

The Swanage School
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE
 Wednesday 10 May 2017, 5.30pm

Present: Isobel Tooley (Acting Chair), Geoff Atkinson, Tristram Hobson (Headteacher), Tim Marcus, Steve Parker, Catherine Starmer-Howes
 In attendance: Sue Fletcher (Clerk), Katy Kerr (Business Manager), Nicola Newman (Governor, Observer)

Item	Action	Lead	Date
FP 6.1			
FP 6.2			
FP 6.3			
FP 6.4			
<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies were received from William Knight (Chair) and Amanda Rowley.</p> <p>Declarations of Interest There were no new declarations of interest or conflict with any agenda item.</p> <p>Minutes of the Last Meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2017 were confirmed and signed.</p> <p>Matters Arising and Actions Where not elsewhere on the agenda.</p> <p><u>FP 2.9 External Auditors</u> KK reported that invitations to tender for the position of external auditor had been sent to six firms. To date, two were known to be putting in a tender with one other having expressed an interest. It was agreed that the Chair of the Finance & Premises Committee and the Responsible Officer would work with the Business Manager and Headteacher to assess the submissions and bring a recommendation forward to the next meeting.</p> <p><u>FP 5.5 Staffing</u> KK presented a paper summarising the number of non-teaching staff and benchmarking the spend per pupil for each type against similar schools (benchmark data set from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) for 2014-15 (the latest figures available) for small, sparse, rural secondary schools). She noted that half of the non-teaching staff are in educational support roles (i.e. teaching assistants and technicians), amounting to 9 full time equivalent (FTE). The other half covered administration (5 FTE), catering (2 FTE) and premises (1 FTE). Compared to the data set, the 2014-15 figures for The Swanage School were in line with or below average for all staff types. For all types except the educational support roles, the spend per pupil decreased in 2015-16 and is expected to decrease further as the school reaches capacity. This would particularly be the case for admin/clerical staff</p>	Decide on applications	KK, TH, WK, SP	Jun '17

	<p>whose number is the least sensitive to increasing student numbers. The number of teachers and educational support staff would, by contrast, increase as student numbers rise.</p> <p>It was noted that if compared to large schools, the number and spend per pupil of non-teaching staff would be relatively high, but the committee concluded that the balance appeared reasonable for the type of school.</p>			
FP 6.5	<p>Reports</p> <p>1. Premises See item FP 6.7 below.</p> <p>2. Business Manager</p> <p>i) <u>Budget monitor</u> In answer to questions, KK noted that the 12k positive variance in income to date was due to phasing of the budget not meeting the timing of the incoming payments and should even out by the end of the year. The costs of alternative provision (students being placed at a Learning Centre) was showing a negative variance against budget due to more than an expected number of students having been moved to a Learning Centre (LC) and as the LC is paid upfront for the year when the student is coming off roll at the school. The overspend on governor expenses related to the hours worked by the Clerk. The Local Government pension scheme contributions had risen by 1.4% with effect from April but this had been allowed for in the last 5-year plan. There had been an error in the coding of examination fees in 2015-16 which had led to an unrealistically low budget, resulting in this line showing a significant overspend as the likely whole year outcome.</p> <p>KK noted that the costs of supply teaching staff are set to increase by approximately 60% as, from April 2017, they must be employees rather than contractors which has consequences for spending on pensions, National Insurance and pay rates. This had re-opened thinking on whether to employ a cover supervisor and a decision had been made to advertise such a position.</p> <p>It was noted that photocopying costs had been significantly reduced against budget on the back of a cost reduction drive.</p> <p>ii) <u>Cashflow</u> A governor queried the high level of cash movement predicted for August 2017 and KK reported that this related to the profiling of the cashflow, with amounts for some budget lines shown against August</p>			

