

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF EXCALIBUR PRIMARY SCHOOL

WEDNESDAY 15th February 2017 – 5:00PM

PRESENT:

Nikki Ratcliffe	NR	Chair
Vicky Alsop	VA	
Sarah Sproston	SSp	
Juliet Tomkinson	JT	

Clerk: Yvonne Hilditch YH

Item	TOPIC / PURPOSE
1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received and accepted from Lise Houldsworth (LH) (ECAPH conference), David Townson (work commitments), and Jonathon Riley (work commitments).
2	DECLARATION OF INTEREST There were no declarations of personal or business interest in relation to any item on the agenda.
3	REVIEW THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING The minutes of the meeting held on 22 nd June 2016 were confirmed as a correct record, approved and signed by the chair.
4	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES Matters arising from the minutes of previous meetings have been dealt with as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recommendations from the SFVS review 2015/16: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Finance training for the new Strategic Leadership and Management Committee.</u> SSp attended Finance training on 22nd November 2016. ○ <u>SFVS training for the new Strategic Leadership and Management Committee.</u> NR and SSp attended SFVS training on 25th January 2017. ○ <u>The Business Continuity Plan</u> This has been completed and sent to governors for review with the committee agenda. It will be reviewed under item 13. ○ <u>The Building Continuity plan should be tested annually and the findings presented to the governors.</u> The plan was reviewed and tested by YH and the findings will be presented with the plan in item 13. • The recommendations from the Local Authorities School's Audit programme 2015/16: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Creation of an inventory of all its ICT equipment.</u> YH stated that this is in the process of being completed and will be presented at the Summer term meeting. It includes the purchase date, serial numbers and costs to go with the photographic inventory already held on the school servers. • Two model education policies on the CEC website need to be adopted by the school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Equality and Dignity at Work Policy</u> Taken to the FGB meeting on 7th December 2016 and approved. ○ <u>Travel and Expenses Policy</u> Taken to the FGB meeting on 7th December 2016 and approved. • Review of the Education HR newsletter : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Employee sickness data for the school for 2015/16.</u> This summary report is to be presented under item 8 showing the average

employee sickness in Cheshire East to compare with the school's statistics.

- Director of Children's Services Report Summer Term 2016:

- Education White Paper

VA presented her review of the main points to the committee.

1. By the end of 2020, all state-funded schools will be academies or be in the process of becoming academies. Where schools are not academies or have not started the process by 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) will take steps to direct them to become academies. This decision has since been reversed. Excalibur governors are in the process of considering conversion to an Academy and it is being discussed under item 9
2. The DfE expects most schools to form or join MATs and is establishing a MAT growth fund to create new MATs and support existing ones to expand. This growth fund has since been reduced. Excalibur governors have investigated the possibility of joining an existing MAT and is now investigating creating a MAT with another primary school under item 9.
3. MATs will have new accountability measures, including performance tables that look at how well they are leading their schools. These will include showing the value added by the MAT.
4. The role of LAs in education will change and in the future their education duties will centre on: ensuring every child has a school place, ensuring the needs of every vulnerable child is met and acting as champions for all parents and families.
5. Qualified teacher status (QTS) is being replaced with a "stronger, more challenging" accreditation.
6. An independent expert group of teachers, leaders and academies are creating a new standard for teachers' professional development. This will set out a gold standard for effective CPD.

What will the school do to reach this gold standard?

JT – This will be reviewed by LH for the Summer term committee meeting.

7. Academy trusts will no longer be required to have elected parent trustees on governing boards.
8. The DfE will be creating stronger expectations on governing bodies to fill skills gaps, including through training. It is also planning to develop a "competency framework" for governance in different contexts. This new framework is to be discussed under item 12(1) – Competency Framework for Governance.
9. A national funding formula will be introduced to replace the current funding system. This is to be discussed under item 5.

- Extremism and Radicalisation self-assessment tool

This has not been sent to schools and does not need to be completed at the moment.

- SFVS review deadline 31st December 2016.

The SFVS review was completed by VA and NR on 29th November 2016 and the report and findings were presented and approved at the FGB meeting on 7th December 2016. The SFVS report was sent to the Cheshire East finance team on 19th December 2016 ahead of the 31st December 2016 deadline. The outstanding action plan was presented under item 7.

- Benchmarking Data for 2015/16.

The financial benchmarking data report was distributed to the governors with the agenda and is to be reviewed under item 7.

- Reward Centre.

