



Yvonne Hilditch Chancery MAT [85] 14 October 2020

Excalibur FGB Pt 1 Minutes 13/07/2020

▶ Virtual ▶ Monday, July 13, 2020 ▶ 17:30 ▶ Chair: Sarah Sproston ▶ Clerk: Sue Lambeth

FINAL: The minutes are confirmed and locked.

A zoom invitation to the meeting will be circulated

Governors Attending: >Jo Bain, Juliet Jones, Petra Wayman-Zwart, Kate Jepson, Michael Cross, Gail Whittingham, Simon Cotterill, Anna McArdle, Sarah Sproston

Governors Apologies: >Rachel Hackney, Nikki Ratcliffe,

Non Governors Attending: >Sue Lambeth,

Non Governors Apologies: >

Agenda Item 1 ▶ Welcome, Apologies and AOB

The meeting was quorate and started at 17.38.

The Chair welcomed Governors to the meeting.

MINUTE Apologies from Rachel Hackney and Nikki Ratcliffe were accepted.

Items of other Part One business requested:

- Holiday dates 2021/22

Agenda Item 2 ▶ Declarations of Interest

MINUTE No potential pecuniary interests or conflicts of interest between an individual and the governing board as a whole in connection with the business to be discussed during the meeting were declared.

Agenda Item 3 ▶ Membership

There had been no changes to the LGB since 18th May 2020.

MINUTE There were no current vacancies.

No Associate Governors were appointed.

Agenda Item 4 ▶ Chairs Action

MINUTE The Chair confirmed that no actions had been taken on behalf of the LGB since the last meeting.

Agenda Item 5 ▶ Part One minutes of the previous meeting

MINUTE The Part One minutes of the Summer 1 LGB meeting on 18th May 2020 were reviewed, agreed to be an accurate account and would be signed off by the Chair.

Agenda Item 6 ▶ Finance

MINUTE Governors had received and reviewed the finance reports on Trust Governor prior to the meeting.

YH highlighted the following points from the documents:

Section 2 – Financial Position

The position at May 2020 showed a loss for the year of £15497 compared to £5757 shared in the previous report.

Section 4 – Forward Projection

The projected outcome for the current year was an in-year deficit of £15,497 with a carry forward of £81,214.

Budget shortfalls were shown in 2020/21, 2022/23 and 2023/24 which were attributable to increases in teacher salaries and a small profit in 2021/22.

Governors were referred to **Section 4.4** detailing a breakdown of the 2021/22 budget.

The three-year projection showed a retained balance of £12,352 at 31st August 2024, which did not account for increases in funding, all of which were predicted to be allocated to teachers' salaries.

Section 4.6 including ratio analysis for the forward projections based on the academies benchmarking report document was explained. The General Annual Grant (GAG) funding was reported to be not as low as other schools.

The top slice retained by the Trust from 2021/22 was estimated at a reduced 4.5% as a greater number of schools join.

Pupil numbers revealed a few more eligible for Free School Meals, which would not be reflected in Pupil Premium (PP) funding until later.

The changes in staffing numbers mostly reflected special needs support for Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs). Staff would leave the school at the same time as the EHCP pupils.

GW arrived at 17.56.

Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) applications (**Section 4.10**) had been unsuccessful and were being appealed. Capital was being retained to be used in the future.

Section 5 – Other Activities within School

This showed a loss for the current year due to the pandemic.

Section 6 – Business Risks for the school

Risks including the new funding formula, rises in teacher salaries, the actuarial valuation and review of the Cheshire East Council Local Government Pension Scheme and future pupil numbers were explained.

There was currently an additional risk for pupil numbers, should pupils not return in October for the annual census. At Excalibur this was not considered a major risk, as generally the uptake for Years 2 to 5 looked promising, although some parents might consider home schooling. Any reduction on the census would be reflected in the income to the school.

The out of hours income should be realisable as the provision would be running from September.

YH confirmed that the document was a worst case scenario, and savings and cutbacks could be made, which would not take away from the pupils.

