



Whinless Down Academy Trust

FSARC Meeting

Thursday 9th February 2023

Minutes of the Finance, Strategy, Risk and Audit Committee Meeting

Held on Thursday 9th February 2023 at 4pm via Teams

Committee Members Present: Mike Ashley, Helen Seeley (Vice Chair), Anne Siggins (CEO), Tricia Sherling

Others Present: Michelle Hards (Bursar), Michelle Noden (Trust Business Manager), Kelly Brown (Priory Fields Headteacher)

Governance Professional: Claudia Sawyers

1	<u>Welcome, Introduction, Resignations and Apologies</u> Apologies Apologies were received from Alison Mackintosh and apologies were accepted by the committee.	<u>Actions</u>
2	<u>Register of Business and Pecuniary Interest</u> All committee members were given the opportunity to declare any new business interests. No new business interests were declared.	
3	<u>Minutes from 11th October 2022 Published on the Website</u> The Governance Professional confirmed the minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 10 th February 2022 have been published on the Whinless Down Academy Trust website.	
4 4.1	<u>Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 15th December 2022</u> Approval of Minutes Minutes from the previous meeting held on 15 th December were agreed and approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The Chair of FSARC will sign the minutes at the next available opportunity in person as this is a virtual meeting.	

4.2	<p>Actions/Matters Arising</p> <p>- Actions from Internal Audit:</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Policy- <i>This policy has been written and is on the agenda to be agreed later in the meeting.</i></p> <p>Prominent link on school websites to accounts- <i>This action has been completed and websites have been updated.</i></p>	
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p><u>Budget Monitoring</u></p> <p>All budget monitoring management accounts for October 2022 were sent to FSAC prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Budget Monitoring October</p> <p><u>Priory Fields School</u></p> <p>The rollover for October was £363,174, which is a variance from September of £6033. This was contributed by a new TA starting with a budget difference of £1691, there was addition funding for 3 Pupil Premium children of £4155, and High Needs Funding increased by £6170.</p> <p><u>St Martin's School</u></p> <p>The rollover for October was £29,146, which is a reduction of £21,000 from budgeted in September.</p> <p>There are several contributing factors, there was a change in the cost of maternity cover for a member of staff, as well as an increase of approximately £8500 for a new member of support staff. There are due to be new carpets fitted in the corridors at a necessary cost of approximately £6000. There was a reduction in Pupil Premium funding equating to seven children which totalled £9378. Recovery premium also reduced by £1015. Thus far there has been no High Needs Funding, which has been an ongoing issue as there have been applications submitted, however this has been fairly recent. A lot of resources are being put in to supporting children with additional needs. A committee member asked whether the delay is due to funding applications being declined or are they initial applications? EHT commented that there were two new applications submitted in December, there were issues with the capacity of being able to submit applications due to staffing but there is now a new SENCO in post and they are able to dedicate the time needed to SEND. EHT explained that it is taking longer than usual for the local authority to take action and a committee member commented that this has been seen at other schools as well.</p> <p><u>Vale View School</u></p> <p>The rollover for October was £227,166, with a variance of £55,572. This was contributed by a reduction in teachers pay of £3230 due to a removal of a TLR, there has been an additional £27,700 received in Pupil Premium funding as there are 20 additional PP children. There is also an increase in High Needs Funding of an additional £22,909.</p> <p><u>Trust and Catering Monitoring</u></p> <p>The Trust accounts show a balanced figure for October monitoring with no variance.</p>	

Catering has increased approximately £5000. Bursar explained that expenditure of food has increased significantly and the cost of member of catering staff members will increase from April due to the increase in national minimum wage.

Budget Monitoring November

Priory Fields

The rollover for November was £285,121, which is a variance of £84,346. This is primarily due to £50,000 being transferred in to a reserve pot. There was a £1759 change in teachers pay due to a change in teacher as well as a change in trips, there was no budget originally set but there has been an expenditure of £1575 which will be partially offset by income. There has been an additional £28,813 income which is the Mainstream Additional Grant, this is a government grant announced due to cost of living and is the first part of a two-part grant.

A committee member asked; are there individual plans for schools or is there a Trust-wide plan for the energy efficiency grant? EHT explained there will be further thoughts put in to this, there are ideas on the estates plan such as electrical car charging, timers on electric equipment for saving usage, solar panels. EHT welcomed any other ideas or thoughts from the committee. MN has been in contact with the energy supplier and they have recommend an audit for energy efficiency.

Vale View

The rollover for November was £178,335, which is a variance of £48,831.