The new reward centre created by Cheshire East Council for employees and the school can buy into has been reviewed by YH and SSp and there are no benefits on the centre

	<p>that employees cannot get elsewhere. It is viewed as not worth the money that the school would have to spend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Occupational Health change to People Asset Management.</u> The school still does not have any user accounts on the new software even though YH has completed the new user spreadsheet and emailed this to the company and chased the log on details. YH is to ask Nuala Hadden in the meeting on Thursday 16th about this. • <u>School Fund Audit 2015/16</u> The School Fund Audit Report 2015/16 findings were presented to the FGB meeting on 7th December 2016 where it was discussed and approved. <p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new standard for teachers' professional development will be the new gold standard. LH is to look into how this will be achieved in Excalibur (LH) • Inventory of all its ICT equipment is to be completed and presented at the Summer term committee meeting (YH) • Nuala Hadden (Cheshire East Council HR) is to be asked for log on details to the new Occupational Health PAM software in the meeting with her on Thursday 16th February 2017(YH)
5	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17 - Review the SSDP objectives for the Strategic Leadership and Management Committee and British Values in relation to Outcomes for Pupils and Leadership and Management.</p> <p>EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Priority 7 – Leadership Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Deputy Head has continued to complete training in order help her to undertake her new role. She has undertaken Neglect and Moderation training in the Spring term so far. • Coaching training provided by the Alsager Community Trust (ACT) was accessed and has been completed by 75% of the SLT in January 2017. The members of staff at Excalibur have since been asked who would like to access coaching as this can now be provided by the trained staff within ACT. <i>How was the training, how do you think it could benefit the staff?</i> JT – The training was very good and it will be useful for staff in developing their potential in the future. • The Deputy Head is to be deployed for a second time as an SLE in a primary school. • The headteacher has been asked to support another school as their School Improvement Partner. LH has accepted this and it will provide an income stream for the school as well as method of looking at development ideas in another school. <p>Priority 8 – Converting School Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is to be discussed under item 9. <p>Other Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new National Funding Formula was seen as a threat to the schools finances in the future from financial year 2018/19. LH had attended the Cheshire East Council National Funding Formula Briefing on 9th February 2017 for headteachers and chairs of governors. JT presented the Crewe member briefing document to the committee. She explained that the consultation runs to 22nd March 2017 and governors that wish to respond should respond by this date. The indicative figures show a reduction in school funding in Cheshire East of £4.1 million, 2.1% of current school funding. Cheshire East has in the past moved funding to the schools block because of the low level of funding but this is to

be removed giving an additional loss of a further £5.2 million. The deprivation factor results in an increase in £7 million. Cheshire East does not attract any sparsity factor or low attainment factor. The overall result is £4 million less funding. 131 schools will see a reduction in their budget and at Excalibur this is judged to be about £21,000 per annum.

What affect will this have in school?

JT replied that this has been discussed in Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings and some scenario budgeting has been completed by YH. It may cause the SLT and governors to look at the size of its classes in Key stage two, the SLT to look at staffing level as people move on, especially around teaching assistant hours and other support staff hours and as support staffing levels reduce this will increase workloads of teachers leading to extra-curricular activities reducing.

- Governors were also reminded that there was also a consultation on Higher Needs Funding around SEN funding for Local Authorities. The consultation is being run in two stages. Stage one of the consultation was launched on 7 March 2016 and closed on 17 April 2016 and looked at the principles on which the new funding system would be based. The second stage of the consultation, which launched on 14 December 2016 and will close on 22 March 2017, sets out detailed proposals for the new high needs funding formula, as well as other details of the new funding system. Proposed changes to the way mainstream schools are funded may have an impact on the level of high needs funding that an LA has available. It explains that, as a result of these changes, the schools block of the dedicated schools grant will effectively be 'ringfenced', limiting the ability for LAs to move funds between that block and the high needs block, as they are able to do currently. It also explains that the DfE is removing the concept of a 'notional budget' for SEN. Rather than the LA using proxy factors to allocate funding for pupils with additional support needs, and giving schools an indication of how much they should be spending to support these pupils, schools will do this themselves.

Action points:

- **Those governors wishing to respond to the National Funding Formula Consultation should do so by 22nd March 2017 (all)**
- **Those governors wishing to respond to the Higher Needs Formula Funding Consultation should do so by 22nd March 2017 (all)**

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SCHOOL FINANCES

1. Ensure financial deadlines have been met since 9th November 2016.

- The School Workforce Census's deadline was 11th November 2016 was reviewed and approved by LH on 9th November 2016 and was uploaded into the Collect portal on 10th November 2016.

What is the workforce Census?

YH informed the committee that this is a government census of the staffing within school including all contracts, qualifications and leave and is completed by every school on an annual basis in the Autumn term. Most of the information for Excalibur is fed in by Cheshire East HR systems as the schools subscribes to their service through CHES.

- The Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) return deadline was 31st December 2016. This was completed by VA and NR on 29th November 2017, reviewed and approved by the FGB on 7th December 2016 and was emailed to the Cheshire East finance team on 19th December 2016.
- The School Spring Census's deadline was 26th January 2017 was reviewed and approved by LH on 24th January 2017 and was uploaded into the Collect portal on 26th January 2017.

2. Review two articles on schools finances from The Key

- Scrutinising the budget

This article was sent out with the agenda. YH explained that the budget is created from the agreed brought forward figure from the previous year; the only known actual, and the indicative funding for the next year is added, staffing costs are then calculated on the known staffing structure based on actuals and known increments, pay awards, changes in pension rates and NI rates. The Schools Development Plan and Property Plan are then reviewed and their costs added to the costs together with any known contracts and annual costs that will continue. The remaining budget is then split over the headings looking and the previous years figures. The governors then discussed the examples of questions that the article put forward that could be asked about budget.

