

## SUMMER TERM 2021 MEETING OF THE FINANCE, PREMISES, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

Date Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
Time 18.30  
Place Via Zoom Video Conference

|                       |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| <b>PRESENT:</b>       | Mr P Davies (PD)(Chair)<br>Mrs T Ellis (TE)<br>Mr T Green (TG) | Mr E Hillyard (EH) (Headteacher)<br>Ms F Kiss (FK)<br>Mr S Pilgrim (SP) |
| <b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b> | Mrs L Jackson (LJ)<br>Mrs J Knight (JK)                        | Director of Finance, HR and Resources<br>Clerk                          |
| <b>APOLOGIES:</b>     | None   |   |
| <b>NOT PRESENT:</b>   | Ms S Stewart   |   |

NB. Governors' questions are highlighted in *italics* throughout these minutes.

| Item | Discussions and Decisions Made   | Actions |
|------|--|---------|
| 1    | <b>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</b><br>The Chair thanked everyone for attending and opened the meeting. There were no apologies.  |         |
| 2    | <b>Notification of Any Other Business</b><br>LJ – Employee Assistance Programme  |         |
| 3    | <b>Declarations of Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FK is an HGSS employee (AOB item)</li> </ul> The following standing declarations were noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PD is employed by Buckinghamshire Council.</li> <li>TG is a Member of Buckinghamshire Council.</li> </ul>   |         |
| 4    | <b>Minutes</b><br>The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2021, having been circulated, were approved.<br><br><b>Actions and Matters Arising</b><br>5.2 – A physical sign-off is required only by the Accounting Officer (EH), not by Governors.<br>7.3 – The contractors will not re-tarmac the drive for free.<br>8.1 – The date has been amended.<br>9.1 – Risk Register to be reviewed termly. It was looked at in Dec and March. Revised version to be circulated with Minutes. |         |

JK

| Item           | Discussions and Decisions Made   | Actions          |
|----------------|--|------------------|
| <b>FINANCE</b> |  |                  |
| <b>5.1</b>     | <p><b>Year End Budget 2020-21</b></p> <p>The budget had previously been circulated.</p> <p>LJ ran through the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchup funding received had been higher than expected</li> <li>• SEN funding is a conservative forecast. There are a number of annual reviews going on and changes expected so income may be higher.</li> <li>• Lettings are starting up again in a limited way. Any changed Government plans for re-opening on 21 June will affect this so this is currently a conservative forecast.</li> <li>• Consortium funding: £3k surplus, working well for HGSS.</li> <li>• 1:1 laptop scheme – this will balance to £0 as laptops are ordered and paid for.</li> <li>• The Director of Arts is supporting other schools. This generates a small income.</li> <li>• More COVID funding has been received for NHS testing on site. This area has made a small profit as in-house staff were used rather than buying in staff. This was also preferable for students, being tested by staff they knew.</li> <li>• Teacher pension forecast is over £60k saving as some staff have opted out. However, this can change quickly, which must be budgeted for.</li> <li>• Staffing costs are higher than budgeted due to the greater SEN need. There was an additional Pastoral Manager as well as a Janitor to ensure the site was Covid clean. This has been a positive change generally as the site is better looked after and toilets cleaner, with fewer complaints.</li> <li>• Some of the 'out of scope' items in the Expansion Plan will be carried over to next year, e.g. the staff room. The changing rooms will likely be finished this year.</li> <li>• The server replacement project is going ahead, as well as the purchase of some additional security software to protect against a ransomware attack as these are becoming more frequent in schools. A cyber attack training programme is being trialled through SLT to alert staff in recognising phishing software.</li> <li>• Overall there is a forecast surplus of £288,651.</li> <li>• The early decision on the gas contract has worked well as prices have now gone up. This could save £13k over two years based on increased prices.</li> </ul> <p><i>Does School have cyber insurance? This is not covered as standard by RPA but additional insurance can be take out.</i></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LJ to look into this.</li> </ul> | <p><b>LJ</b></p> |

