

THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE ELIOT BANK AND GORDONBROCK PRIMARY SCHOOLS FEDERATION

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held on Thursday, 11 October 2018 at 6.30 p.m. at Gordonbrock Primary School

PRESENT

Mr P. Fidel	Chair for the meeting
Ms M. Gilmore	Executive Headteacher
Ms K. Knowles	
Ms H. Lyttle	

Also present

Ms A. Carter	Senior Admin Officer, Gordonbrock
Ms S. McAllister	Federation Business Manager
Mr M. Ridler	Head of School, Eliot Bank
Ms J. Wright	Head of School, Gordonbrock
Mrs J. Woods	Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received with consent from Ms Branch, Mr Bremner, and Mr Hayles.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Governors were reminded that they must declare conflicts and pecuniary interests before items were discussed, and must withdraw from the meeting while the item was under discussion.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR 2018/19

The Clerk took the Chair and invited nominations and self nominations for a governor to serve as Chair for the new academic year. Mr Bremner had indicated that he would be willing to continue as Chair, and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that he be elected as Chair of the Resources Committee for 2018/19.

In Mr Bremner's absence, Mr Fidel chaired the meeting.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee carried out the annual review of their terms of reference. It was pointed out that membership of the Committee should also include the Senior Admin Officer. No other changes were proposed, and it was therefore **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference be approved and commended to the Governing Body for ratification.

5. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 April 2018 be approved as a correct record.

There were no matters arising which were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

6. TO AGREE THE BUSINESS FOR THE MEETING

The order in which items were to be discussed and those items which would be considered as urgent business was agreed upon.

7. 2018/19 BUDGET UPDATES

Copies of the budget vs actual report, summary report, and narrative had been circulated for both schools.

(a) Eliot Bank

The Committee considered variations to the income since the last meeting.

I01 – Nursery funding

Ms McAllister informed governors that there were 16 full time DfE funded places this year, and 22 part time DfE funded places, which was a slight increase from last year.

I03 – SEND funding

It was noted that an additional £3,228 had been included in the budget for a child whose EHCP had been increased from Band C to D.

I105 – Pupil Premium

A total of £110,800 had been received for Pupil Premium funding this year, which was £13,120 more than had been anticipated. Ms McAllister explained that this amount was made up of £1,320 for each of 70 children, and the higher rate of £2,300 for each of the post looked after children. Mr Fidel asked the reason for the increased income. Ms McAllister said that this was largely due to a higher number of post looked after children at the school than had been expected.

I106 – Other government grants – NCTL

Governors were reminded that the school would no longer receive the grant of £6,000 because Eliot Bank was no longer a national support school following Mrs Palmer's retirement.

I108 – Income – facilities and services

Funding of £15,446 had been received from the local authority, which included funding for Mrs Palmer's outreach work and reimbursement from Gordonbrock for joint services. It was noted that the income received for Mrs Palmer's work had been passed on to her.

I13 – Income donations

The School Fund reimbursement so far was £10,007.64, and the EBSA contribution so far was £8,517.23, which was being used for books, dictionaries, PE curriculum week, and percussion instruments for the playground.

I17 – Community focused school facilities income

Reimbursement of £469 had been received from Kelvin Grove for their share of the intruder alarm and maintenance for the children Centre.

I18 – Additional grant

Ms McAllister explained that £217 less funding had been received than anticipated for Universal Infant Free School Meals, but this would be offset by the amount to be paid.

Expenditure

The Committee then considered variations in expenditure since the last meeting.

E01 – Teaching staff

Ms McAllister informed governors that expenditure on the teaching staff budget had not yet reached 50% because the national pay increases had not yet been paid. These would be payable in November, and would be backdated to September. All of the pay awards which were being considered by the Pay Committee later that evening had been included in the budget plan, and by the next meeting, the budget should be showing at the expected percentage spend.

E04 – Premises staff

There had been an overspend of £10,668 due to overtime claims from March to July. Ms McAllister said that she had now asked the premises staff to submit claims on a half termly or monthly basis as some claims had been made across two years.

