



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT HR AND FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 29 June 2022 at 6.00 pm

Venue: Canteen, Cambridge Road

Present:

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| Mr T Bailey | (TB) | Trustee, Chair of Finance & Premises Committee |
| Mr J Everard | (JE) | Trustee, Vice-Chair of Trustees |
| Ms M Foster | (MF) | Trustee |
| Mr M Howell | (MH) | Trustee, Health and Safety Link |
| Mr E Judge | (EJ) | Trustee, Safeguarding Trustee Link |
| Ms L Smart | (LS) | Trustee |
| Mr C Wakefield | (CW) | Executive Principal |
| Mrs C Whitaker | (CDW) | Chair, HR Committee |

In attendance

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| Mrs S Freeman | (SFR) | Director of HR |
| Mrs K Redmond | (KRE) | Clerk to Trustees |
| Mr R Scott | (RSC) | Director of Finance & Premises |

Apologies:

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| Mr K Bannister | (KB) | Trustee |
| Mr T Baster | (TBA) | Joint Head of Academy |
| Mrs R Clark | (RCL) | Joint Head of Academy |
| Mr M Judd | (MJ) | Trustee |
| Mr P Nagle | (PN) | Chair of Trustees |

This group was quorate for the purpose of resolutions

| Item | Topic | Minute |
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| 1. | Welcome and apologies for absence | NOTED. |
| 2. | Minutes of the previous meeting | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Minutes of the previous HR Committee meeting held on 26 January 2022 were APPROVED unanimously2. Minutes of the previous Finance & Premises Committee meeting held on 2 February 2022 were APPROVED unanimously. |
| 3. | Matters Arising | <p>Trustees NOTED:</p> <p>Item 7 - Responsible Officer will conduct his visit before the end of term and TB would arrange to meet with him on that date.</p> <p>Item 8.5 – Aged Debtors commitment for the dance school had been removed.</p> <p>Item 8.6 – price of school meal has been increased to £2.40 and catering will break even this year as predicted.</p> <p>Item 9.1 – the valuation of the caretaker's house will take place in the summer holidays.</p> |

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| | | Item 10 - following the RIDDOR reportable incident, RSC confirmed that the bakers had been instructed to deliver after 6.00 am once the gates have been unlocked by site staff. |
| 4. | Declaration of Business Interests | There were no new declarations of business interests and no trustee recorded any conflict of interest with the items on the agenda or the receipt or giving of any gifts or hospitality since the last meeting. |
| 5. | HR | <p>3. Trustees RECEIVED a report regarding the impact of teacher absence from lessons as requested at the previous HR Committee meeting.</p> <p>SFR advised that the analysis showed that absence was quite low and only 0.3% of lessons were covered by agency staff. There was a downward trend of absence across the academy and it is hoped to return to normal rates in the autumn term.</p> <p>CDW raised a query on behalf of PN as to whether there was any underlying explanation for personal and compassionate leave still increasing.</p> <p>SFR advised that there were a number of staff whose family members had been very ill after Covid-19 and a number of funerals, hospital visits and support/care was required. CWA advised that this would be more of a concern if there was a high staff turnover. CWA reviewed every application for annual leave and exceptional leave and the pandemic continued to have a significant effect which required managing the wellbeing of staff even more important. CWA believed there was the correct balance at the academy and staff greatly appreciated the support and endeavoured to be in work if they could.</p> <p>SFR advised that mental health was a key issue for both staff and students and there was minimal support from external agencies particularly for supporting those with long Covid. The academy supported those staff with long term absence and were proactive in communicating with them and had managed to keep the academy running during the pandemic with the least amount of cover possible.</p> <p>CWA stated that there was a distinct shift in fragility and this was similar to that found in other schools. Trustees agreed that they saw similar trends within their workplace where more flexibility had been offered and the perception of the importance of a work/life balance had shifted.</p> <p>4. Trustees NOTED the pleasing outcomes from the Health & Wellbeing Survey results. SFR advised that feedback from the survey would be given to staff next week. The academy continued to work towards the Gold Investors in People Award and was working with a consultant to achieve that.</p> <p>5. Trustees NOTED the Key Indicator of Performance (KIP) Report which had been updated with reference to the strategy report.</p> |