- Budget Cuts: role of governors

This article was sent out with the agenda as budget cuts could be part of the agenda in the following months following the national Funding Formula Consultation. YH explained that the document explained the responsibilities of governors for approving decisions on budget cuts and school spending. Budget cuts should be presented by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and governors should scrutinise the cuts and be happy with them before they approve them. If governors disagree or have not been provided enough information they should challenge the SLT to give further information or come up with alternative suggestions. On approving the decision they should consider the impact of the decision on the school as the decision could be unpopular with stakeholders.

3. Review and Approve the LMS virement report from the Autumn Term meeting

The school business manager, YH, presented this terms virement report. It showed all virements from the Autumn term meeting to this Spring term meeting totalling a £12,764 reduction in the amount to be carried forward to 2017/18 from £72,100 budgeted in the Autumn term to £58,436 budgeted in the Spring term. The virements included and explained:-

Income

- A £1,156 reduction in formula funding from Cheshire East
- A £500 increase in DFE Pupil Premium due to an extra allocation from Stoke on Trent City Council for cared for children in school.
- A £342 reduction in educational visits income based on a reforecast of educational visits to 31st March 2017.
- A £1,332 reduction in community letting due to a reforecast of pilates and karate income to Easter

Expenditure

- A £5,288 increase in teaching staff salaries, due to the decisions made on performance management achievement in the Autumn term FGB meeting.
- A £6,000 reduction in supply staff due to extra staffing in school being used instead of supply staff and therefore saving money.
- A £5,726 increase in support staff costs due to £5,490 for a Teaching Assistant to cover sickness from January to March 2017 and costs will be claimed through sickness insurance and £454 extra midday assistant for work completed in the kitchen and rechargeable to Cheshire East Catering and . Also included in the three year forecast are increase in support staff pension contributions from Cheshire East Council finance team. In 2017/18 an increase from 28.7% to 30.5% (1.8%) equals £4,536 per annum, in 2018/19 an increase from 30.5% to 32.4% (1.9%) equals £4,874 per annum, in 2019/20 an increase from 32.4% to 34.5% (2.1%) equals £5,489 per annum.
- A £47 decrease in Employer Liability Premium due to overestimate of insurance