	<p>[Clerk's note: subsequent to the meeting, the Responsible Officer proposed to raise the stated authority level for opening an investment account or bond to the full governing body (FGB), in line with bank account opening. However, delegation from the FGB to the Finance & Premises Committee would be sought, for practical purposes.]</p> <p>4. Health & Safety Governor</p> <p>CS-H reported that she had met with the Premises Manager (April 2017) for the termly H&S check and a "drill-down" on first aid and medication. She had found procedures in this regard to be robust.</p> <p>There were no new or outstanding areas of concern and all areas raised during the previous audit had been looked at. Areas with ongoing actions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Ventilation to the science areas</u>: some improvement had been noticed following remedial work undertaken by Kier, however ventilation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the laboratories function effectively and that hot weather does not trigger gas shut off valves as experienced last year. - <u>Keeping all areas tidy</u>: Shelving is on order to clear-up areas of concern. - <u>Class sizes</u>: the level of comfort/heat in classrooms will be monitored in classes with larger sizes. Emergency evacuation routes had been evaluated and deemed safe. - <u>Educational Visits Co-ordinator Training</u>: is being undertaken by the Premises Manager to enable him to sign off risk assessments for trips. 			
FP 6.6	<p>Budget 2017-18 and 5-year Forecast 2017-2022</p> <p>KK presented an overview of the proposed budget and 5-year forecast. She noted that the climate in which the budget is set is uncertain, both in terms of student numbers and national funding. Student numbers were still not as high as hoped and the budget is sensitive to small changes in the number of students. The benefits expected from the National Funding Formula (NFF) looked unlikely to materialise. The NFF was currently out for consultation and assumptions on which the budget is based may well be affected by the results of this consultation or a change in government. The security of the Pupil Premium funding was also considered at possible risk from political changes as it had been protected only for the duration of the parliament.</p> <p>KK noted that the costs of delivering the curriculum to three small groups in a cohort, rather than two larger ones were sizable. Once the threshold of requiring three groups was reached and the costs committed (e.g.</p>			

	<p>teaching staff time), the rewards of economies of scale were noticed for each additional student. Delivering the curriculum to 84 students (a full cohort), for example, was therefore of significant financial benefit compared to delivering to a cohort of 65 students (the current number of applicants for Year 7 in September 2017), given that both of these cohort sizes required a three-group model. The 5-year forecast had been closely tailored to the likely student numbers in each of the next five years, as based on a percentage of the feeder primary cohort size.</p> <p>TH reported that the school was working tirelessly to increase the intake into Year 7 for 2017 and for future cohorts, and noted that this is a key strategic priority (as overseen by the Community & Engagement Committee). Primary outreach, surveys and the Local Authority transport policy were briefly discussed [see also Community & Engagement Committee minutes, 3 May 2017].</p> <p>Overall, the budget for 2017-18 showed a 95k deficit, followed by a surplus in each of the following four years of the forecast, leading to a predicted 72k surplus over the whole 5-year period. A dip in income for 2020-21 was noted, it being explained that this related to the full current Year 8 cohort having left the school and lower numbers in the primary feeder cohort in this year.</p> <p>It was confirmed the budget excludes income or expenditure relating to teaching school activities, should the school be successful in its application for teaching school status, as this would be ring-fenced. A drop in teaching load for the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher had, however, been budgeted to allow for the capacity needed to undertake teaching school duties.</p> <p>AGREED to recommend the budget and 5-year forecast to the full governing body, subject to including the projected student numbers on which the figures are based.</p> <p>Thanks were given to KK.</p>	FGB agenda	Clerk	May '17
FP 6.7	<p>Premises Annual Report</p> <p>KK presented the annual premises report, noting that the school had completed three full years in the building. She highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Defects outstanding from the original build:</u> these were now fewer and less significant, with several issues having been resolved during the year including new wing doors and remedy of the rain water leaks to the South and West elevations. The involvement of the EFA may be required to progress the resolution of the remaining issues that are disputed with Kier. These include issues with the lightening 			