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| | <p>6. Safeguarding Report</p> <p>EJ referred to his personal experience of being recently involved in a safeguarding matter within the academy and the outstanding response by staff. This highlighted to EJ that whilst he continued to believe there needed to be a balanced approach he appreciated that there was sometimes a need for immediate action. EJ congratulated CWA and his team for dealing with the matter in a professional and appropriate manner.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the options available to ensure the appropriate work/life balance for those staff involved in supporting serious safeguarding matters. CWA advised that a small team of staff were being exposed to high level pastoral matters to provide them with more confidence and he was always on hand to provide any reassurance that was required. CWA advised that he had taken Trustees' concerns on board and was not spending weekends and holidays on correspondence and was modelling that with staff which had had a positive effect. CWA was also encouraging staff to push back against social services who demanded meetings during holiday periods. There will be a rota for SLT cover during the summer for emergency situations.</p> <p>EJ advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Single Central Record had been reviewed with SFR and all was found to be correct. A phenomenal amount of work had been carried out to ensure that all staff files contained the correct documentation b. he had met with Mr Stoneman, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Mrs Darcy-Smith, Assistant DSL, to receive an executive summary of how safeguarding was being managed, how impact was measured and what the next steps were. This included reviewing the MyConcern system to ensure appropriate action had been taken and noted that Mr Stoneman was reviewing how to produce reports from the system. EJ will review this system during his next visit to understand the process and how decisions were made c. results of the Students' Wellbeing Survey were on the website and 95% of all students who responded confirmed that they felt safe and supported d. all actions from the external safeguarding audit conducted in December had been completed and closed e. discussed the next steps of transitioning documents from primary schools for Year 6 to 7 students and the visits/calls required to ensure the information was received f. Year 11 and 13 files will be archived or passed on to the next destination |
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| | | <p>g. safeguarding training will take place in September.</p> <p>EJ congratulated staff all their efforts to ensure safeguarding was effective.</p> <p>7. Trustees REVIEWED the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bereavement – <i>no changes</i> ii. Capability Support Staff – <i>no changes</i> iii. Early Careers Teachers – <i>minor changes</i> iv. Menopause – <i>new policy</i> v. Mental Health and Wellbeing for students which mirrors the one in place for staff– <i>new policy</i> vi. Teacher Performance Management & Capability – <i>no substantial change</i> <p>Trustees APPROVED the above policies for ratification by the Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Trustees thanked SFR for her excellent work.</p> |
| 6. | Finance | <p>1. Trustees RECEIVED the Monthly Management Accounts, Trial Balance and Balance Sheet to 31 May 2022.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the move away from a cost centre summary report to the more comprehensive management accounts based on nominal coding structure as required by the Department for Education (DfE) b. additional funding of £207k was received against what was originally budgeted for c. non salary costs have been matched against the additional income and therefore was as predicted. Savings had been made within staffing by some vacancies not being filled d. the report now identified the capital income and spend e. in-year savings of £83k had been achieved but spending was slightly more than income. <p>TB referred to the Month 9 deficit being disproportionate to the year end as there was an additional £100k within the last three months of financial year. RSC advised that in March the local government body agreed to a 1.75% pay rise for support staff backdated to April 2021 which was unexpected and was about £100k. This explained the swing of £100k between the anticipated difference from Month 6 to Month 9.</p> <p>2. Trustees REVIEWED the Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2022/23 to 2024/25 and the Budget Forecast Return (BFR3Y) which had to be completed and submitted by 26 July 2022.</p> <p>TB referred to the discussion at the last Finance & Premises Committee regarding inflationary concerns and rising costs which were now being seen. TB and RSC had met and</p> |

