

**MINUTES OF THE 107th FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
OF ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2022 AT 16.15**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW) - Chair, Richard Perry (RJP), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Stuart Harris (SH) via TEAMS

In Attendance: Jane Kiddell (JKD) (Minutes)

Start Time: 16:15

1. Apologies for absence

The only absentees were Tony Bothwell (TB), Kevin Chamberlain (KC) and Rachel Branaghan (RB), who has formally resigned her position on the FRC board.

2. Declaration of interest

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of Last meeting

There were no changes to the previous minutes.

The previous minutes were agreed and signed as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

RJP told the FRC that the work required for the lift in Zone D has been rescheduled for Easter. DW asked about the delay and RJP confirmed this is due to the difficulty in obtaining parts, but RJP would like to know if the delay will have any impact on the pricing for the subsequent lift upgrades in the other zones. If there is, the Academy may need to go back to the market for a re-evaluation of the costs.

The item on pay reviews was taken next (see item 9).

5. Openview

RJP confirmed that the income received from renting Openview through 2021-22 was higher than it had been previously and it is expected to be even better this year. There was much discussion over arrangements in place for the current year and RJP was due a further meeting with Spencer Club and Thomas's school on progress thus far and to see what further progress can be made for the following year. He would also discuss it with the Academy's auditors so that cost allocations between the Academy Trust and the trading subsidiary are correctly apportioned.

Several of the FRC members were also the Directors of Prospect Education and Public Services Ltd and considered that this initiative had made very good progress and were keen to see how this developed further. DW congratulated

the Academy on how this had moved forward to date.

RJP will update on Openview further at the next meeting.

6. Revenue Funding 2021-2022

RJP gave an update on the revenue funding for the previous year which is subject to year-end adjustments. At the year-end the Academy had overspent by over 4.5% on the income received for the year. This was within the forecast figure at the start of the year and what the Academy had anticipated. RJP would provide a further update at the next meeting which will be towards the end of the annual audit.

DW would like to know how many years the Academy has sufficient reserves available with which to meet annual deficits and any other contingencies to be put in place. RJP will present an updated 5-year budget plan to the trustees next month for their approval, which will then subsequently be shared with the FRC. Annual deficits going forward equate to an average of £400K per year, which, if experienced, will need to be more closely reviewed in 4 years' time.

7. Revenue Funding 2022-2023

RJP gave an update on the current year's funding. The Academy has an improved funding position on account of its student numbers drawn from the previous year's October census return. Further improvement on student numbers and efficiencies made within the staffing, should reduce the deficit situation from its present level.

RJP will update the FRC more at the next meeting.

8. Staffing Matters

Staff Attendance Reward Scheme

RJP discussed the Staff Attendance Reward Scheme, which was included in his report. This indicated the number of staff benefitting from the Scheme on both the teaching and the associate side. Any absence remotely linked to COVID-19 up to the end of March 2022 was discounted, yet despite this, the numbers benefitting from the reward were surprisingly low and especially so amongst the associate staff.

Understandably, Covid has played a large part in absence rates over the past three years, but it is hoped that this will be less of a concern going forward.

The absence rates for Teaching and Learning Assistants tend to be more adversely affected, but the Academy will be re-introducing procedures aimed at establishing higher rates of attendance, where these are a concern.

Staff Exit Interviews

RJP outlined to the FRC the questionnaire data from the leaving members of staff.

The data was shared with LG recently. The responses were few in number and were mixed, which was anticipated to an extent. Despite this, the responses were generally more positive. It was also felt that the questionnaire was in need of revision going forward so that it better reflects the way in which the Academy operates and the hierarchical structure in place.

RJP further discussed the responses received with the FRC, with a focus on the replies that were of a more negative nature. No serious concerns were expressed by the Committee in comparison with their experience of exit opinions in the wider employment world – but, nevertheless, it was good, and important, that ATA was able to consider any

actionable points for improvement.

9. Pay Reviews

The Committee were taken through the paperwork that had been circulated for the meeting and RJP explained how the staffing figures for the year had been arrived at. These had been based on existing staffing numbers making standard progression where due and also receiving an inflationary pay increase that had been calculated using indicative national pay awards within the teaching profession and within local government (which ATA generally followed). He added that the Trustee Remuneration Committee had also been issued with the same paperwork and that they had agreed to cost parameters for the Academy and the FRC to work within for setting individual salaries for staff other than those of the Principal and Vice-Principal.

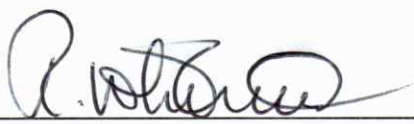
DMI then talked the FRC through the individual members of staff where exceptional arrangements were requested to be considered, which consisted of one member of staff remaining on their current pay point and not progressing, one other who would receive accelerated progression by moving two incremental points and one member of staff to receive a one-off bonus payment. After discussion, the FRC agreed to accept the Principal's recommendations. There were no other exceptions requested for the year.

The Committee further noted that the inflationary awards referred to above remained subject to final ratification in the "outside world" for teaching and supporting staff in schools and it was agreed that until these had been formally agreed, the decisions taken on inflationary increases would be held back until these were finalised. Should these alter significantly from those used within the calculations, then this would require taking back to the Trustee Remuneration Committee for further deliberation first.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

DW thanked the FRC for their continued support.

Signed: 
Richard Whitcutt
Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee

Date 14/12/2022