

**MINUTES OF THE 94<sup>th</sup> FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON  
WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2019 AT 16.00**

**Present:** Dick Whitcutt (DW - Chair), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stewart Harris (SH)

**Absent:** Tony Bothwell (TBO), Rachel Branagan (RB)

**In Attendance:** Richard Perry (RJP), Conor Hewitt (COH) – Minutes

**Meeting Started:** 16:00

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were passed on from TBO and RB.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting (12/12/18)**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record. DW asked COH if all the declarations of business interest forms had been returned, COH & RJP noted that two were still outstanding. No further issues were raised.

**4. Matters Arising**

The Trustee Remuneration Committee would meet shortly after the FRC meeting to discuss arrangements for related-party transactions.

**5. Annual Report and Financial Statements 2018**

The Annual Report and Financial Statements to August 2018 were submitted to the ESFA prior to the December deadline. A copy was also made available via the Academy website, again, prior to the January deadline. RJP circulated the finalised Post-Audit Management Report. The Academy also completed the Academy Accounts Return (essentially the accounts formatted differently and in a little more depth to better assist the DfE with its own year-end returns), before the mid-January deadline.

**6. Capital Developments**

The ongoing plans to redevelop parts of the Academy in order to accommodate an additional form of entry are progressing slowly. RJP explained to the Committee that the plans are to redevelop the ground floor of Zone C, move SEN to Zone F to situate it with ARC, and move the Art department to redevelop the ground floor of Zone E. The second food room will also be reconfigured as a second conference room which can be used for multi-purpose activities such as: study hall; walking talking mocks and other events. DW noted that the Academy will be contributing approximately £27,000 to the development (around 5% of the total cost of the work DW added that he believes the Academy should seek to keep to this figure and try to avoid incurring additional costs. RJP agreed but noted that if the opportunity arose to include cost effective additions that became apparent during the phased works, these should at least be considered.

The Academy is also looking to redevelop the main Library and Learning Resource Centre over the summer break. The new area will still predominantly be used as a library; however, the space will be redesigned to accommodate all study hall and catch up activities, maintaining a quiet space for students to study effectively. The area will include a bank of laptops which have already been purchased, as agreed by the Committee previously. The re-development works are currently subject to final planning. RJP added that the work may be broken down into smaller contracts so the Academy can work with trusted companies.

RJP proposed that the lighting and ceiling work could be undertaken during the Easter break in order to help ensure the completion of the remaining building work over the summer. RJP circulated a document which showed the 4 leading tenders. RJP added that the cheapest tender had been submitted by True Electrical Services, a company the Academy had already used. RJP was happy with the work the company had previously undertaken and recommended using them again. The Committee agreed and supported RJP's recommendation.

RJP added that the Chancellor's clumsily worded 'little-extras' funding that had previously been promised to schools has materialised in the form of an in-year small fund bonus in order to help with building repairs and renovations, this fund would amount to around £69,000 and would contribute towards the library renovation.

## **7. Revenue Funding (2018-19 and onwards)**

RJP had updated the expected income and expenditure figure and, by the end of January the Academy had spent 42.4% of total income, which equated to just over £4 million. By the same point last year, the Academy had spent 41% of income.

DW asked about this year's teachers' pay increase. The school teachers review body are expected to recommend a 2% increase of pay for all entry level teaching staff. Last year all entry level teachers were given a 3% increase in pay. The Academy will receive a supplementary teachers pay grant to help cover the cost, however, this has been provided as a one-off grant and the way in which this will be incorporated into annual funding figures going forward is yet to be confirmed.

## **8. Trading Company**

The trading company is still operating well and the Academy still seeks to increase lettings. The Academy has received a couple of enquiries, however nothing has materialised as of yet.

## **9. Benchmarking Report Card**

The benchmarking report card which is created and distributed by the DfE was issued in Autumn 2018. The report card compares the Academy to other academies with a similar number of pupil premium students. RJP had researched the schools and found a number of key differences in the types of schools the comparisons represented, which led him to question the value of the comparison data.

RJP showed the committee a breakdown of staffing costs at the Academy. DW asked if the Academy's cleaning and kitchen staff costs were included in the figures, as the majority of schools put these costs out to contract and therefore would not be included in the data. RJP noted that agency costs were not factored into the calculations, which compromised the accuracy of the data. RJP noted that the benchmarking figures section of the DfE website was more useful as it allowed the Academy to compare its costs to other schools in the area. This data would be a better representation of the Academy's financial performance.

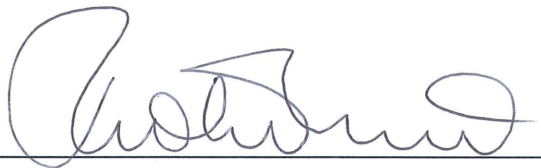
The amount of money spent on support staff was flagged on the report card as an area for further investigation. RJP noted that because of the longer school day, and the additional staff in ARC and ICAS, the Academy has to dedicate a larger percentage of its budget to support staff. RJP further highlighted the inaccuracy of the data, as some of the schools on the report card had apparently spent 0% of their funds on support staff. Another area highlighted for closer scrutiny was premises costs. RJP said that because the Academy is in a generally positive financial position it can afford to spend more on maintaining its premises. RJP also felt that having a dedicated premises staffing leads to a higher level of maintenance upkeep throughout the Academy, which in the long term helps to reduce the necessity for major capital works.

**10. Administrative & Staffing Matters**

None to report

**11. Any Other Business**

No other issues were raised.

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 2 / 5 / 2019

**Richard Whitcutt**  
**Chair of Finance & Resources Committee**

