



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & OPERATIONS (F&O) COMMITTEE OF BROOKVALE GROBY LEARNING TRUST TUESDAY 1ST DECEMBER 2020, 4.30PM, VIA GOOGLE MEET

Present: Steve Goddard (Chair)
Helen Brown
Helen Stockill
Peter Leatherland (from 4.37pm)

Also in attendance: Helen Smart (Business Director)
Joanne Golding (Bursar)
Will Teece (Headteacher)
Rebecca Langton (Magma Accountants) – for items 1-3 only
Elaine Freeman (Clerk)

AGENDA ITEM	<i>DENOTES GOVERNOR CHALLENGE</i> <i>DENOTES CAMPUS ACHIEVEMENT</i>	ACTION
1. Apologies for Absence:	No apologies for absence were received.	
2. Declarations of interest:	No declarations of interest were reported.	
	The Chair welcomed Peter Leatherland to his first meeting, as he had recently moved from the Local Academy Board to this committee.	
3. Presentation of 2019/20 accounts and Audit Report – Accounts Scrutiny:	<p>The Chair welcomed Rebecca Langton to the meeting, and Rebecca proceeded to present the 2019/20 accounts, along with associated documentation, advising the committee that there were no major changes to the requirement by the ESFA to the accounts documentation. All information relevant to this agenda item had been shared with committee members ahead of this meeting.</p> <p><i>A committee member asked, given the high level of reserves which the school was currently holding, should the reserves target be increased?</i></p> <p>Rebecca Langton advised that, since this had been the position for some time, this was not a concern and there had been no interest from the ESFA regarding this situation. Rebecca suggested that a paragraph within the reserves policy could be included, justifying why this amount of reserves was being held, as well as a detailed breakdown as to how these reserves were to be spent.</p> <p>Following this detailed presentation, <i>both Rebecca Langton and Will Teece paid tribute to Helen Smart and the Finance team for all of their work and efforts in ensuring the campus retains its healthy financial position.</i></p> <p><i>The members of the F&O Committee echoed this praise and thanks to Helen Smart and the Finance team.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked Rebecca Langton for her work involved in the presentation of these accounts and the F&O Committee were happy to recommend these accounts, as presented, for approval</p>	



	<p>by the Trust Board at their next meeting, scheduled for 15th December 2020.</p> <p>Rebecca Langton requested the management responses to the findings within the Audit Report as soon as possible, to enable this documentation to be circulated ahead of the Trust Board meeting.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p> <p><i>Rebecca Langton left the meeting at this point – 5.15pm.</i></p>	<p>Chair/ Helen Smart</p>
<p>4. Budget Monitoring October 2020, including Catering, Lettings and Transport:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented documentation with relation to this agenda item, which had been circulated to the committee ahead of this meeting, and pointed out that the amount of £6,800 shown within the Variances section of the GAG Budget Monitoring document, was in fact a surplus of monies received from HMRC following a claim for Statutory Sick Pay due to COVID-19. This claim, Helen Smart advised, was able to continue for the next few months.</p> <p>Helen Smart confirmed that all monies held for forthcoming trips during this academic year had now been removed, as it was unlikely that any trips would be able to go ahead due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Helen Smart advised that no Lettings had been carried out this year due to the pandemic and the extra work that this would cause to the Premises team, as well as the risks posed due to external visitors to the campus and its facilities.</p> <p>Making reference to the overspend shown within the Teachers section of this document, Helen Smart advised that this was due to a maternity cover which the campus had needed to pay for, as well as additional TLRs for those two staff members seconded to the Senior Team for this academic year.</p> <p>Helen Smart pointed out that at the beginning of this academic year, Supply Agency costs were low, however this may look very different moving forward due to the demand which COVID-19 had placed onto the staff absence numbers.</p> <p>Making reference to the underspend shown within the Support Staff section of this document, Helen Smart advised that this was due to money being set aside for the recruitment of a Learning Support Assistant, which was deemed not to be required, and a Cover Supervisor vacancy which the campus was unable to appoint to at that time. Helen Smart pointed out that a member of the Cover Supervision team had moved over to cover a maternity leave within the Science Faculty, which had contributed to this underspend within the Support Staff section, as well as the overspend within the Teacher section.</p> <p>A committee member asked whether the Ski trip to America, scheduled to take place in February 2021 and previously discussed at a past F&O meeting, would still be going ahead?</p>	



Helen Smart stated that in January 2021, should the travel advice be the same as it is currently, then the RPA would refund all monies already paid to the Ski company. It was acknowledged that it was highly unlikely that this trip would go ahead.