| Item | Discussions and Decisions Made   | Actions |
|------|--|---------|
| 5.2  | <p><b>Approval of Budget for 2021-22</b></p> <p>The budget for 21-22 had previously been circulated.</p> <p>LJ ran through the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay and pension grants are now included in the National Funding Formula figure. A reduction in overall funding was expected as a result of this, but it is only just under £2k less.</li> <li>• Sixth Form funding is still separated out.</li> <li>• There is an increase in the AWPU figure.</li> <li>• Students were lost across other years which has affected income this year.</li> <li>• A 2% increase in Teachers Pay has been left in the budget despite the likelihood of a pay freeze, as things could change unexpectedly.</li> <li>• The budget includes full pension contributions, so there is likely to be a saving here as some teachers may opt out.</li> <li>• A new Alternative Provision is planned for September which increases staff costs in the budget. EH: External provisions are currently used for fixed term exclusions but the 6-12 week programme is not very successful and it is felt a better job could be done on site. A space will be provided where students can go for 1-1 support to get back up to speed with lessons and gain confidence and self-esteem. This may be required for a student going through a particular period of trouble at home or falling behind in particular subjects, giving flexibility for them to stay in the main class for subjects that are working. EH is excited about the possibilities but the scheme is staff intensive. Hopefully it will save in terms of disruption around the school and SEN costs. It should also provide better for vulnerable pupils (comparative schemes at other schools have seen great results).</li> </ul> <p><i>What are the costs for this new facility, including staff and space?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LJ/EH: Approximately £40k for one full time member of staff and half time for another, who will also work in the main school. Cosmetic work will be done to the current music block (this was to be demolished but is now being kept). Gas heating must be extended to this building but this is covered by CIF money (£17k).</li> </ul> <p><i>What is the cost of using PRUs for pupils now?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LJ/EH: Approximately £30k this year (3 pupils alone cost £18k for just English and Maths provision). Demand has grown, partly due to Covid.</li> <li>• EH is hoping the project will be cost neutral, but with a much better experience and outcome for students as well</li> </ul> |         |

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|      | <p>as reduced disruption across the school.</p> <p><i>Could air source heating be used instead of gas in the new unit?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: There are limited electrics, which need upgrading anyway. The building is close to the new boilers, so pipework is short and existing radiators can be used. The building is 1930s and has a shelf life of perhaps 10 years so it's not worth doing a major upgrade. Windows were replaced in 2011 so are fine. It just needs tidying up.</li> </ul> <p><i>Has there been a reduction in Sixth Form Bursary funding?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: We have no control over this. Originally this was a grant for students to support their learning but the rules seem to have changed.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TG to forward a communication about 16-19 bursary funding received today, to accompany the minutes.</li> </ul> <p>LJ continued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IT costs have reduced in the 21-22 budget as the senior technician role has been outsourced after a member of staff resigned. Budget includes £41k plus £9k contingency in case of additional IT requirements.</li> <li>Utilities budgets have been scaled up for the new buildings. Hopefully money will be saved here as the buildings should be efficient.</li> <li>Cleaning costs are only estimates as realistic quotes can't be given until the build is finished.</li> <li>Outcome of the budget is a £26k in-year deficit but there are likely to be savings on this from teacher pay and pensions.</li> <li>There were no further questions on the 2021-22 budget and Governors were happy to approve this to go to FGB.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ to add in comparative costs for the in-house PRU before presenting the budget at FGB in July.</li> <li>PD thanked LJ for all her work on this</li> </ul> | <p>TG</p> <p>LJ</p> |
| 5.3  | <p><b>3-Year Budget</b></p> <p>The 3-Year budget had previously been circulated (actually includes 5 years).</p> <p>LJ ran through the highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income increases over time with increased pupil numbers. % increases in funding have not been included.</li> <li>2% teacher pay increase for teachers assumed throughout, which adds £268k to staff costs by Year 5.</li> <li>The school is in a better provision to withstand difficulties as it is growing.</li> </ul>  |                     |