Section 7 – Summary and Conclusion

Details included were the factors taken into account in the arrival at the figures and included details of the debt for the reclaim of VAT for The Berkeley which was currently under investigation.

Governors noted the report, noted and approved the virements presented, noted the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value, reviewed and approved the detailed budget for 2020/21, approved the financial forecast for future years, noted the profit from other activities and noted the business risks listed.

Governors thanked YH for her report.

DECISION Governors noted the report, noted and approved the virements presented, noted the financial position for the current year including the carry forward value, reviewed and approved the detailed budget for 2020/21, approved the financial forecast for future years, noted the profit from other activities and noted the business risks listed.

Q: What is the reason for the greater in-year loss?

A: This is shown in Section 3.1 and is due to £5,780 increase in Local Authority Pupil Premium income funding for 1:1 provision from 28th February 2020 to 31st July 2020, £1,103 decrease in Teaching Salaries expenditure as budgeted maternity kit days cannot be completed due to closure and bubble rules, £1,988 increase in Support Staff Salaries expenditure due to extra 1:1 provision and £13,150 increase in Catering expenses to pay for Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) dinners during closure. There is a contract in place and payment had to be made to Cheshire East Catering for April - July 20 as per the DfE guidance, even though meals were not provided.

Q: Is the school happy with the catering service in general?

A: Different suppliers have been considered and could be possible as the kitchen belongs to the school. However, a new contract would have to be decided 18 months in advance. Food is adequate and packed lunches have been satisfactory. The school is not dissatisfied, although some improvement could be made e.g. on the quantity of food.

Q: The Schools Forum site shows Excalibur second from bottom for actual funding per pupil. Why is this?

A: Most schools have a nursery unlike Excalibur.

CHALLENGE **Q: Why is the cost of educational support staff down significantly in the next year?**

A: This is due to the EHCPs with teaching assistants (TAs) on 37 hours moving on. Contact time contracts will be issued to new staff.

Q: Would TA posts be restructured?

A: These staff have been in place for many years and will be looking to reduce their hours over the next 5 years.

Q: Is there a list of pupils waiting to join the school?

A: A contact list is in place.

Q: How secure are the school income streams?

A: EHCP funding is only received whilst the child is in school and require a needs assessment. School must pay the first £6k of any agreed funding and staff might be required to provide support regardless of whether an EHCP is granted.

Q: Can Personal, Protective Equipment (PPE) costs be reclaimed?

A: Cleaning costs cannot be reclaimed. Total costs incurred amount to approximately £8k to £10k but reclaiming is unlikely due to the financial position of the school. A potential loss situation would lead to an attempt to get it back.

Agenda Item 7 ► Business Critical Decisions

MINUTE There were no business critical decisions to discuss.

Agenda Item 8 ► Headteacher Report

MINUTE The Headteacher's Report had been available to Governors on Trust Governor prior to the meeting and Governors confirmed it had been read.

Staff survey

A staff survey (14 responses out of 19) had revealed:

- The majority felt the workload was manageable with communication and engagement positive.
- Most staff felt supported and no one felt that more could have been done.
- Some anxieties had been expressed but the majority were happy with the level of support in place.
- Some comments about work life balance, stemming from the challenges of schooling their own children and doing their normal job.
- An overwhelming feeling of safety.

Governors agreed that initial concerns had been handled well and staff felt secure.

AM praised JJ for her work, effort and support for all staff.

Parent survey

The survey had revealed:

- Communication was strong
- Information on the return to school was strong
- There were lessons to be learned around home learning, which would be relevant for contingency planning for the return and the possibility of a further lockdown, such as the use of See Saw or Microsoft Teams for small group work. Parents expressed the view that the support had been of an extremely high quality but educating older pupils had been challenging. The aim of the school was to balance the expectations on staff and their wellbeing. Governors suggested that pupils were missing school and their teacher, and pre-recorded videos would avoid the feeling of disconnection.

A short discussion around the need for consistency of offer and safeguarding for all pupils took place.

Qualitative feedback was felt to be important and surveys had backed up the thoughts of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

After phone calls with pupils, SLT had taken the decision to end the year early in order to allow other year groups to attend giving some sense of closure of the year.

