

# GLADSTONE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Learning to Succeed"

## MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**DATE:** Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**TIME:** 5.30 p.m.

### **PRESENT:**

Mr. Garry Johnson (Headteacher)

Mr Ray Williamson

Mrs Jane McLeod

Miss V Lewis (Clerk)

Mr Peter Southward

Mrs. Helen Halliday

Mrs. Kate Hill

### **Additionally Present:**

Ms Jane Pepper (Chair of Governors)

Mrs. Caroline Sarney (Business Manager)

## **MINUTES**

### 1. Election of Chairperson for Resources Committee (5 minutes)

The Clerk welcomed governors to the meeting and asked for interest in the role of Committee Chairperson for this school year. RW is willing to act as Chair, but reminded governors his term of office comes to an end in January and he is not yet sure if he will be able to continue so there is a possibility a new Chair will be required in January. However, for the purposes of this meeting, and until January, RW will act as Chair.

**Action: Update records as appropriate**

**By: Clerk**

### 2. Apologies for absence; consider acceptance of apologies (2 minutes)

Apologies received from: -

RB – apologies received retrospectively 18.11.20. RB is unwell, awaiting outcome of Covid test and the meeting slipped his mind.

All apologies were considered and accepted.

**Action: None Required.**

### 3. Confidentiality (2 minutes)

There were no items identified as confidential for the purposes of the Minutes.

**Action: None Required.**

### 4. Declaration of Interest in any Agenda Item (2 minutes)

There were no declarations of interest in any agenda items.

**Action: None Required**

## 5. Resources Committee Terms of Reference (2 minutes)

CS: there is an ongoing attendance management issue which is heading towards dismissal, without going to governor Panel at the request of the staff member involved. In previous years similar issues have been actioned by the Headteacher etc but HR are advising that there should be governor involvement (though not a Panel) due to the scheme of delegation not showing the Headteacher as having delegated responsibility for dismissals.

GJ: did Kate Thompson (HR) come back with more detail re delegated responsibilities?

CS: if a staff member has agreed to a process outside the Panel of governors by choice, they still have the right of appeal so would then be able to go back to governors. Where there are dismissal arrangements and processes not involving a governor Panel it would seem this responsibility has to be formally delegated to the Headteacher. This has not always been the case, seems HR are being overly careful on this occasion as the school has undertaken this attendance management process (without Governor Panel) in the past without governor input.

RW: In the Committee's Terms of Reference which point are we talking about?

GJ: when the attendance policy procedures are exhausted the end of the line is a governor panel to decide on dismissal. This staff member has decided not to go to this Panel and instead wants to resolve in a formal meeting with Deputy Headteacher. The issue is that there is no formal delegation of the Headteacher's right to dismiss in any of the policies, or the scheme(s) of delegation.

HH: I've been taking the staff member through the process and she has opted for the less stressful step of a formal meeting outside of governor panel. However, if we now have to invite the Chair of Governors to the meeting to adhere with the current delegation of responsibility it will change the format, feel and approach of the meeting.

JP: In Item 12 under Staffing it does state this committee has the right to change policies but that's not necessarily quite what's required here.

RW: would give us the right to make changes to the policies, but we can't do that here and now.

CS: the attendance policy doesn't state a governor needs to be involved in a formal dismissal meeting outside of Governor Panel so it seems the need for governor involvement is HR's interpretation.

HH: the plan was that I would have the delegated responsibility to be the deciding leader at the formal meeting. HR said I don't have the authority, it's usually the Headteacher. HR asked to check the policies for appropriate delegation wording, however nowhere in the policies or GB Scheme(s) of delegation does it delegate this responsibility to dismiss to the Headteacher. HR rep would much prefer it to be the Headteacher but if no option it would have to be the Chair of Governors, as the policies and schemes stand. This is obviously not what the staff member has agreed to.

JP: what does the Attendance Management Policy say?

HH: it says 'manager' and clarifies this could be the Headteacher, line manager, business manager etc as appropriate. It doesn't explicitly state who has the power to dismiss outside the governor panel. The staff member has opted not to go to governor panel which is perfectly acceptable.

RW: could we, as the committee, agree to do as outlined on an ad hoc basis?

JP: it's not about adding it to the Terms of Reference of this committee, we need to know from HR which policy needs to have this extra detail in.

HH: will seek further info from HR and feed back to JP as Chair. May need to have an amended policy / scheme of delegation agreed via email remotely. Kate Thompson is waiting for input from the governance team. Might have to do something different and go from there.

Otherwise – all ok.

Governors considered the duties outlined in the Terms of Reference and adopted them for year 2020/21.