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|      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sixth Form numbers have been held but the school hopes to grow the Sixth Form. With new facilities and higher numbers in the rest of the school, this should be possible.</li> </ul> <p><i>SEN funding has not increased in the budget. Do you not anticipate an increase in SEN numbers with expansion?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EH: This goes up in 2021-22 as HGSS will have 60 students with EHCPs next year. After that it is flat, as numbers aren't known. EH is doing a secondment role looking at the equitable distribution of SEN pupils across Bucks secondary schools. Currently HGSS has 3x the national average of EHCP pupils and there is no advantage to being in this position (EHCP pupils negatively affect finances, attainment, disruption and resources).</li> </ul>  |         |
| 5.4  | <p><b>Schools Resource Management Tool (SRMSAT)</b></p> <p>LJ had previously circulated a copy of the completed form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This must now be completed annually.</li> <li>The only element that is not fully compliant is Q.38 (Internal Scrutiny) as this is something that has not yet been signed off.</li> <li>Otherwise school is fully compliant.</li> <li>The Head signs off on the return, so this is for Governor information only, to confirm it has been done.</li> <li>There were no questions.</li> </ul>  |         |
| 5.5  | <p><b>Monthly Management Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A list of questions arising from the Monthly Management Reports had been sent to LJ and circulated with the papers for the meeting.</li> <li>PD felt it was hard to understand the figures, though the accompanying notes had been helpful.</li> <li>LJ confirmed that Governors are not required to sign off the monthly reports; the purpose is strategic oversight. Only 6 out of 12 monthly reports are required to be sent to the Finance Committee (the Chair sees 12 months).</li> <li>TE would like to see a rolling forecast of the projected financial outcome at the end of the year against each month's figures.</li> <li>LJ/EH felt that this level of detail would require additional resources and perhaps additional information just creates more questions.</li> <li>PD suggested looking at Sage to see what other, clearer reports can be run easily, without excessive extra work; otherwise it seems difficult to scrutinise the accounts effectively.</li> </ul> |         |

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|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TG felt Governors are not intended to be accountants; rather the purpose is to have an overview to spot any glaring errors.</li> <li>SP was happy with the narrative provided by LJ but found the Cash Book Transactions sheet confusing.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EH to find out from two other Bucks SATs how they approach this.</li> <li>LJ to find out if there are better designed reports which keep things simpler. A narrative will still be provided but the Cash Book Transactions sheet will be dropped.</li> </ul>  | <p>EH</p> <p>LJ</p> |
| <b>AUDIT</b>    |   |                     |
| <b>6.1</b>      | <p><b>Internal Scrutiny</b></p> <p>LJ had previously circulated an options appraisal paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other schools had been contacted for their non-financial audit provider recommendations.</li> <li>Financial audit firms cannot cover these alternative areas.</li> <li>One provider (Strictly Education) had glowing references and could cover all three proposed areas of scrutiny.</li> <li>The engagement of this provider will initially be for one year, but with the intention of a longer-term relationship.</li> <li>All governors agreed to the appointment of Strictly Education.</li> </ul>  |                     |
| <b>PREMISES</b> |   |                     |
| <b>7.1</b>      | <p><b>Current Works Update</b></p> <p>LJ had previously circulated a report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Staff room and changing room will go over budget due to a) major asbestos removal and b) an additional steel required to replace a load-bearing wall.</li> <li>Due to hold-ups in the build of some in-scope areas, progress is being made on out-of-scope areas.</li> <li>The changing room has been split (M/F) and is a good space.</li> <li>The staff room is scheduled for the summer holidays but may not be complete by 1<sup>st</sup> September.</li> <li>A quote has been requested for the re-tarmac of the main drive.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ to get a second quote on the re-tarmac, not just from Wilmott Dixon sub-contractors.</li> </ul> <p><i>Has there been any progress on the Art Block roof?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: This has been ongoing for 11 years. Water is coming in,</li> </ul> | <p>LJ</p>           |

