017

RJP reported that £100,000 of the funds raised by the trading company had been donated back to the Academy.

9. Policies –

- **Anti-Fraud Policy** – *approval required*
- **Harassment & Workplace Bullying Policy** – *approval required*

RJP asked the Committee for their thoughts on the policies. KWI noted that it may be beneficial to include some anti-bribery information within the anti-fraud policy, as there are a number of people within the Academy who work closely with a range of suppliers. RJP informed KWI that this information was included in another policy. The members of the Committee then **approved the anti-fraud policy**.

RJP then asked for all members of the Committee to read through the harassment & workplace bullying policy in preparation for the next meeting.

10. Administrative & Staffing Matters

There were no administrative or staffing matters to report

11. Any Other Business

No other issues were raised.

Meeting ended 17:20

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 16 May 2018.

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 16 / May / 2018