E08 – Indirect employee expenses

This budget was overspent by £10,668 as a result of recruitment advertising. Ms McAllister said that the school had needed to use recruitment agencies this year to recruit both teaching and support staff. The picture at Gordonbrock was similar, but it had been possible to agree reductions of around £2,000 as a result of negotiation with the agencies.

Ms Lyttle asked whether NQTs were being recruited through agencies. Ms Gilmore said that NQTs were not tending to apply directly for jobs and were increasingly being placed through agencies. Ms Lyttle suggested that it might be possible for the Federation to make contact with the universities to recruit NQTs directly, and Ms Gilmore said that she was happy to explore this. The Federation did not advertise in the TES often because of the expense involved, and used Jobs Go Public. Ms McAllister said that new teachers who were appointed directly now expected a recruitment and retention package, and she had reached agreement with some experienced teachers to pay them for two weeks over the summer holiday; she stressed that this arrangement was only agreed with teachers who were not currently being paid and there was no question of double paying.

E09 – Staff development and training

The budget for this year was slightly overspent for the cost of the subscription to the Key. However, the school had been able to make savings in the longer term by entering into a three year contract, and there would be no cost for the next two financial years.

E13 – Grounds maintenance and improvement

There was an overspend in this budget because of the cost of cleaning and maintenance for the pond which had not been included in the budget. This would be a recurring cost in future years.

E22 – Admin supplies

The budget appeared to be overspent at present, but there would be a re-charge to Gordonbrock for the cost of two of the premises staff phone contracts.

E26 – Agency support staff

It was noted that there was an overspending of £1,591.20 for SEN support, because of delays in EHCPs being agreed. However, no further expenditure was anticipated.

The school had also paid for additional days for the maternity cover teacher to come in for INSET days and some work during the summer.

E27 – Bought in professional services – curriculum

An additional training session on specific learning difficulties had been bought in for £495.

E28 – Bought in professional services – other

Governors were informed that there was an overspending of £740 for health and safety because the school had agreed to a two year contract which would mean that there would be no expenditure in 2019/20.

There was an overspend of £4,056.25 for Federation consultancy work, but reimbursement was awaited from the School Improvement Team.

Ms McAllister reminded governors that no budget had been set for the performance team service because Lewisham had agreed that this would be provided free of charge this year in return for the work that she had carried out. However, a charge had been made in error, and Ms McAllister was pursuing reimbursement.

Budget summary

The Committee then considered the budget summary. Ms McAllister said that she expected all budgets to be spent in full. She said that it had been possible to make savings

of £41,000 as a result of restructuring, which had reduced the in-year deficit, and would give a year on year reduction. By the third year, the school would face a huge funding cut, but she hoped that it may be possible to avoid going into deficit. Assuming that all of the budget was spent by the end of the year, there would be a surplus of £295,796 to be carried forward to the 2019/20 financial year.

The balance in the capital budget was lower than anticipated because of the extra expenditure on the boilers.

Mr Fidel asked for more information on the delay to the EHCPs referred to above. Ms McAllister said that they had only taken one or two weeks longer than expected, and had all been agreed at the end of term; however, it had been necessary to pay the supply staff until 23 July and the EHCPs were not backdated to the date of application.

The gift declarations for both schools had been discussed and signed off by Ms Gilmore. Governors were reminded that if members of staff received gifts above £50, this had to be declared and was entered onto a spreadsheet. Ms Gilmore said that this was included in the staff code of conduct and was intended to safeguard staff from allegations of impropriety. Some staff received gifts of £70-210 from parents, and she scrutinised the spreadsheet and signed it off, and it was then available for the auditor to inspect.

(b) Gordonbrock

The Committee then discussed the budget documents for Gordonbrock and noted variations in the income and expenditure.

