

**MINUTES OF THE 97th FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON
WEDNESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2019 AT 16.15**

Present: Dick Whitcutt (DW - Chair), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Stewart Harris (SH), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Tony Bothwell (TBO), Kevin Chamberlain (KC).

Absent: 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 RB, who could not attend due to work commitments. KC was welcomed to his first meeting of the FRC.

2. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting (11/07/19)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

5. Capital Developments

Richard Perry notified the Committee that the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) renovation had made a positive impact on Academy life. RJP showed the Committee a number of pictures of the LRC and, following discussion of outcomes of the key changes, the Committee agreed that the renovations had been a success. RJP commented that the overall cost had been some 30% higher than previously debated at FRC, but added that the majority of the additional costs were for items not included in the original estimate but were still associated with the redevelopment (including storage container costs/ crate hire/ window blinds etc.). RJP explained that the LRC area would specifically benefit pupil premium students even more than beforehand, as they were more likely to lack access to computer facilities or an appropriate learning environment at home. As a result of this, the non-capitalised costs of the project had been funded through pupil premium funding. RJP and DMI both observed that the facilities had been in use, from 7.30am (when up to 100 students make use of this before the school day starts) and after school to 5.30pm every day (4.30 on Fridays), for study hall and catch up as well as general student drop-in. Sixth Form and BTEC students had also been using the facilities throughout the Academy day and it is also booked for timetabled lessons and during registration periods. At breaks and lunchtimes, it continues to be full too.

RJP then discussed the planned refurbishment works which will help to house the extra form of entry (30 students per year across 5 years). RJP confirmed that the latest Year 7 cohort contained 240 students in 8 forms, but the new classrooms would not be needed until 2020/2021. It was expected that the project would now start to progress as there had been a number of hold ups to date largely due to the project being a smaller part of a larger pupil capacity increase initiative across a number of local schools under the LA's funding and control. RJP discussed one of his appendices, which detailed the areas in the Academy that would be refurbished in the programme. The refurbishment will create a number of new classroom spaces as well as a new conference area. The SEN department will move to F block with ARC and the Art department moving to the previous SEN area, with some re-jig of other curriculum areas.

6. Revenue Funding (2018/19)

RJP updated the Committee on last year's revenue funding situation. RJP had previously estimated that the Academy would incur a small deficit in the year of around £100,000. The Trustees had previously been aware of this through the annual budget forecasting processes and they remained content for the Academy to continue its full operations whilst running with this deficit funded through unrestricted reserves. RJP hoped that further government funding would be allocated to educational establishments in the near future, but reminded FRC members that the Academy currently has strong reserves to enable the Academy to continue to operate as it does.

RJP has started to prepare the end of year accounts and the audit process will start shortly. A draft set of the accounts will be circulated at the next meeting. They will also be shared with the Trustees at the same time in order that they can be approved and duly signed off before being sent to the ESFA.

7. Revenue Funding (2019/20) & 3 Year Revenue Budget Forecast Return

RJP discussed his 4th appendix, which was the 3-year budget return forecast that had been discussed and approved at the last meeting. RJP explained that the ESFA had been looking to strengthen the governance arrangements within Academies in general. There had been a number of changes to the required arrangements for internal audit which, for ATA, are able to be incorporated into the check currently undertaken by the Responsible Officer. Appendix 5 offered more information about the new aspects required, including a variance report. RJP added that the Academy already had in place a number of the provisions the ESFA are asking all Academies to introduce.

8. Trading Company

RJP noted that there had been an increase in Openview sports hirings, which had led to an increase in revenue. RJP added that the Spencer club had raised their maintenance costs, and that he would be liaising with them to discuss the changes.

9. Staffing Matters

RJP updated the Committee on the staff attendance reward scheme and reconfirmed the educational benefits of maintaining excellent teacher attendance, with both the financial and educational implications of classes being taken by temporary supply staff. 62.6% of all teaching staff had attended every single day of the previous academic year. 94.5% of teaching staff had received some form of attendance bonus, which is the highest percentage since the scheme's creation. RJP highlighted the fact that Associate staff also benefit from the scheme but that their overall attendance performance had historically not reached the level of teaching staff, mainly on account of the Teaching and Learning Assistants (TLAs). RJP hoped that the appointment of two Higher Level Teaching Assistants would help to support an improved attendance from TLAs at the Academy, who have often struggled to attend consistently.