There has also been £25,000 transferred to a reserves pot. In previous meetings there have been discussions regarding building reserves therefore there has been monies removed from Priory Fields and Vale View rollovers so there is a 'buffer' for the schools. St Martin's in not currently in a position to build reserves.

A committee member asked whether there should be a set measure to ascertain the amount to be taken, such as a policy as to what the amounts should be. It was agreed this should be formalised in some way.

The other variances are contributed by; Teachers pay as one teacher went from a 0.6FTE contract to full time which was an expenditure of £10,080, there is a new member of support staff which was not budgeted originally, an increase in High Needs Funding of £3220, the Mainstream Additional Grant of £16,195 and an energy efficiency grant of £14,218.

St Martin's

The rollover for November was £43,476, which is a variance of £14,321.

The rollover has gone back up from October due to the additional funding already discussed earlier, the Mainstream Additional Grant for St Martin's was £12,950 and an energy efficiency grant of £14,373. There is still no High Needs Funding but it is hoped that it may be backdated.

	<u>Catering and Trust</u> No further comments further to October monitoring.	
6	<u>Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)</u> The Key Performance Indicator data for October and November was sent to the committee to review prior to the meeting. All schools in the Trust are looking at an in year deficit, the increase in salaries previously discussed will impact on money spent and money received. Staffing levels have needed to increase due to supporting children who need it, this is further exacerbated by delays in High Needs Funding and delays in placements at specialist provision. This is a last resort measure but is becoming untenable, due to the complex needs of the children and the level of skills needed in staff to provide for them. There have also been issues with staff sickness levels which also requires cover; meaning additional financial impact. A committee member asked how long can the Trust sustain spending at 104-107%? EHT explained that this can be sustained currently with the rollover, but the Trust should be aiming for an in year balanced budget. EHT further commented that there are MATs across the country who are setting deficit budgets. As a committee, we can afford at this level but we should be cautious that the figure doesn't increase exponentially. EHT asked Bursar for a revised forecast of the budget with the current plans in place so a better position can be established.	
7	<u>Pupil Premium</u> The review of Pupil Premium for each school and the current plans were shared with the committee prior to the meeting. The committee commented that the reviews of pupil premium were the most comprehensive reviews they had seen and couldn't find any questions as the documents answered them all. Trustees present feel well informed and also commented that the new format also makes it much easier to read. The format is now a 3 year plan which remains the same and is reviewed each year, rather than new plan each year. This is the second year of the 3 year plan. A committee member asked what the tutoring plan is going forward. EHT explained the cost is increasing due to the reduction in government funding, so ensuring the impact is measureable and is improving the outcomes is important. It was agreed that this could be reviewed by standards committee, ideally after SATs in term 6.	
9	<u>Review of Estates Strategy</u> EHT has updated the Estates Strategy with completed actions and added new parts, such as the refit of the St Martin's toilets. The strategy is RAG rated based on priority. There are some measures that could be candidates for the energy efficiency funding which was discussed earlier in the meeting. TBM commented that there are new conditions surveys taking place at Vale View which may influence the plans. TBM is also underway with organising the new ICT services (broadband) update. This is planned for the Easter holiday. With regards to the 'Sports England' pitch at Priory Fields, which has been going back and forth between DfE and Portakabin about the liability of cost, TBM is still ensuring this work is going to be completed.	

	<p><u>Quotes and Tenders</u></p> <p>Three quotes for the toilets at St Martin's have been obtained and they are under the limit set out in the financial regulations policy that can be agreed by EHT. TBM has found it difficult to find three companies who have been willing to quote but has now obtained them. Best value will be discussed between TBM and EHT before moving forward.</p>	
10	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>10.1 <u>Governor and Trustee Allowances</u></p> <p>The policy was shared with the committee prior to the meeting to review. There have been no major changes to the policy, other than to include Trustees in the wording. This policy has been agreed.</p> <p>10.2 <u>Conflict of Interest Policy</u></p> <p>The policy was shared with the committee prior to the meeting to review. This is a new policy which was suggested as best practice in the last internal audit. The policy has been written based on a model policy by TheSchoolBus and adapted based on this Trust's needs. The policy has been agreed.</p>	
11	<p><u>Risk Management</u></p> <p>EHT has made updates for the Spring term. See Confidential Minutes.</p>	
	<p><u>Date of Next meeting</u></p> <p>Thursday 11th May at 4pm</p>	
	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>None</p>	
	<p><u>Confidentiality of Proceeding</u></p> <p>11. Risk Management - Support staff pay discussion.</p>	

<u>Action Points</u>	

Minutes taken by Governance Professional, Claudia Sawyers

Signed by Chair of FSARC Committee: _____ Date: _____

Mike Ashley