I05 – Pupil Premium

An additional £44,760 had been received since the budget had been set, £17,160 was Pupil Premium funding and £27,600 was for looked after children, of whom there were currently 12 at the school. Ms Carter said that she always erred on the side of caution when setting this area of the budget because it was very difficult to predict how many children in the new Reception intake would be eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

I07 – Other grants and payments

An additional £2,000 had been received for Ms Gilmore's school improvement work. Ms Carter said that an identified sum of £3,809 had been received from Lewisham, which she thought was from the Virtual School for looked after children. This had been ring fenced in the budget until clarification had been received.

I08 – Facilities and services

£5,149.50 had been received in nursery contributions from the previous academic year for parents who had paid for additional hours, and additional income would be received this year for a further place which was being paid for. Ms Carter said that here were currently two vacancies in the nursery, which was an improvement on last year, and it was hoped to make offers for these places in the near future.

Ms Carter drew the Committee's attention to the budget vs actual report which showed an outstanding amount of £18,000 under I08-2006. She explained that this related to a member of staff who had been seconded to work for one of the trades unions, and whose salary had been paid by Lewisham. The member of staff had now been promoted to president of the branch, and despite emailing Lewisham repeatedly and an approach from Mrs Palmer, the outstanding amount had still not been reimbursed. It was **RESOLVED** that Mr Fidel would write to Lewisham HR to express the Governing Body's concern at the delay in making this payment.

Expenditure

E07 – Cost of other staff

The midday meals budget was underspent because of the outstanding vacancies which had to be filled. Two new members of staff had been recruited and clearance was awaited, but there were still three more vacancies. Ms Carter said that it was proving very difficult to recruit to these posts, and in the meantime teaching assistants were being used to cover half hour slots. Ms Gilmore said that consideration may be given to moving to the Eliot Bank model where teaching assistants were told when they were recruited that their duties would include lunchtime supervision.

E08 – Indirect employee expenses

As mentioned earlier, the recruitment budget for Gordonbrock was also overspent due to the large proportion of teachers who went to agencies rather than applying direct to schools.

Ms Carter explained that the DBS budget showed a negative figure, but this was because the school had been overcharged last term and had subsequently been reimbursed by Lewisham.

The school meal charges had not been received from Lewisham, but were often received very late.

E13 – Grounds maintenance

This budget was slightly overspent, and was likely to exceed the allocation by £100 at the end of the year.

E16 – Water and sewage

A bill had been received for charges going back to 2016, after a long period without any charge. Ms Carter said that she thought the bill was probably accurate, but would check it and report back to the next meeting. She said that a further two quarterly bills would be received before the end of the year which would mean an overspending in the budget.

E16 – Energy

The fuel oil account was over spent. Ms Carter said that the school had not spent much on the biomass boiler last year because it had been out of action for so much of the time, which had led to under budgeting this year, and another container of wood chips would be needed.

E19 – Learning resources

It was noted that the school trips budget was overspent but this would be adjusted as money was transferred from school funds. The departmental budgets were underspent, but Ms Carter reminded governors that the main expenditure for this budget took place in the spring term.

E27/28 – Service level agreements

A number of the agreements were charged at various points in the year, and should all be fully spent by the end of March.

KCE04 – Capital

It was noted that a refund of £400 had been received for an interactive TV which had been installed without a stand.

Ms Carter said that she expected the in-year deficit would be reduced from the prediction of £83,675 to £29,956.27 by the end of the year, with a predicted surplus of £592,507.73, which would put the school in a good position for the new financial year.

Ms Gilmore thanked Ms McAllister and Ms Carter for their detailed budget presentations. She also apologised for the late circulation of the budget documents, but said that as this had been her first meeting at Executive Headteacher, she had wanted to scrutinise the reports in greater detail before they were shared with governors.

8. 2019/20 BUDGETS AND THREE YEAR BUDGET PLANS

Preliminary discussion of the 2019/20 budget had been included in item 7 above. Ms McAllister said that the budget monitoring plans for both schools would be presented to Mr Fidel for signature.