The overall cost of the scheme was £100,000 inclusive of on-costs, which RJP felt provided very good value for money on many fronts. DW reminded colleagues that the net cost of the scheme was lower than stated, as the Academy saved a large amount of funds on supply staff.

RJP explained that every departing member of staff has the opportunity to fill out an exit questionnaire and also to meet with RJP. RJP showed the Committee an example of the questionnaire which highlighted the most common answers and included the comments received from exiting staff members. RJP and DMI had discussed the responses to the questions to see if any consistent concerns had been raised. This was then taken to Leadership Group for further generic discussion. RJP noted that, overall, the majority of the replies were positive; however, some questionnaires did offer surprises and inspired some changes in processes.

10. Pay Reviews 2019/20

RJP talked the Committee through the appendices to his report which had outlined to the Trustee Remuneration Committee the anticipated staffing costs for 2019/20 based upon staffing changes across the summer and standard pay progression entitlements for others able to benefit from incremental progression. Incorporated into these calculations had been the, now confirmed, national pay awards for teaching that had been set at 2.75% across the board and, for the associate staff, largely set at 2.0% for most pay grades, but at reasonably higher amounts for a number of the lower grades. The latter were based upon replicating provision within local government, as had been past practice. RJP added that the 2% for associate staff would work out closer to 2.5% when allowing for the greater increases for the lower paid staff.

As a result, the Trustee Remuneration Committee had agreed with the calculations arrived at and to the additional request for allowing up to 1% above the calculated cost of £8.26 million.

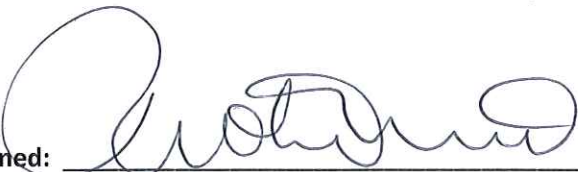
In using this as the benchmark, DMI informed FRC members that he would wish to restrict two members of staff from incremental progression this academic year. He explained the subject areas for the two concerned and that one was likely to be subject to internal procedures going forward. The other would potentially be able to apply for moving to the upper pay spine, but their performance did not warrant this. The FRC questioned whether the individuals should also be prevented from receiving the national pay award, as was possible nowadays under freedoms given to governing bodies. DMI had considered this, but felt that the restriction suggested was sufficient in both circumstances.

He then asked the FRC to agree to the accelerated pay progression of two members of staff and again explained the subject areas they worked within and described how both went significantly beyond their respective job roles and gave much to the Academy in its wider extra-curricular perspective. Both were recommended for a double-jump in terms of incremental progression. The Chair of the FRC asked whether this was the preferred route or whether a one-off bonus would be sufficient. DMI responded that whilst a bonus did provide one-off recognition, both individuals had consistently gone well beyond the expectations of them. He wished to reward them for this and the award of a double-increment would hopefully act as a retention tool also.

The FRC agreed with all the individual recommendations made above and also resolved that all other staff subject to this review would receive the national pay awards declared above and, where relevant, incremental progression within their appropriate scale.

11. Any Other Business

No other business was raised and the meeting concluded at 17:15

Signed: 

Richard Whitcutt
Chair of Finance & Resources Committee

Date: 11 / 12 / 2019

**PROSPECT EDUCATION (TECHNOLOGY) TRUST LTD
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
TO BE HELD WEDNESDAY 11 DECEMBER 2019 AT
17:30 IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM**

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting**
- 3. Matters arising**
- 4. Principal's report**
- 5. Current developments for discussion:**
 - a. ARC report (Douglas Mitchell)**
 - b. Safeguarding (Phil Hall)**
- 6. Vice Principal's report**
- 7. Any Other Business**