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| | <p>discussed the budget and options which were being presented at this meeting and proposed that a further meeting be held to scrutinise the plans in greater detail before approval by the Board of Trustees and submission to the DfE.</p> <p>Trustees NOTED the information with the Budget Approval Report 2022-23 and the three year plan for consideration.</p> <p>RSC referred to the uncertainty from government on funding streams for schools which made forecasting very difficult. The academy's initial budget plan had therefore had to be adjusted as the budget currently did not balance for 2022-25. This was a situation being experienced by most schools.</p> <p>CWA advised an attrition model had been used to reduce costs and this will be reduced further by strategically managing staffing. CWA was confident that a balanced budget could be met for 2022/23. There will be serious concerns for 2023/24 with rising utility costs and all schools will struggle with up to 10% rise in costs unless they receive government support.</p> <p>Trustees AGREED that a small working group of CWA, RSC, SFR and TB should meet to look at the attrition model and assumptions in order to present the budget for approval to the Board of Trustees on 13 July 2022.</p> <p>3. Trustees NOTED the Academies Accounts Direction 2021 to 22 published on 20 April 2022 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. a new disclosure requirement for severance payments ii. the removal of the requirement to submit dormant accounts to Education and Skills Funding Agency (EFSA) iii. there were some clarifications to the trustees' report and changes to the governance statement. <p>This information was produced by DfE as guidance for auditors on how academies should be audited from 31 August.</p> <p>4. Trustees NOTED the Premises Report for the summer term 2022 including that the academy had been unsuccessful in its Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid for a new Sports Hall at Mill Road Campus.</p> <p>The academy had been successful in its CIF bid for a pipework and boiler replacement programme across both campuses and had been allocated £764,000. This will provide a much more economical system and would provide sufficient funds to install an Air Source Heat Pump alongside the installation of PV solar panels to drive down overall revenue costs and install a fit for purpose economic system with thermostatic control throughout. The tender process had commenced and the aim was to complete the installation of boilers by the October half-term and the pipework by 2023.</p> |
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| | | <p>5. Terms of Reference/Academies Planning Calendar</p> <p>Trustees NOTED that the Terms of Reference had been updated to incorporate key items within the DfE Academies Planning Calendar.</p> <p>6. Health & Safety (H&S) Update</p> <p>MH advised that the H&S Committee meeting had taken place on 18 May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the draft H&S staff handbook had been discussed and agreed that it was clear and concise. This would be reviewed again at the next meeting b) a new model for staff evacuation was being proposed with the use of fire marshalls appointed to check areas and this would be finalised over the summer. <p>CWA advised that three fire drills had taken place recently at Cambridge Road and the buildings were evacuated in under four minutes and returned to within seven minutes. Those with special needs and medical conditions were supported to evacuate. Behaviour had been impeccable. The new fire alarm system worked very well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) there were no RIDDOR reportable incidents. <p>8 Trustees NOTED the draft Whole Academy Safety and Security Policy and would feedback any comments to RSC in order to finalise for ratification by the Board of Trustees on 13 July 2022.</p> <p>Trustees thanked RSC for his excellent work.</p> |
| 7. | Any Other Business | There were no matters of Any Other Business. |
| 8. | Confirmation of confidential items for the minutes | Agenda items 5.1, 5.2 and 6.7 |
| 9. | Date of next meetings | To be confirmed. |

Meeting closed at 7.45 pm

Actions

| Date of Meeting/ Item number | Topic | Minute |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 02.02.22 - Item 9.2i | Fire Door Replacement Tenders | RSC to share the tender proposals with Trustees for approval to proceed. |
| 26.01.22 – item 9 | Probationary Policy | SFR to submit a policy including both teaching and support staff at the next meeting. |

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| 05.07.22 – item 6.2 | Budget working party meeting | CWA, RSC, SFR and TB to meet review the attrition model and assumptions in order to present the budget for approval to the Board of Trustees on 13 July 2022. |
| 05.07.22 – item 6.8 | Whole Academy Safety and Security Policy | Trustees to feedback any comments to RSC in order to finalise for ratification by the Board of Trustees on 13 July 2022 |