Jo Golding presented documentation relating to Catering within the school, and advised the committee that the figures contained within were an expected projection for the end of this academic year, with an in year deficit of just over -£24K, although Jo Golding confirmed that the budget set had reflected this quite accurately. Jo Golding advised the committee that the school would be reviewing its catering pricing structure in the near future, to implement a new pricing structure at the beginning of next academic year. It was acknowledged that prices had remained unchanged for the past 2 years. The committee also acknowledged that the deficit within Catering had been caused solely by the COVID pandemic, where the uptake of school meals and the number of students on campus at any one time, had been heavily affected. The Chair requested that any new pricing structure determined for next academic year should be brought to the F&O Committee ahead of its implementation.

Jo Golding presented documentation relating to Transport, shared with the committee ahead of this meeting, and stated that the total income stood at £160K, with the expenditure being £162K.

A committee member queried, where 'bubbles' needed to be collapsed, had parents/carers requested refunds on bus monies already paid?

Helen Smart advised that some parents/carers had requested this, and the school had taken the stance that if students had been requested to self-isolate due to close contact with an infected student, then monies would be credited from next term, rather than refunded. If the student had to self-isolate due to an external contact (ie via Track & Trace) then there would be no credit due.

Jo Golding presented documentation relating to Lettings on campus, shared with the committee ahead of this meeting, and advised that all Lettings (as previously reported) had been stopped due to the COVID pandemic, although it was hoped that this may be able to continue in the near future. This, it was acknowledged, would have an effect on the final figures, should it not be possible to continue with Lettings this year, with a projected year end balance of -£15K being expected. This, it was felt, was a great shame as historically, Lettings had always been extremely successful.

A committee member asked if it was felt that there could be long term risks associated with the school's decision not to allow any Lettings during the pandemic?

Helen Smart advised that it was highly likely that some hirers would choose to go elsewhere, but the safety and welfare of all staff and students on the campus had been of paramount

**Helen Smart/
Jo Golding**



	<p>importance during this time. The committee was fully supportive of this decision.</p> <p>Committee members noted these reports and there were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
<p>5. Local Authority Audit Report:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented the Local Authority Internal Audit Report, shared with the committee ahead of this meeting, and advised that due to the pandemic, this had been carried out remotely, but had still been a thorough audit. Helen Smart pointed out that only one recommendation had been noted within this report, to update the Scheme of Delegation documentation to include the roles of the specific governing committees. It was acknowledged that this document was already being scrutinised and updated at that point in time.</p> <p>Helen Smart was pleased to advise the committee that to see only one recommendation within the report of a school of this size, was a phenomenal achievement. Helen Smart paid tribute to the work of the finance team, and their efforts in ensuring that all processes and procedures are strictly followed and adhered to. The committee echoed their agreement and thanked the whole team.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
<p>6. 5 Year Forecast:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented documentation relative to this agenda item, which had been circulated to the committee ahead of this meeting, and asked the committee to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These figures had been produced ahead of the government’s announcement to halt all salary increases for public sector workers. • The reduction in Post 16 incoming numbers would necessitate the need to ‘eat’ into the reserves. • No indication being received of any future additional funding. • Loss shown from superannuation and teachers’ pay grants. <p>A committee member asked how much the Post 16 provision cost the school each year?</p> <p>Helen Smart confirmed that during this academic year, the other two key stages within the school had supplemented the Post 16 provision by £300K.</p> <p>A committee member asked if the campus had fully explored its integrated curriculum financial planning?</p> <p>Helen Smart stated that this was an area of constant review and was now as tight as it could be, without having a detrimental effect on the learners and on the curriculum which the campus was able to offer. Will Teece echoed this statement.</p>	