**Action: Seek advice from HR re scheme of delegation and update/action as agreed with HR**      **By: HH/GJ/CS**

6. Correspondence (2 minutes)

None.

**Action: None required.**

7. Business Manager Report: Finance & Premises (45 minutes)

RW: everyone should have read the report and supporting financial documents. Can we highlight key issues.

CS: any questions? In my report issues have been noted by budget headings and in the finance reports the right hand column shows comments and notes.

£3.8m income this year which then decreases 21/22 due to pupil numbers but increases in 22/23 due to the increase to per pupil funding.

Staffing model changes since start budget and increases to premises expenditure (related to Covid mostly) have had impacts.

Balances show in year deficits of £28k (20/21), £160k (21/22), £202k (22/23) but this is acceptable due to balances brought forward. By the end of 3 years just about breaking even and will have used our carry forward surplus. There is £6k Achievement for All ICT expenditure which was not factored in and will put the balance carried forward to 23/24 very slightly in deficit.

RW: obviously the authority will look at the revised budget and find it acceptable as we seem ok until the end of year 3. However, in year 4 and 5 we would clearly be in a significant and increasing deficit. It seems to be important to tackle this situation sooner rather than later to avoid any further need for extreme changes. Obviously not easy but presumably its either reducing outgoings or looking at increasing numbers for better income. We'll hit the buffer at some point and this will prompt some drastic decisions.

PS: not that long ago we were going to be £1m in deficit so this is more positive.

CS: yes, that would have been the position after 5 years if we hadn't undertaken the staffing restructure. The FSM officer and school are happy to submit this as the revised budget and then run with it until next September when we will have new intake data, pupil premium and free school meal data etc to be able to inform further financial analysis and changes.

RW: agree, we can accept the revised budget but then I think we need to start looking at the issues much sooner than next September, trying to make changes as early as possible for the greatest impact.

JP: so bearing in mind the governor skills audit and upcoming governance health check – we need to look at balancing the budget but also look at it in a more strategic way for aspirations and priorities. When we identify potential savings and income sources they should be in line with school improvement.

RW: we know things aren't going to magically improve, we need to look at things sooner to be able to make the correct and most relevant savings and changes.

JP: the skills audit has shown we need further strategic planning knowledge within the governing body. Consider implications of budget decisions on other areas of school as well as just bringing numbers in line.

RW: had an offer from LA to have a consultant look at strategic financial management. This was then affected by Covid, perhaps now is a good time to try to resurrect it sooner rather than later.

HH: CS what is the overall impact going to be re covid on supply, extra resources, cleaning etc?

CS: extra costs have been factored into the revised budget. The authority are advising that funding for reimbursement of extra costs related to covid isn't available if a school has a positive budget position.

HH: NAHT has started a petition for people to sign which asks for all schools to be fully reimbursed for extra expenditure related to covid.

CS: regarding staffing, if staff are isolating because they are unwell or have been told to isolate this is covered by the absence insurance scheme. However, absence of staff due to their child's school being closed etc is not. Factored in extra 25 hours cleaning, upped budget for extra paper towels etc.

GJ: extra contingency is available in that we have staff on fixed term and temporary contracts so we can lose staff without financial impact if necessary (redundancy etc). We will also need to look in due course at best savings on things such as the catering and cleaning services which we may be able to get better value on.

JP: need to consider funding and issues whilst not affecting the current running equilibrium. Can definitely see the benefit of consultancy input to identify possible future changes. Also need to look at not making changes which aren't thought out or are knee jerk or damaging. RW will you look into the LA support again? Is it free?

RW: yes, I'll write again. Yes, its free. Will do it sooner rather than later.

CS: they did send me an email so I will also look to see if I can track it down.

RW: will wait to hear from CS before doing anything. Perhaps set up a working party for the strategic funding review?

JP: can work this into the governance health check and the Chairship course alongside possible consultancy input and feed back.

RW: revisit in January.

CS: asset management plan more formalised. Parts of the building need improvement, we need to include these in the strategic expenditure planning context.

RW: would like to see it broadened further to include aspirational plans such as greening etc. Gives you the scope to look for external grants or funding.

RW: thoughts on the AMP? On our recent site visit RB and I saw many of the issues noted and can confirm the requirements.

JP: pre-emptive maintenance and improvements can perhaps avoid things such as the recent ceiling issue.

RW: yes, 6 incidents of rain reported to county and nothing actioned before the roof collapse.

CS: 2 strands of AMP: decorating etc are internal school funded improvements and then the more structural larger scale needs. The MASS scheme is under review currently. Local authority funding will be reducing over the next 3-5 years.

JP: there will be changes to structures and the autonomy the LA will have in line with funding changes.