	<p>premium on CHES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £74 increase in Public Liability Premium due to an underestimate of insurance premium on CHES • A £2,000 increase in Employee Sickness Premium due to the quotes received so far for 2017/18 due in March 2017. • A £156 decrease in the DBS checks for staff as not deemed to be required to 31st March 2017. • A £2,000 increase in the Premises Costs budget based on the extra costs of £645 for a new hot water boiler valve and £1,264 for drainage repair and the installation of a rat blocker • A £250 decrease in electricity budget due to reforecast of future costs. • A £198 decrease in cleaning contract due to reforecast based on only Spring half term costs now to be incurred to March 2017. • A £100 decrease in Casual Mileage costs not deemed to be required. • A £290 increase in Education Equipment due to actual spend. • A £3,214 increase in the General Equipment due to actual spend £500 on replacement chest freezer for the school kitchen, £500 on extra staging to be funded by Friends of Excalibur (FOE) and £2,262 on musical equipment for the hall to be funded by FOE. • A £251 increase to Curriculum Furniture due to overspend on horseshoe table for year 3 asked for by LH • A £2,500 decrease in Educational Equipment as spend so far this year of £14,842 against a budget of £20,000, therefore not needed. • A £253 increase in Medical Supplies due to overspend on required items in the year. • A £250 decrease in hygiene supplies as no money spent in the year so far and not required. • A £308 increase in spend on magazine and books £96 on the new subscription to Health and Safety magazine and £212 on Oxford University Press. • An £86 increase in the Text Book budget due to overspend on Accelerated Reader books for the classroom. • A £146 decrease in the TV licence budget as not used. • A £73 increase in Purchase of Meals due to the inset lunch in September. • A £1560 increase in Hired and Contracted due to spending £405 on new Arbour reports on benchmarking and performance and £981 on The Key for governors and SLT. • A £246 increase in Professional Fees due to whole year payments for R Caulfield who supports the schools direct students in school. • A £166 decrease in School Partnership agreements due to overestimate of CHES payments. • A £1,434 decrease in Visiting Lecturer Fees due to the budgeted artist coming into school at the end of March 2017 that will not be invoiced until April 2017. • A £500 decrease in Governor Training as not required as most of training this year was free. • A £400 decrease in Computer Consumables Curriculum as not required. • A £1,103 decrease in Computer Software Curriculum as not required. • A £3,362 increase in Educational Visits where the costs for visits will be charged before March 2017 but the parental contribution will be received in April 2017. <p>4. Review the budget and 3 year forecast document prepared by the school The school business manager presented the revised Spring term budget and 3 year forecast to the committee prepared by herself.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YH indicated the carried forward figures at the end of each year would show as 2016/17 surplus £58,436, 2017/18 surplus £42,982 and 2018/19 deficit £38,744. The forecast included a £20,000 reduction in funding in 2018/19 due to the resultant findings in the National Formula Funding Consultation. YH indicated that the pupil numbers for the next 3 years are based on no children leaving the school and 30 children being admitted in September 2017 and 2018 which looks likely due to the applications showing on the School Admissions Module (SAM). YH indicated that pupil premium numbers and funding based on the October 2017 and 2018 census are based on the registered free school meal pupils at Excalibur at the moment. This reduces from 20 to 17 pupils in October 2016 reducing funding in 2017/18 from £26,400 to £22,400 and 17 to 11 pupils in October 2017 reducing funding in 2018/19 from £22,400 to £14,520. YH indicated that forecasted staff FTE's and hours will remain the same except the support staff that will reduce from 154 hours per week to 123 hours per week due to a temporary contract ending on 31st August 2017. YH indicated that the DF Capital carry forward at the end of 2016/17 would be £9,982, this will then be spent on the ICT infrastructure at the start of 2017/18 and therefore the predicted carry forward in 2017/18 will be £6,466 and 2018/19 £12,854 but this will depend on the DF Capital funding provided by Cheshire East Council. <p>5. Review the LMS accounts to 31st January 2017 The school business manager presented the revised accounts to 31st January 2017 which included a revised budget and 3 year forecast to the committee. The actual to 31st January 2017 was £179,179 with commitments of £31,465 and indicated the surplus carried forward at the end of the year would be £58,436.</p> <p>6. Review the School Fund Income and Expenditure Account to 31st January 2017 YH presented the School Fund accounts to 31st January 2017. The school fund had a balance of £13,508.39 and petty cash of £45.14. This was made up of £6,349 held in the holding account ready for transfer into the LMS accounts or external charities and £8,075 that is held on behalf of Friends of Excalibur. <i>What are the charges made by the school to Parentmail?</i> YH informed the governors that this was for visa and paypal charges on payments made by parents to the school. Visa debit card payments are charged at 32p per transaction, Visa credit card payments are charged at 10p per transaction and paypal payments are charged at 20p per transaction. This was agreed at the start of the contract and the school makes savings on banking cash and cheques and security as there is less cash and cheques being handled in school.</p> <p>7. Review the Friends of Excalibur Accounts to 31st January 2017 YH presented the Friends of Excalibur Accounts to 31st January 2017. They have a balance of £8,075 being held in the school bank account and £50 held in the Britannia Building Society totalling £8,125. They have raised £1,166 so far this year. Friends of Excalibur have committed to £7,455 worth of expenditure.</p>
7	<p>SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (SFVS)</p> <p>1. SFVS review 2016/17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Schools Financial Value Statement (SFVS) return deadline was 31st December 2016. This was completed by VA and NR on 29th November 2017,

reviewed and approved by the FGB on 7th December 2016 and was emailed to the Cheshire East finance team on 19th December 2016

- The findings of the review were as follows:
 - Two governors to attend booked SFVS training on 25th January 2017. NR and SSp attended the training.
 - Refresher SFVS training is needed for all governors before next years SFVS is due. This will be arranged by YH.
 - SFVS training to be completed by the chair of the committee on 25th January 2017. NR attended training.
 - The new Senior Leadership team will complete a financial skills matrix in the Spring term 2016/17 that will be presented to the Strategic Leadership and Management Committee. This will be completed for the Summer term meeting.
 - The new administrative assistant will need to complete and financial skills matrix once her probation period is complete in March 2017.
 - The business continuity plan needs to be reviewed and needs to include scenarios and the premises to be used in the event of the school building being not available. This is to be presented under item 13.
 - The business continuity plan needs to be tested after implemented. This will be completed for the Summer term meeting.

2. Review the recommendations of the Unofficial School Fund Audit 2015/16

- Banking to be completed regularly (YH). Now the school has appointed a Site Manager the banking is completed on a two weekly basis.
- The school should retain scanned copies of cheques for all expenditure items to evidence that the transaction has been pre-authorised (YH). This has been done after last years audit.

3. Review the reports on all tenders and quotations between £10,000 and £25,000 since 9th November 2017 to be approved by this committee

- YH has received two quotations for Staff absence Insurance and is awaiting the quote from the current supplier. The cost last year was £10,000.
 - The quote from APL Health is £7,458 this includes 180 days stress cover and pre-existing conditions but will not cover people off sick at the time of renewal. YH does not know of any of the local schools that use this company.
 - The quote from Towergate Insurance is £12,615 this includes extended stress cover but their will be an extra cost for staff off at the time of renewal. A lot of schools in Cheshire East use Towergate.
 - The school is awaiting the quote from Schoolsafe but governors were reminded that the two staff members who will be of sick at the time of renewal will be covered without extra costs, that the school has never experienced any problem with insurance claims.

How much did we claim back this year?

YH informed the governors that the school had claimed back £14,042 this year so far.

The governors decided to approve the use of Schoolsafe for another year as long as the cost is under that of Towergate at £12,615.

