

**MINUTES OF THE 111th FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023 AT 16.30**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stewart Harris (SH), Kevin Chamberlain (KC)

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 16:30

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies necessary.

2. Declaration of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of last meeting held on Wednesday 3 May 2023

DW Reviewed the minutes of the last meeting which was held on 3 May 2023.

DW noted the mention of the Astroturf project, but RJP covered this in his report.

DW asked about the Trading Company and RJP confirmed he will provide an update within his presentation.

DW asked about the IT works and RJP will provide an update.

The minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 3 May were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

There were no further matters arising other than those coming up via the agenda.

5. Capital Developments

RJP talked through his report to Colleagues.

RJP spoke about the Capital works and reiterated the final two lifts within the main teaching zones will be upgraded this summer, so all three lifts will be fully refurbished and will give us longevity going forward.

The Astroturf project was agreed with the appointment of S&C Slatter to commence works over the next two summers, the first one which will commence this summer is the West Hill playground and other works adjacent to Upper Richmond Road will follow next summer.

RJP told Colleagues that the decision was made not to go with the expensive upgrade of the Academy's phone system and to opt for a cloud base system. RJP explained that the old system does not provide the same level of service it has been providing, the equipment is becoming obsolete and the parts are becoming expensive to replace. ATA has received 3 quotes already and has just received a fourth quote from a company called Novus which has come in at £5,500 for a cloud-based system based on a 3-year deal, RJP has asked the IT Manager to look at the costs based on a sixty months term including new handsets. The previous three quotes were based on large company fitouts. RJP said the costings are not going to be as large as expected and the cloud-based system will be more cost effective.

RJP has asked the IT Department to provide details of how many new whiteboard and PC's are exactly needed this year, RJP is waiting for the prices to be sent to him and will update Colleagues in due course.

6. Revenue Funding 2022-23 Update

RJP informed Colleagues of the Mainstream Schools Addition Grant (MSAG), which is worth around £300k for the year although the Government phase this in from the financial year and as ATA operate on the academic year ATA received part year funding from April – August which was £130K. ATA has benefitted over the past two years from the supplementary grant funding which going forward will become part of the core funding and the new MSAG will go through the same process. As at 31 May, ATA spent £8.6M of the expected funding for the year which breaks down to 73% of ATA's funding compared to just under 78% at the same stage last year although if the capital works were not undertaken this summer then ATA would have been in surplus rather than deficit.

DW asked about the floodlight replacement at Openview and enquired whether this is essential, RJP explained the facilities at Openview at some point they will need replacing and most of the bulbs on one pillar are not replaceable. The lights are out of date and the current usage of the facility is large and dependent on lighting being sufficient. RJP will discuss the floodlight costings with the Spencer Club in more detail.

RJP told Colleagues that the associate staff recruitment process is becoming increasingly difficult at the moment as experienced with the teaching staff.

RJP spoke about the recent strike days, although £55K for the year has been saved in salary costs, the impact on the education has been large, a discussion followed between Colleagues.

7. Revenue Funding 2023-2024

RJP said that ATA are still looking at a 6.5% increase on funding levels for next year. This will be the last year of 30 students joining the Year 7 cohort so the Academy will still receive funding next year for those additional students although there is still a concern about the funding which goes towards SEND students.

8. Academic Budget Forecast Return

RJP informed Colleagues of the annual return to EFSC, termed the Budget Forecast Return which covers a summary of the for next 3 years, which will also contribute to an updated 5-year plan to put to the trustees later in the year. The return is to be submitted by the end of August.

9. Trading Company

RJP spoke about Openview, the minimum income expected is £165K but will increase by 10%, various works still need to be completed and further discussions will be had with the Spencer club on letting arrangements and share of surplus income through the further impetus put into lettings during the day.

10. Administrative and Staffing Matters

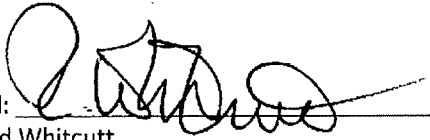
RJP spoke about the staff exit questionnaire which has been updated and should start receiving these from the staff who will be leaving at the end of the Academic year.

RJP shared several policy updates for Colleagues to look through and send any comments that they may have before they go live.

11. Any other Business

There was no other business

DW thanked the FRC for their continued support.

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee

Date/8/10/2023