9. STAFFING ISSUES

(a) Eliot Bank

Mr Ridler gave a summary of staff changes since May. These included Mrs Palmer's retirement, and the resignation of the Assistant Headteacher who had moved to Scotland. Four class teachers had left; one of whom had relocated to New Zealand and another to Leeds.

Three teaching assistants had left. One had become a School Direct trainee and had been placed within the Federation, and one had joined the Police Force.

Mr Ridler informed the Committee that Mary Quin had been appointed to the Assistant Headteacher vacancy following an internal advertisement. Three class teachers had been appointed, one of whom had provided maternity cover at the school last year.

One teaching assistant appointment had been made, and vacancies for morning and lunchtime teaching assistants were currently being covered by agency staff. A one to one classroom assistant had been appointed, as well as a nursery midday supervisor.

Mr Ridler said that the Arts Team Leader role had not yet been filled. Two staff were currently sharing the role but the Teaching and Learning Responsibility payment had not been allocated, although the two members of staff were sharing the monetary equivalent. It was the intention that a permanent appointment would be made to this role at the end of the academic year.

It was noted that Emma Tighe would be returning from maternity leave and would be job sharing in Reception from January. Another teacher would be starting maternity leave at the end of the month.

(b) Gordonbrock

Ms Wright gave an update on staff changes since June.

Two midday supervisors had been appointed; their DBS checks had been completed and references were awaited. It had been hoped, however, to recruit five midday supervisors

Governors were reminded that Nicki Connelly had been appointed as Deputy Headteacher from 1 September. The phase leaders from the Early Years and Lower Key Stage 2 were both going on maternity leave, together with one of the learning support assistants. A teacher, who had previously worked as the Early Years Phase Leader, had returned from maternity leave, and was covering this post this year. Ms Wright said that two strong teachers who were in a job share arrangement were covering the Years 3/4 Phase Leader post, and had both worked as phase leaders in the past.

One of the teaching assistants, who had worked in the Breakfast Club, had retired, and one of the learning support assistants had resigned on the last day of the summer term to study. A learning support assistant and a teaching assistant had resigned this term, and both were

being covered by agency staff. A teaching assistant would be returning from maternity leave in January.

10. BENCHMARKING DATA

The benchmarking information was not yet available, and discussion was therefore postponed to the next meeting.

11. PREMISES AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

The Committee welcomed Glen Goode to the meeting. Mr Goode highlighted areas from his detailed premises report, which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The report included an update on all statutory requirements, health and safety issues, and other building works or premises projects, together with information on recent fire and lockdown drills at both schools.

Mr Goode informed the Committee that there had been ongoing issues with the cleaning contract, which had started in March. Regular meetings had taken place with the contractor, at which concerns had been raised that the specification was not being met. Standards had been set for the summer deep clean, but this had not been carried out to the specification. Mr Fidel had attended the last meeting, and had made it clear that the company's charges were being scrutinised and the situation was being monitored closely. A further meeting was due to take place in the next few weeks

Ms McAllister said that she had anticipated that there would be a slight increase to the cost, but a substantial bill had been received. However, a discrepancy had been noticed in the claims made by the cleaners, and £2,000 had been deducted from the bill. There was still an overspent for the summer clean, but Ms McAllister said that this was not all the fault of the cleaning contractor.

It was proposed that the situation should be monitored and reviewed termly, and it was noted that it would only be necessary to give one month notice if it was decided to terminate the service because the school had a one month rolling contract. Ms Gilmore pointed out that it would be costly to change contractors; she said that she needed to prioritise her new role and she did not feel it was the best time to recruit a new company. She said that the company had been warned that the contract would be terminated if the service did not improve.