- YH has a quote from Apex on the upgrading of the school servers and IT infrastructure. The quote is £9,622 for the capital element. Yh is to obtain two further quotes for the work and these will be presented before the work is completed.

4. Review and items that are within £10,000 and £50,000 for approval by this committee.

None

5. Review the listing of school contracts 2015/16

The listing of school contracts was presented. The school business manager explained that it was split into the schools main contractors with contract dates and value together with contact details. There is then an area where details of all insurance cover is shown to ensure that the school has adequate cover, an area for ICT contracts and area detailing the school's licences. The members of the committee reviewed and discussed the contract listing.

A lot of these contracts are renewed on 1st September through CHESS. Would this have a cash flow implication if the school was an academy?

YH will have to check when the payments for academies are due for the purchases through CHESS and feedback to the next meeting.

6. Review how the school has achieved best value since 9th November 2017

- Governors have booked onto the free courses offered through eCAPH. Two governors are attending the Understanding and Using Data course on 19th April and one is attending the Pupil Premium training on 28th March.
- Book gifts were purchased for £106.51 which included a saving of £447 on the RRP of the books and £35.50 which was 25% discount on cyberextra.

7. Review the benchmarking Data for 2015/16

The financial benchmarking data from Arbor for 2015/16 was reviewed by the committee.

- The committee saw the positive findings from this report were:
 - Other Grant Income has risen from £12 per pupil in 2012/13 to £362 per pupil in 2015/16 which is more than other schools like us £206, Local Authority schools £269 and Nationally £234.
 - Income from Facilities and Services has risen from £43 per pupil in 2013/14 to £51 per pupil in 2015/16. This is lower than other schools but is rising due to increased rental of the school hall.
 - Reimbursement for staffing has risen from £4 per pupil in 2013/14 to £98 per pupil in 2015/16. This is due to two staff members being used as moderators by the local authority in 2015/16 and the headteacher being on secondment for a term. The average for schools like us is £56, local authority is £62 and nationally £48.
 - Teaching staff has fallen from £2,028 per pupil form 2012/13 to £1,808 in 2015/16. This is due to natural movement from the school and strategic recruitment. This would continue in the future without affecting the pupils.
 - Learning Resources is at £303 per pupil which is much more than the £205 for schools like us, £247 for the Local Authority schools and £235 nationally. This was seen as a strength by the governors as money was being spent on the pupils.
 - ICT Learning Resources is at £129 per pupil which is much more than the £64 for schools like us, £67 for the Local Authority schools and £75 nationally. This again was seen as a strength by the governors as money was being spent on IT is needed in school.
 - Energy spending had reduced from £74 per pupil in 2012/13 to £60 per pupil in 2015/16 and become more efficient and a C category school.
 - Back Office staffing is at £342 per pupil which is lower than schools like us at £361, local authority at £408 and nationally at £421.
- The committee found items that were negative finding with some needing further investigation:
 - Donations have fallen from £89 in 2012/13 to £10 per pupil in 2015/16. YH explained to governors that this is due to Friends of Excalibur (FOE) not funding the projects requested by the school in 2015/16 and the reason that they are sitting on £8,000 (£38 per pupil). This is now to be spent in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

- Supply teachers are at the level of £257 per pupil. This is much more than the schools like us at £111, local authority at £117 and nationally at £163. The school has reduced the costs this year to £95 per pupil and next year the budget is £57 per pupil.
- Buildings spend was £389 per pupil in 2015/16 which is much higher than other schools (schools like us £293). This is due to the work completed at Excalibur in this year. The school refurbished the school kitchen through a capital grant and had to make a contribution of £25,000 (£119 per pupil). The school made a provision for the school gates of £20,000 (£95 per pupil).
- Catering costs have increased from £14 per pupil in 2012/13 to £156 per pupil. This is due to a change in the way that meals are charged to the school. In 2012/13 the school was given the profit or charged for the loss made by the school kitchen. In 2015/16 Cheshire East catering charge the school £2.10 per meal. The 10p difference between the £2.20 charged to parents and the £2.10 is now invested in the kitchen each year.
- Other staff have increase from £117 per pupil to £161 per pupil. This is due to cleaning staff being taken inhouse from Cheshire East at £57 per pupil.

8. Review of the DfE guide 'School's Buying Strategy'

The DfE document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. The governors thought that the important points were:

- The document is to help schools save £1 billion a year by 2019/20 on non-staff spend.
- Effective schools make the best use of resources ensuring every pound is used efficiently to improve standards and have maximum impact on pupils.
- They are introducing the National Funding Formula so there is more certainty on funding from year to year and allow schools to plan ahead.
- It includes a range of initiatives:
 1. Ensure buyers in schools have the right relationships and skills by building peer to peer support networks and creating regional advice and guidance services.
 2. Support schools to become smart consumers by providing practice help and advice on buying decisions
 3. Ensure buyers have access to best value every time by giving schools access to better deals for energy, printers, photocopiers and digital opportunities.
- The document then looks at the practical support that is available now to School Business Managers:
 1. Tools that schools can use to assess their level of efficiency eg. benchmarking data, efficiency metric and top ten checklists
 2. Guidance on best practice through videos on strategic planning and collaborative buying and individual case studies.
 3. Support for schools to access greater financial skills.
- The document then has a user research summary about the buyers in schools that are often School Business Managers. They feel alone and isolated, they do not have status in the school to bring about change, they are overwhelmed by the choice and variety and procurement is only a small part of their role.
- It recommends that the school creates a school buying strategy and follow the guidelines from p10 to do this and the governors believe that the school should do this.