CS: bearing in mind the financial position what are governors' thoughts re the new laptops for teachers? They need replacing by next summer and if we order now they won't come until February as it is.

JM: if they are a must for effective teaching rather than a want then they need to be purchased.

CS: the cost is already built into the revised budget.

*All agreed.*

*Governors formally agreed to accept the revised budget for submission at this time, after CS has made a minor amendment to include the additional year 2 cost for Achievement for All programme (approx. £6k).*

**Action: Update Revised Budget re AfA £6k and then submit**

**By: CS**

**Action: Liaise and arrange external financial consultancy**

**By: RW/CS**

## 8. Health & Safety (15 minutes)

CS: the biggest issue was the recent roof collapse. There is a new online reporting system which we used to report the issue after the event. I had a phone call within a few hours and then a visit from Robin Smith the next day. Hoping the repair works will also include other improvements and works which we have once again reminded them of, particularly as the roof collapse was in an area which had already been reported as having issues several times.

HandS Paperwork review undertaken last week – only minor issues for the most part. The only real issue was the forming up and practicing of a lockdown procedure. Need to finalise the exact prompts and clarify the policy before running a drill.

**Covid Update:**

No significant issues from covid, no positive cases in pupils affecting Bubbles and we stand at approx. 96% attendance. One of the only schools not to have had to close a bubble yet.

HH: unbelievable – staffing has been affected by other schools closing when our staff need to be off with their own children or when staff have had to isolate after being identified as close contacts of cases outside of school. We did have one positive test in a pupil but after speaking with Public Health England it was determined that he had not actually been in school during the period of contagion and therefore his Bubble was unaffected.

JM: the procedures in place since day 1 have been extremely robust and clearly paying off. The children are being really accepting of the systems in place.

HH: still doing lots of hand washing which not all schools are. The cleaners are being fantastic, every touch point is cleaned regularly.

JP: it's amazing to be honest, especially considering the levels in Scarborough generally.

HH: off duty PCSO walked through Sainsbury Park and informed school they would be targeting the area re groups congregating etc to take action. Nothing seems to have happened subsequently and the park has been just as busy since.

JP: obviously bubbles are mixing outside of school, which we can't control. But a big well done regarding the current Covid situation.

**Action: Firm up lockdown policy and procedure & run drill**

**By: CS/HH**

9. Approve & Adopt Policies (20 minutes)

All the following are based on local authority model policies and have been agreed by unions etc.

**Pay Policy:** revised version no significant changes.

**Appraisal:** revised version no significant changes.

**Recruitment & Selection:** revised version no significant changes.

**RIAW:** revised version no significant changes.

**Leave:** revised version no significant changes.

**Allergens:** model policy, not previously adopted by governors but highlighted on the recent HandS paperwork review as being required.

**Charging & Remissions** (updated by school): during lockdown staff were making phonecalls from home and incurring other small costs so we were advised to put something into this policy regarding reimbursement of costs. It now explicitly states costs can be reimbursed if receipts/bills/invoices are submitted and the correct claim form is completed.

**HS003 Health & Safety Policy (statutory):** updated to reflect names and dates for this school year but no significant changes.

**HS001 Fire Safety Policy:** reviewed. No significant changes.

Scheduled review of H&S policies HS004-31 as per SBM summary report: these are on a 3 yearly review schedule and have not been changed but need to be re-adopted.

*Members present agreed to adopt all policies as presented.*

**Action: File policies as per procedure (intranet, website, paper file)**

**By: Clerk/SBM**

13. A.O.B (5 minutes)

**School Mobiles:**

VL: the school mobile phones which are used by staff on visits for both contact and taking photos for social media are coming to the end of their shelf life and need to be replaced. The most cost-effective option is to buy phones outright and continue to use Pay as You Go; a contract would not be needed. Costs range from £1000 – £3000.

KH: think the most important thing is to go for the best camera possible and this is their main usage.

RW: would it not be better to go for cameras instead of phones?

VL: we went for phones because they can a) be used when on visits for contact but also, photos can be directly uploaded to social media apps on phones.

RW: ok so shall we set a budget and then you can do further research and buy accordingly?

RW: would a budget of £1500 be appropriate?

All agreed.

**Governor Health Check:**

JP: the health check is scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> November. How many governors are needed?

VL: it's actually just the Headteacher, Chair and Clerk.

**Action: Further research mobile phones and purchase accordingly**

**By: VL/CS**

**The Meeting was closed by the Chair at 6.15pm**

Signed *R Brearley* Dated 10.03.2021

Counter Signed *JMcLeod* Dated 10.03.2021

*Countersigned by Jane McLeod as RB was absent for this meeting.*