Eliot Bank

Mr Goode updated governors on the work that had taken place at Eliot Bank over the summer. The redecoration programme had continued, although it had been reduced slightly

The boilers had been replaced in the main boiler room during the summer. The start of the work had been delayed as a result of issues with asbestos removal. Mr Goode had discussed the delay with the contractor and had stressed that the school must have hot water by the end of August. It had been agreed that hot water could be provided via immersion heaters until the work to the boilers could be completed. There had been ongoing issues from the start of September, and meetings had taken place with the contractor, which had been attended by the local authority. There had been some days when the school had been without hot water and it had almost been necessary to close the kitchen on one occasion. Mr Goode said that the Premises Team always tried to keep the schools open at all costs, and the heating was being controlled manually on a day to day basis at present, which was stressful for the Team. The main concern expressed in the precontract meetings was that the new boilers were being connected to old pipework, and it may be necessary to make a bid for capital funding to replace the internal pipework.

Ms Gilmore said that this had been a highly stressful issue for the premises staff and Senior Leadership Team, and she had reported the stress and strains to Lewisham. Ms McAllister had asked Lewisham for reimbursement for the extra Premises Team time which had been spent trying to overcome the problems, and this had been agreed in principle.

It was noted that the school had to make a contribution of £5,000 towards the cost of the boiler replacement. Ms McAllister informed the Committee that Lewisham prioritised capital works in

schools, and those who were not in a deficit position were now required to make a small contribution towards the cost.

Mr Goode informed the Committee that there was an issue with the corrugated roof to the Year 3 block which was leaking. Ms McAllister said that the local authority was currently looking at the 2019/20 capital programme, and an urgent request for funding towards the cost of this work would be made.

Gordonbrock

An extremely intense and intrusive conditions survey had been conducted at Gordonbrock by Capita on behalf of the Education Skills Funding Agency. No feedback had been received yet, but a report would be made to the DfE in due course.

12. SCHOOLS FINANCIAL VALUE STANDARD (SFVS)

Ms McAllister said that she and Ms Carter would be meeting the finance link governors later in the term to discuss budget monitoring, and a further meeting would take place between January and March to go through the SFVS documentation, which would need to be returned to the local authority by 28 February 2019. It was agreed that Ms McAllister would contact Mr Bremner or Mr Fidel, and Ms Carter would contact Mr Hayles.

13. GOVERNORS' VISITS

Mr Fidel informed governors that the Strategic Group had agreed that reports on governors' visits should be removed from committee agenda to avoid repetition at the Governing Body.

14. URGENT BUSINESS

It was noted that the annual health and safety self monitoring checklist should be available in December.

Finance package

Ms McAllister reminded governors that the Federation had used Wauton Samuel for a number of years for the provision of financial and pupil data. The company had stopped their pupil data system two years earlier, and the schools had since used the Scholarpack MIS system. However, Wauton Samuel had now decided to discontinue their finance package from 1 April 2019, and discussions had taken place over the summer on alternatives.

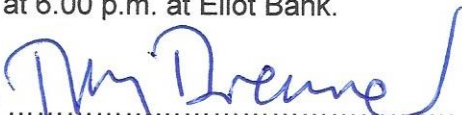
It had not proved possible for Lewisham Finance to operate a finance system, and four alternative providers had been identified. School Business Managers had attended a number of presentations to hear about the options. Ms McAllister had been impressed initially by the packages which were on offer from HCSS and SIMS, and she outlined the costs of both systems and the benefits. She had found HCSS to be rather pushy, and some of their information had been misleading in respect of the number of schools who had signed up for their package. Although the SIMS package had been more expensive, Ms McAllister had been able to negotiate a reduction which was sufficient to justify the cost. The price would be fixed for five years, and would be index linked. She said that SIMS had a comprehensive MIS system, and the reports were approved by Lewisham Finance, which was not the case with HCSS, and she believed the level of support would be much better. Some schools had chosen to use the HCSS system, and there would therefore be a division among the schools in the Borough.

After careful consideration, it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendation to sign up to the SIMS financial management package with effect from 1 April 2019 would be approved.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Governors were reminded that the next meeting had been scheduled for Thursday, 7 February 2019 at 6.00 p.m. at Eliot Bank.

Chair



Date

7 Feb 2019