Action points:

- **SFVS return actions:**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SFVS training for all governors (YH) - The new Senior Leadership team will complete a financial skills matrix in the Spring term 2016/17 that will be presented to the Strategic Leadership and Management Committee (YH) - The new administrative assistant will need to complete a financial skills matrix once her probation period is complete in March 2017 (YH) - The business continuity plan needs to be tested after implemented. This will be completed for the Summer term meeting (YH) • Governors have enquired when CHES payments are due for academies and if this would affect the school's cash flows. YH is to investigate for the Summer term meeting (YH) • DfE's 'School Buying Strategy' believe that schools should create a school buying strategy (YH)
8	<p>HUMAN RESOURCES</p> <p>1. Review HR Guidance on the English language requirement for public sector workers</p> <p>The DfE document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. The governors thought that the important points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 7 of the immigration Act came into force 21 November 2017 requires people who work in the public sector in customer facing roles to speak fluent English. Employees, apprentices, contractors and agency workers in schools and academies are within the scope of this provision. A customer facing role is where a regular and intrinsic part of a person's role is to communicate with the public. • When advertising a customer based role we must include the following text "The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English is essential for the post". <p>2. Review the CEC Headteacher, Deputy and Assistant Headteacher pay 2015 report.</p> <p>The document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. They had no comments of the document.</p> <p>3. Review the CEC report on employee sickness absence in 2015/16</p> <p>The document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. YH presented the absence figures for the school which were 3.7 sickness days per FTE's for teaching staff and 6.4 sickness days per FTE for non-teaching staff. The average for schools in Cheshire East is 6.3 days per FTE. It must be remembered that the non-teaching figure includes a member of staff on long term sickness that is no longer with the school.</p> <p>4. Review the Education Spring HR newsletter</p> <p>This was not available on the HR website as of 15th February 2017. This will be presented in the Summer term meeting.</p> <p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spring term HR newsletter needs to be reviewed in the Summer term meeting when available (YH)
10	<p>REVIEW THE ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGES AND PROCEDURES IN SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The attendance procedures remain the same as in the Autumn Term. • YH presented the Register Inspection document from the register inspection on 13th February 2017. The recommendations from the report were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school should look at the number of staff authorised to change the marks

	<p>on the online register system on SIMS. This will be looked into by YH.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That there is no requirement for a Summer term register check. • YH presented the attendance report to 13th February 2017. The whole school attendance was at 96.45% (target 96.5%) (2015/16 96.92%). No fixed penalty notices have been issued as CEC have informed us not to issue any at the moment as per the Summer term directors report.
11	<p>ADMISSIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Admission Application forms for 2016/17 YH presented a report on the applications for admission so far received in 2016/17. The school has received 9 applications with 3 being offered places at Excalibur and 6 not being offer places. All applicants were responded to within 3 school days and all parents not offer places were due to no spaces being available in the relevant cohort. • Review of the Office of School Adjudicator's Annual Report The document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. The governors thought that the important points were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities have a duty to object to the admission arrangements of any own admission authority school in their area if they are of the view or suspect that the arrangements are unlawful. - More objections this year have referred to the naming of feeder schools in oversubscription criteria. - A number of objections have been made based on paragraph 2.9 of the Code which says that admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely on the grounds of a number of reasons including that the child applied later than other applicants or has missed entrance tests for selective places. - There are a number of different ways that admission arrangements for academies in multi-academy trusts (MATs) are determined. - Evidence from local authorities suggests that the interests of children needing a school place in-year may not always be fully served and that some children may be out of school for too long.
12	<p>REVIEW THE ITEMS FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES REPORT TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES SPRING TERM 2017 FOR THIS COMMITTEE</p> <p>YH presented the report informing the governors of the following items of importance for this committee:-</p> <p>Item 1 – School Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire East Governors' Conference on Friday 10th March 2017. This has been sent to all governors in the weekly bulletin to schools. • Spring Term Training Programme. This was sent to all governors at the start of the term. • New Publications on Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A Competency Framework for Governance – January 2017</u> The Department for Education has introduced a brand new competency framework for governance based around the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed for effective governance in school, whether we are an foundation school or part of a MAT. It states that effective governance provides strategic direction, and control, creates robust accountability and is ambitious for all children to achieve their best outcomes. It sets out 16 competencies under 6 headings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategic Leadership - This part of the competency framework deals with strategic leadership, and stresses the importance of governors' ability to 'set the tone from the top' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting direction - Culture values and ethos - Decision making - Collaborative working - Risk management

2. Accountability - This part of the competency framework explores the ways in which governing bodies can do this effectively, and how schools as a whole are held accountable for their own performance.