JJ reported that regular school contact and safeguarding phone calls to vulnerable pupils were continuing and a communication strategy had been devised, for which a evidence log was available.

Excalibur School had been put forward to have an DfE Health and Safety (H&S) audit, which had taken place via Zoom. The results of the audit would be available for the September meeting.

Q: What alternatives been considered should online learning have to be in place again?

A: Online lessons could be considered, and this had led to the staff and parent survey. Home learning needs to be modified e.g. use of face to face to enhance the learning. See Saw, purchased in May Half term, has been felt to be effective in communicating with teachers.

Q: What is the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offer available for staff for online learning? How would school ascertain the real value of any resources?

A: Traditional lessons might not be particularly useful e.g. in terms of differentiation, whereas The Oak Academy resources and White Rose Maths materials are extremely suitable. There could be value in having a mixture of these resources plus group work to go through areas found difficult by pupils. The aim will be consistency across all year groups.

CHALLENGE

Q: Have there been any concerns regarding parental mental health?

A: No. Class teachers have responded quickly to parents' concerns and requests for support.

Q: What is the plan for the full return to school in September?

A: A letter has gone to parents regarding the staggered start and finish times and other daily logistics. All pupils will arrive and leave over a 30 minute period, and the number of required hours in school will remain unchanged. Lunch and break times will also be staggered. Reception pupils will attend either morning or afternoon slots at the start of September and their play will be in the Reception area.

Q: How will teacher Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time be managed?

A: KS1 time will be covered internally by Karen, Years 3 and 4 will have music tuition provided externally as at present, but no wind or brass instruments or indoor singing, and Years 5 and 6 will have Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) as previously. A risk assessment has been provided by The Love Music Trust.

Agenda Item 9 ► Policies

The outstanding MFL Policy would be brought to the September meeting of the LGB.

MINUTE

There were no MAT policies for approval.

Agenda Item 10 ► LGB meeting dates 2020/21

The dates of the Excalibur LGB meetings for 2020/21 were confirmed as:

MINUTE

- 14th September 2020
- 23rd November 2020
- 11th January 2021
- 1st March 2021
- 26th April 2021
- 14th June 2021

All dates were now available on Trust Governor

Agenda Item 11 ► Any Other Business

The term dates for 2020/21, which were confirmed to be in line with Alsager High school and CE and which fitted around polling dates, were **noted** by Governors.

MINUTE

JJ advised that consideration was being given to the assessment of pupils without formal testing.

Governors were requested to consider Governor Development points for the September meeting.

ACTION

To add an item to the September LGB meeting agenda to discuss LGB development points. (Clerk)

DECISION

The term dates for 2020/21, which were confirmed to be in line with Alsager High school and CE and which fitted around polling dates, were noted by Governors.

Q: What is the position with staff appraisal?

A: Guidance is that that staff cannot be held accountable for achievement of targets during the pandemic.

Q: What are the arrangements for the staff In Service Training (INSET) scheduled for 1st September?

A: This will take place in school in a safe and socially distanced way and will include circle time and a Maths focus.

CHALLENGE

Q: What is the position regarding the School Development Plan (SDP)?

A: No SDP is to be prepared at this time, but will be written in September. It is anticipated that there will be a focus on emotional wellbeing and relationships education (the introduction of which has been delayed until the summer term of 2021). There may be funding for catch up from the government, but no decision has yet been made regarding an application.

Agenda Item 12 ► Impact Statement

MINUTE

- Governors received an in-depth explanation of the healthy finance position of the school and approved the budget.
- Assurance was given of the safe reopening of the school, both at the current time and in September.
- Governors were made aware of the impact of the situation on staff and SLT support.
- Remote learning was discussed in detail.
- The very positive outcomes from the parent survey were reviewed.
- Governors noted the happiness of the parents and pupils on their return to school.

The Part One meeting closed at 18.42.

Governor Agreed Actions set during this meeting: 0

Excalibur LGB Summer 2 2020 Pt1 dated: 13/07/2020

Minutes approved by Yvonne Hilditch