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|                            | but legally this is difficult. As a claim was not opened within the latent defects period (because the building was signed off by the Bucks surveyor), it can be ignored. A structural engineer will be called in to find out where the water is coming from and a cost/benefit analysis put together.  |         |
| <b>7.2</b>                 | <b>Expansion Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new buildings are coming on well, though there are delays due to building material shortages.</li> <li>The 2-storey teaching block has windows in place and the first fix starting inside.</li> <li>The old sports hall has issues with asbestos around the windows so works here have been stopped for 4 weeks.</li> <li>The fitness suite is continuing but with some delays.</li> </ul> <i>Has everything been done to prevent any asbestos risk to students and staff?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: Much of the asbestos was removed during the Easter holidays. The rest is not accessible to staff or students so there is no concern about contamination. Some of the asbestos was notifiable to the HSE so this is taking time.</li> </ul> |         |
| <b>7.3</b>                 | <b>Capital Improvements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reception area will be refurbished in the new academic year. Architects are looking at this next week.</li> </ul>  |         |
| <b>7.4</b>                 | <b>Dome Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There was nothing to report.</li> </ul>   |         |
| <b>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY</b> |   |         |
| <b>8.1</b>                 | <b>Termly Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TG conducted a termly visit to school.</li> <li>There were no changes to any priorities or dates.</li> </ul>   |         |
| <b>8.2</b>                 | <b>H&amp;S Audit Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: The date is not yet known for the audit.</li> </ul>  |         |
| <b>8.3</b>                 | <b>COVID Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The latest risk assessment had been circulated with minor changes since half term.</li> <li>Face masks are no longer required, though these were kept for the last two weeks before the holiday. This improved safety and helped get Years 11/13 through their assessments without Covid isolations getting in the way.</li> <li>There are more Covid cases in the community, so there</li> </ul>  |         |

| Item                  | Discussions and Decisions Made   | Actions        |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|
|                       | may be a return to masks and testing at some point.  |                |
| <b>POLICY REVIEWS</b> |  |                |
| <b>9.1</b>            | <b>Health &amp; Safety Policy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy had been circulated.</li> <li>This is a model document which has been updated but not materially changed.</li> <li>There were no comments. Governors approved the policy.</li> </ul>   |                |
| <b>9.2</b>            | <b>Best Value Statement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PD had emailed LJ on 12<sup>th</sup> May suggesting revised wording for one section.</li> <li>PD pointed out that the EU procurement regulations mentioned in the document are no longer referred to as 'EU' so this can be amended, and there is one incorrect date which also needs revision.</li> <li>Governors agreed with the revised wording and approved the document on the basis of the other changes being made.</li> </ul> <b>ACTION:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PD to forward revised version highlighting errors to LJ.</li> <li>LJ to edit statement as above.</li> <li>Revised policy to be circulated to Governors with meeting Minutes.</li> </ul> | PD<br>LJ<br>JK |
| <b>OTHER MATTERS</b>  |  |                |
| <b>10</b>             | <b>ICT Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ reported that the Senior IT Technician had left for a new role. A suitable candidate was not found when advertised so a tender went out for an outsourcing contract.</li> <li>EAC was selected and a handover took place.</li> <li>An ex member of staff works at EAC and has overseen the changeover.</li> <li>A one-year contract has been agreed to start with.</li> <li>So far things have run smoothly. There is a Senior Technician on site 3 days a week plus a team behind him including a Strategic Planning Manager with a wide range of experience.</li> <li>FK commented that the staff were positive about the seamless changeover.</li> </ul>                               |                |
| <b>11</b>             | <b>AOB</b><br><b>Employee Assistance Programme</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LJ: Staff have been under a great deal of strain, so School is considering providing a package of support for</li> </ul>   |                |



| Item | Discussions and Decisions Made  | Actions |
|------|---|---------|
|      | <p>employees including counselling, legal &amp; health advice etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff would go direct to the provider rather than coming through EH/LJ. A report is provided on the numbers taking up support and the impact, but not who uses it.</li> <li>• There are 3 levels available with provider 'Health Assured' – which has been recommended by other local Headteachers. The lowest is proposed as a starting point, at £5.77 per staff member, to start in September (approximately £750/year).</li> </ul> <p><i>What is the difference between packages?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The next level provides face to face counselling rather than telephone. However, school already offers counselling to staff and they are reluctant to take this up. If the service goes well, it could be upgraded.</li> <li>• The top level also provides work health assessments.</li> <li>• Costs are £5.77/£8.37/£9.87 for the different packages, each per staff member per year.</li> <li>• PD: This seems consistent with the provision of other large organisations and may make a positive difference to staff loyalty.</li> <li>• Governors gave their approval for the programme to be purchased at the lower level.</li> </ul> |         |
| 12   | <p><b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b><br/>Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 18.30</p>  |         |
| 13   | <p><b>Evaluation of Meeting</b><br/>Governors confirmed that the meeting was conducted in an open manner and that all governors were invited to participate and contribute to discussions.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 20.40.</p>  |         |

Signed ..... Date .....

CHAIR