- Educational Improvement
- Rigorous analysis of data
- Financial frameworks and accountability
- Financial management and monitoring
- Staffing and performance management
- External accountability

3. People - In terms of the people on the board, the competency framework has placed emphasis on the importance of effective working relationships, and individuals' ability to learn from others and accept challenging conversation. For example, governors are expected to: Demonstrate professional ethics and sound judgement and be honest and self-critical about mistakes made. It also points to the importance of the role of the clerk in supporting the board.

- Building an effective team

4. Structures - The second part of this section looks at the roles and responsibilities of the governing body as a whole, and individual governors' understanding of how these structures influence the delegation of decisions.

- Roles and Responsibilities

5. Compliance - sets out the governing body's legal, financial and regulatory responsibilities. It stresses the importance of all members of the governing body understanding: the legal frameworks and context in which the organisation operates and all of the requirements with which it must comply. For example, the framework refers to: The Prevent duty, Equality and health and safety legislation, The Ofsted inspection framework and The Data Protection Act. This part of the framework also requires governors to be able to 'speak out' when they have concerns that their governing body may be failing to meet certain requirements, or failing to take compliance seriously.

- Statutory and Contractual requirements

6. Evaluation - Governing bodies should be able to monitor how they themselves are carrying out their statutory functions, and ensure that individuals are contributing to the developing of the governing body as a whole. This part of the framework has split theme of evaluation into two parts: Conducting self-evaluation and reflection and monitoring the board's effectiveness

- Managing self review
- Managing and developing the boards effectiveness

The governing board should also fulfill their duties in line with the 7 principles of public life; Committed, Confident, Curious, Challenging, Collaborative, Critical and Creative. They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation. The document then describes why each of the competencies are important and how the chair individually and the full board can ensure that they have the knowledge required and show they have the skills and effective behaviours. This would then be evidenced in meeting minutes, on visits to the school and in discussions with OfSTED.

The governors to look at the new skills audit's that match the new framework from The Key. It was agreed that the 4 skills audits should be sent out to all governors to complete this term so that the summary can be reviewed in the Summer term meeting.

- Governance Handbook 2017

The governors looked at the changes from the previous handbook and commented on the following:

1. Updated text at 4.1.2 to reflect the new requirement that all those involved in governance in maintained schools, as well as in academy trusts, must have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Are there any governors without a DBS check?

YH had chased the outstanding DBS's but there is still one governor that has not completed the paperwork and the governors name will be sent to the Chair.

2. A new explanation at 4.8 of the risks associated with close family relationships between those involved in governance or between them and senior employees
3. Details of the duty on boards to provide information about individuals involved in governance via Edubase at 4.8.

Have all governors provided this information?

YH to check all governor is included on edubase and to inform the chair of any missing information

- The Governance Professionals' Competency Framework – February 2017

This provides non statutory guidance from the DfE around the role of the clerk, governance professional, in the school. It can be used as an audit tool and complement the clerks training development programme. The document informs the clerk of the importance of certain documents, how to provide high quality clerking and the competency framework of governors. At the back is a Knowledge and skills listing that clerks should assess themselves against.

YH presented the committee with her completed clerks skills audit and it was deemed by the governors that YH had sufficient skills to continue as the Clerk to governors without any immediate need for training.

- Ofsted's Improving Governance Report – December 2016

The document had been sent out to governors with the agenda for review. The governors thought that the important points were:

1. The report focuses on governance in schools serving disadvantaged communities.
2. The report sets out the three critical factors that made improvements in governance possible. These were: schools becoming aware of the weaknesses in their governance arrangements, governing bodies being able to develop their knowledge, understanding and insight and governors' roles and responsibilities becoming clear and lines of accountability were being clarified
3. One of the report's key findings is that weak governance is going undetected in many schools and training needs are not identified. The report recommends that all governing bodies ensure that they have a robust self-evaluation process to make sure that they are operating effectively. This is completed at Excalibur by completing a governor skills audit annually.
4. The report says that governors need better access to highly skilled people with educational expertise. Excalibur have this through the School Improvement Partner (SIP).

- Edubase. A reminder that all governor information needed to be included by 1st September 2016.
- Recruiting new governors. Inspiring Governance is an online matchmaking service which matches skilled volunteers with schools.
- Cheshire East Survey Results was presented to governors for review.

Item 2 – New Guidance – Part 3 of staying in control of your school's destiny

- This NGA documentation provides a useful procedural guide and is available on the Cheshire East website.