	<p>A committee member asked if the campus was investigating other local Post 16 provisions, in order to be alerted as to where Year 11 students were moving to following their GCSE results?</p> <p>Helen Smart and Will Teece advised that some Year 11 students were choosing to take up Post 16 provision within the City schools, with another local school also being able to offer good provision at Post 16.</p> <p>An in-depth discussion followed regarding possible marketing strategies to retain/attract numbers within Post 16.</p> <p>The committee noted this report, and it was agreed that Post 16 forecasting would be an ongoing agenda item for this committee.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	<p>Clerk/ Will Teece/ Helen Smart</p>
<p>7. Number on roll and Local Authority (LA) Pupil Projection:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented documentation relating to the LA pupil projection, shared ahead of the meeting, and pointed out that the numbers contained within this document reflected the number of pupils within the feeder Primary Schools, however it was noted that the school didn't attract all Year 6 pupils, with some going elsewhere, so these figures were not accurate for future forecasting.</p> <p>A discussion followed.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
<p>8. Self-Assessment Tool:</p>	<p>It was noted that this Self-Assessment did not need to be completed until April/May 2021, so Helen Smart had asked prior permission of the Chair to discuss a future spending plan during this point in the meeting. The Chair had given agreement to this.</p> <p>Helen Smart asked permission of the committee to approve the spend of £80K from this year's reserves, to enable the ADT area within the Groby building to be refurbished. This area, Helen Smart advised, had received no attention or spend for several years and was looking very tired and dated.</p> <p>A committee member asked if there were any areas within the Brookvale building which also needed refurbishment work?</p> <p>Helen Smart advised that there were some Science Labs which would need refurbishing at some time in the future, but in general the Groby building was in a poorer state of repair.</p> <p>In light of the previous discussions relating to Post 16 retention and future marketing, a committee member asked if the school had given thought to any refurbishment of these areas?</p>	



	<p>Helen Smart advised that there was provision set aside within the budget to re-decorate and re-floor some areas within Post 16, to make these more up-to-date and attractive.</p> <p>Following discussion, committee members gave their approval to this spend within the ADT areas in the Groby building, with a future spending plan for other areas also being considered.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
<p>9. 'My Financial Insights':</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented the financial dashboard of the Power BI software, previously presented by Will Teece during the recent meeting of the Local Academy Board in November 2020, and advised those present that this software program would prove extremely useful in the future. Helen Smart presented a YouTube video explaining more about the features associated with this program.</p> <p>Committee members agreed that this looked extremely interesting, and looked forward to seeing it fully up and running in the future.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
<p>10. Fixed Assets Identified by the Senior Team – Report:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented documentation relative to this agenda item, shared with the committee ahead of this meeting, and committee members focused firstly on the IT section. Helen Smart advised that, once this list was populated, then members of the finance team would identify each asset and ensure that it still existed on campus.</p> <p>Jo Golding explained that, following her scrutiny, there were some items listed which needed to be amended.</p> <p>A discussion followed, with the committee members agreeing that this proved to be a useful exercise.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	<p>Jo Golding</p>
<p>11. Finance Work Scrutiny:</p>	<p>Jo Golding presented documentation relevant to this agenda item, shared with committee members ahead of this meeting, and explained that she had used the gov.uk template to formulate this internal document. Committee members noted that this was very much work in progress.</p> <p>A committee member asked whether this internal document overlapped in any way with the external audit document provided by the LA?</p> <p>Jo Golding explained that she had attempted to pick up and highlight different areas – eg invoicing, BACS run etc - within this internal document.</p>	



	<p>A committee member asked whether issues around cyber security/data protection on campus had been considered for inclusion within this document?</p> <p>Helen Smart agreed to speak to Lee Shellard, IT Manager, with a view to incorporating this area.</p> <p>The Chair asked for this to be reported on again in a future F&O committee.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	<p>Helen Smart</p> <p>Helen Smart</p>
<p>12. Site and Health & Safety Update:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented the Health & Safety Report, shared with committee members ahead of this meeting, and the contents therein were noted and discussed, particularly those positive areas regarding compliance. Committee members were pleased to note that there were no major areas for review.</p> <p>It was pointed out that in some sections, access was required to be able to view the content and Helen Smart agreed to speak to Sangeeta Patel, Business Development Officer, to rectify this.</p> <p>A committee member asked if a section on Accident Reporting could be included within this document in the future?</p> <p>Helen Smart agreed that this would be possible and confirmed that she would speak to Sangeeta Patel and Steve Ward, Campus Site Manager.</p> <p>Committee members extended their thanks to Sangeeta Patel and Steve Ward for their comprehensive report and it was agreed that this should be a regular F&O agenda item.</p> <p>Committee members wished their thanks to be relayed to all of the Premises staff for working under very difficult circumstances during this pandemic.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	<p>Helen Smart</p> <p>Helen Smart</p> <p>Helen Smart/ Clerk</p>
<p>13. IT Update:</p>	<p>Helen Smart presented the report, shared ahead of this meeting, prepared by Lee Shellard, IT Manager, and advised committee members that Weduc, a parental communication tool, was to be introduced on campus, which would enable all campus data to be housed under one App.</p> <p>Whilst discussing new CCTV to be installed across the campus, a committee member queried whether the school currently had a CCTV Policy in place?</p> <p>Helen Smart confirmed that there was a Policy in place.</p> <p>Committee members thanked Lee Shellard and his team for their professional, expert work across the whole campus.</p>	