	<p>protection system, drainage from the new sliding wing doors and ventilation issues in one of the Science laboratories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Solar panels</u>: these were operating well and the school is on track to gain savings of c£3K per annum. Additional savings would be achieved for the current year as some charges had been waived in recognition of the project management undertaken by the school's Premises Manager during the installation of the panels. The installation of immersion heaters is under consideration as this would allow for the heating of water from the electricity generated by the solar panels during the summer months, reducing the use of gas boilers. - <u>Lettings</u>: the contract with SchoolsPlus for the letting of the facilities was reported to be working well. - <u>Cleaning</u>: response to a tender for cleaning services had been poor, with the only quote coming from the current contractor and having risen to cover increases in the national living wage and pension costs. The viability of directly employing a team of cleaners was being considered to assess whether it would be a cost effective alternative. The floor in the drama room is being repaired/replaced due to damage caused by an incorrect cleaning product being used, the cost being met by the cleaning company's insurance. - <u>Maintenance</u>: a preventative maintenance schedule was included in the written report, and was additional to the regular maintenance/service contracts for the mechanical and electrical plant in the building. <p>Thanks were given to Gary Stone for his work in managing the premises.</p>			
FP 6.8	<p>IT Annual Report</p> <p>The committee received the annual IT report from the IT Manager. This reported that, overall, the IT provision serves the school well, is keeping pace with new technologies and has capacity to scale up. Security systems are well maintained.</p> <p>Governors were pleased to hear of the success of the infrastructure project to install the i-desks and new thin client terminals to provide a virtual desktop environment for students, noting that support time has reduced as a result and that there will be benefits in relation to hardware costs going forward.</p>			

	<p>The report noted that network storage has been challenging due to capacity and back-up issues. Various options for improving the back-up capacity are under consideration. These included moving to a cloud based solution although the cost is considered prohibitive at the current time. It was recognised that this will likely decrease over the next few years and in the longer-term cloud storage would be a preferred option.</p> <p>The IT assistant was studying for a Network Manager qualification and is increasingly taking on more complex tasks in support of the IT Manager who also handles a teaching load.</p> <p>It was noted that TM and the IT Manager were planning to meet to conduct a software audit.</p> <p>Thanks were given to Matt Walling for his work and report.</p> <p>[Tim Marcus left the meeting]</p>			
FP 6.9	<p>Catering Annual Report</p> <p>The committee received the annual catering report. KK highlighted key points, noting that the management and catering teams continue to strive to make the catering operation more efficient. They have made strides in improving its financial viability by reducing staff hours in the kitchen, reducing wasted meals, managing portion sizes, bulk buying, increasing the cost of the pizza snack, plus analysing costs and changing suppliers where merited.</p> <p>Uptake of meals remained at around 35% of students and increasing this number was seen as the key factor in improving income. The Student Council have been consulted for ideas but generally ask for options that either would not meet School Food Standards or would be difficult/costly for a small catering operation. As another means of involving students in the future of the catering on offer, it was suggested that a project for food technology students be considered, including in the project brief the need to plan a menu adhering to strict costings per meal. It was also suggested that the Community & Engagement Committee be asked to consider ways in which take-up might be improved.</p> <p>Governors noted that, in the context of increasing cost of ingredients (up by 15%), an increase in the price of meals from £2.50 to £2.60 is planned with effect from 1st January 2018. It was noted this would be the first price increase since the school opened.</p> <p>The committee thanked KK for her report.</p>	Pass to C&E	Clerk	Sept '17

FP 6.10	<p>Policies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Freedom of Information Policy</u> APPROVED the Freedom of Information Policy, noting that the updates reflected changes to the Information Commissioner’s guidelines. 2. <u>Data Protection Policy</u> APPROVED the Data Protection Policy, noting the addition of data privacy notices as an appendix. The data privacy notice had been sent out to the parents of the new Year 7 intake in the parent pack and will be emailed to current parents and staff. These had been based on standard models provided by the government. 3. <u>Investment Policy</u> SP introduced the new draft policy, noting that the parameters given in the policy were for risk averse, restrictive investments (primarily sterling denominated cash deposits). It was noted that consultation with the EFA would be required for any novel or contentious investment products, however as such products would not be permitted under the policy it was proposed that reference to this not be included in the policy, for the sake of simplicity. It was confirmed that current accounts held at the banks will inform whether other investments can be made, but were not themselves covered by the policy. <p>APPROVED the Investment Policy, subject to changing the review period to a 3-year cycle.</p>			
FGB 6.11	<p>Any Other Business None.</p>			
FGB 6.12	<p>Confidentiality It was agreed there would be no need for confidential minutes.</p>			
FGB 6.13	<p>Next Meeting Wednesday 28 June 2017, to consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budget, if required - School Development Plan end of year review - Recommendation for the appointment of auditors 			
	<p>The meeting closed at 7.15pm.</p>			