Item 4 – Primary school consolidation report

Internal Audit have completed their annual survey of local school and they have the following

findings:

1. Imprest Petty Cash – This is not used at Excalibur
2. Purchase Cards
 - Employee undertaking forms were not always completed for all purchase cards. At Excalibur all Employee undertaking forms completed for all purchase cards.
 - Receipts are not consistently retained. At Excalibur the receipts are attached to the statement, the reconciled statement is signed by the headteacher and all are retained in a file that will be stored for seven years
 - All transactions are not reviewed. At Excalibur the SBM reviews all transaction, recoding them and reconciling to receipts. These are then passed to the headteacher so that she can approve all the transactions online.
 - Cardholders and Limits must be set out in the Manual of Internal Financial Procedures. This is set out in section 7.14 in the school Manual of Financial Procedures
 - Purchase cards are used to make purchases not for educational attainment. One card was used inappropriately once last year to order flowers and the headteacher spoke to the person involved and the card has now been destroyed.
 - Card Limits seem to be excessive. The card limits that Excalibur use have never been changed from the limit set by CEC (£2,000).
 - Purchase cards are not kept securely. The members of staff hold their own cards.
 - Card limits are circumvented by splitting payments. This has only happened once on an Oxford Reading Tree order where over £500 worth of books were needed and it is quicker to buy online.

Item 10 – Permanent Exclusion Financial Re-adjustment

- CEC follows the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations when students are permanently excluded. The AWPU funding will move with the child and follow then to their next school straight away. This will have a financial implication to the school when excluding a pupil.

Item 11 – Exclusion Training

- Governors - It is vital that the correct procedures are in place and that relevant governors are trained on the requirements around exclusions both permanent and temporary. At the moment only LH has attended.
- SLT – Again it is essential as they need to ensure that all relevant paperwork is in place and is of a good quality. LH is on SLT and plans to feed back the training to SLT members.

Item 12 – School Admission 2018/19

- Admission Scheme will show application processing within 10 school days rather than 10 working days
- Governor Boards are reminded that all applications should be processed within no more than 10 school days from the receipt of the application. From the report presented to governors under item 11, the school have responded to all applications in 2016/17 within 3 school days.
- Governing Boards should ensure that where there is a vacancy a place should be offered unless the school believes that it has identified that the student has challenging behaviour. CEC has found that some schools are not complying with this. As seen in the report presented to governors in Item 11 at Excalibur all applications are reviewed against cohort vacancy availability and are only rejected when the cohort is full.


Item 13 – What is the Apprenticeship Levy?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From April 2017 all maintained schools will have to pay 0.5% of the basic pay of its employees as an Apprentice Levy. Excalibur will not have to pay this as a Foundation school. YH has contacted payroll and HR to ensure that then know that we are a foundation school and has received a reply that the 0.5% will not be charged.
	<p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New skills audits that match the new competency framework are to be sent to all governors this term for completion so that the summary can be reviewed in the Summer term meeting (YH) The name of the governor who has not completed the paperwork for the DBS will be passed to the chair (YH) Check to be completed that all governor is included on edubase and information on any missing is to be passed to the chair (YH)
13	<p>REVIEW THE POLICY LISTING DELEGATED TO THIS COMMITTEE</p> <p>The policy listing was reviewed and all due policies have been reviewed and presented to the committee.</p> <p>The following policies were reviewed and approved to be taken to the Full governors meeting on 29th March 2017. The policy will be uploaded onto the governor section of the website ready for the Full Governors meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Continuity / Contingency Plan Governor Attendance Policy
14	<p>DISCUSS ANY SAFEGUARDING ISSUES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LH and JT attended Neglect training in February 2017.
15	<p>TRAINING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback on governor training attended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSp attended finance training on 22nd November 2016. She is to provide her feedback at the Summer term meeting SSp/NR attended SFVS training on 16th January 2017. They will provide feedback to the Summer term meeting. YH attended Clerk to Governor training on 31st January 2017. The training had provided YH with an understanding of all the documentation that is important for the clerk to understand and follow as both the clerk of a foundation school and an academy in a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). They also looked at what makes good minutes and what needs to be legally included on the school's website. VA attended Academy Funding training on 2nd February 2017. She found the training really useful and her main findings were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The key financial problem that new academies struggle with is cash flow. The school is moving from a model where they can pay for items from an annual budget at any point in the year to a monthly funded budget that cannot be overspent. For academies who to not a accountancy trained SBM this is a huge shake-up to the way they work and they have serious difficulties. They suggest that all contracts are renegotiated so that the school does not have to pay for them annually, stagger contracts so not all due at the same point, ensure that the accountancy software chosen is one that the SM+M is comfortable with and if possible carry a cushion of funding from your LMS account when you convert. Pupil funding is always a year behind. Pupils on role in October 2017 will dictate the funding for 2018/19. Ensure the school knows the services that they are now accountable for that

	<p>was previously covered by the Local Authority.</p> <p>4. Use bulk buying power through the MAT</p> <p>5. You can still buy certain services back from the Local Authority and Financial Auditing at £720pa and Risk Indemnity Insurance at £20 per pupil looked like good deals to the people in the room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were not deemed to be any training issues for the governors on this committee. <p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on Finance training on 22nd November 2016 (SSp) • Feedback on SFVS training on 16th January 2017 (NR/SSp)
16	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p>

Part one of the meeting concluded at 7.30pm

The meeting was declared closed to parents, staff, the public & press

Minutes agreed and signed as a true record by  (chair)

Date 29/3/17