	<p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
14. Staff Update:	<p>Helen Smart presented documentation in relation to this agenda item, which had been shared with committee members ahead of this meeting.</p> <p>This report was noted and there were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
15. Risk Register:	<p>The Finance & Operations section of the Risk Register, shared ahead of this meeting, was scrutinised and discussed.</p> <p>A committee queried whether succession planning should be included within the Risk Register, particular focusing on the individual expertise of the Senior Team?</p> <p>It was agreed that this focus should be considered within the Risk Register.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	Will Teece/ SLT
16. COVID-19 Update and Catch Up Funding Plans:	<p>Will Teece presented documentation regarding this agenda item, which had been presented and discussed at the meeting of The Local Academy Board in November.</p> <p>The committee noted the figures contained within the Universal Catch Up Premium Strategy Statement and a committee member asked what the bulk of the money had been spent on?</p> <p>Will Teece confirmed that the money had been spent on resources and equipment such as - Google Chromebooks and new laptops to enable blended learning to take place. Following discussion, the committee noted the contents and thanked Will Teece for his presentation and explanation.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	
17. Approval of Pay Policies 2020/21 - Teacher and Support Staff:	<p>It was noted that both Policies had been shared with committee members ahead of this meeting, and there were no alterations to either Policy, other than the updated pay structures for this year. It was confirmed that, although the minutes did not reflect this, these pay structures were discussed during the Remuneration Committee when it met in October. It was requested that these minutes be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>Following discussion, committee members approved both Policies as presented for 2020/21.</p> <p>There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.</p>	Clerk



18. Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting held on 14th September 2020:	The draft minutes as presented, from the meeting held on 14th September 2020, were agreed as a true and accurate record. There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.	
19. Matters Arising from the minutes:	The actions from the meeting held on 14th September were reviewed and confirmed as being either completed or in progress. There were no further questions or discussion relating to this agenda item.	
20. Confirm date of next meeting:	The date of the next meeting of the F&O Committee was confirmed as Tuesday 23rd February 2021, 5.30pm, via Google Meet.	

The meeting closed at 6.46pm

Signed by Chair:

Date: 23rd February 2021

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

NAME	ACTION
Chair/ Helen Smart	Management responses to the findings within the Audit Report to be given to Rebecca Langton as soon as possible. ACTION COMPLETE <i>Agenda item 3.</i>
Helen Smart/ Jo Golding	Any new Catering pricing structure determined for next academic year should be brought to the F&O Committee ahead of its implementation. <i>Agenda item 4.</i>
Will Teece/ Helen Smart/ Clerk	Post 16 forecasting to be an ongoing agenda item for this committee. ACTION COMPLETE <i>Agenda item 6.</i>
Jo Golding	Amendment of the Fixed Assets Identified by the Senior Team – Report.



	<i>Agenda item 10.</i>
Helen Smart	<p>Incorporate cyber security/data protection on campus into the Finance Work Scrutiny document – speak to Lee Shellard.</p> <p>This document to be reported on again at a future F&O Committee. ACTION COMPLETE</p> <p><i>Agenda item 11.</i></p>
Helen Smart	<p>Helen Smart to speak to Sangeeta Patel re access to areas of the Site and Health & Safety Report.</p>
Helen Smart	<p>Include a section on Accident Reporting within the Site and Health & Safety Report – Helen Smart to speak to Steve Ward and Sangeeta Patel.</p>
Clerk/ Helen Smart	<p>This report to be a regular agenda item. ACTION COMPLETE</p> <p><i>Agenda item 12.</i></p>
Will Teece/ SLT	<p>Include SLT succession planning within the Risk Register.</p> <p><i>Agenda item 15.</i></p>
Clerk	<p>Amend Remuneration Committee minutes to reflect that pay structures for 2020/21 were discussed. ACTION COMPLETE</p> <p><i>Agenda item 17.</i></p>