

THE BEECHES PRIMARY SCHOOL
MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Wednesday 12th July 2017 at 6:15pm

MINUTES

Present: Adrian Holdstock (Chair), Tim Smith (Headteacher), Bill Peasley

In Attendance: Neil Burford (Finance Manager), Suzanne Arnold (Clerk)

1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed those present. Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Humaira Bhabha and Helen Marsden.

2 Declaration of Interest

The Chair, Adrian Holdstock, recorded his employment as vicar of St Mark's Church, which received payment from the school for staff car parking spaces.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2017 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed as such by the Chair.

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Safeguarding governor contact details

It was confirmed that a school e-mail address had been set up for the nominated governor for safeguarding, Bill Peasley, with an automatic forward to Bill's personal e-mail address.

4.2 SEND

Bill Peasley confirmed that he had written to the local authority SEND Department in his capacity as Chair of the Governing Body, to express concern at delays in Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) processes for children at the school. It appeared that a delay for one of the children would shortly be resolved; the Deputy Headteacher would be asked to provide an update at the next meeting.

4.3 Rental arrangements for school carpark

The Headteacher advised that he spoken to the local authority to express concern that the school had no formal contract for rental of the car park space. Governors agreed that it was essential that the position was clarified regarding the status of the land; this would be particularly relevant if/when the school converted to academy status.

It was confirmed that, currently, the local authority was refunding the school for the rental charge for the carpark, under a six-year agreement.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Chair of the committee would draft a letter to the local authority requesting clarification in terms of ownership and rental of the land.

Action: Chair of committee to draft letter to local authority (Brian Howard) in consultation with Headteacher and Finance Manager, requesting clarification of the status of the carpark land.

5 IT Project

The Finance Manager advised the committee of the outcome of negotiations with Think IT regarding renewal of the IT contract. The proposal was that the original three-year contract should be concluded at this stage (i.e after one year) to be replaced by a new three year contract. The new contract would result in cost savings and additional resources for the school. Governors discussed the detail of the new contract, which included refreshing or renewing laptops, additional technical support and additional training sessions for staff. SMART software licencing was also included in the new contract, to support

the school's teaching boards; this would be provided free of charge for the first year.

The new contract would result in a saving to the school of approximately £7,000 against the sum budgeted.

In response to governor questions the Headteacher and Finance Manager confirmed that the quality of service provided by Think IT had improved considerably since the appointment of a new project manager. **Governors asked whether the initial project had now been fully delivered** and it was confirmed that this was the case, with some minor exceptions.

Governors asked whether there were alternative options to renewing the contract with Think IT and were advised that the school was free to find an alternative provider, or to negotiate a different deal with Think IT.

In response to governor questions the Headteacher and Finance Manager confirmed that their recommendation was to renew the contract with Think IT, for a further three years and in accordance with the specification as discussed. The cost for the initial year was £48,600, and the cost for year 2 and year 3 was £46,600 for each year. **In response to governor questions** it was confirmed that the funds had been included in the agreed budget, and that the contract could be reviewed if the school's requirements changed, for example due to any academy conversion.

Governors approved the recommendation to enter into a fresh three-year contract with Think IT.

Later in the meeting governors held a telephone conversation with the project manager from Think IT, Nigel Hall. Nigel confirmed the details of the contract and confirmed that the new arrangement would result in enhancements to the provision, and cost savings for the school. The Chair thanked Mr Hall for his work for the school.

6 Finance

- 6.1 The budget vs commitment report for the first financial quarter had been circulated, with a detailed annotated budget report showing proposed budget revisions.
- 6.2 Governors were advised that income had increased in comparison with the original budget for SEND and for the pupil premium.
- 6.3 Additional funds had been received for reimbursement for the work of the Headteacher on union duties.
- 6.4 Additional expenditure had been budgeted for implementation of the Maths No Problem programme, subject to committee approval.

The Headteacher provided details of the Maths No Problem programme, which the school had identified as a way of addressing the underperformance at the school in maths reasoning, as evidenced by SATs outcomes for 2017. The programme was based on an international scheme and had operated as a pilot in several schools. In Peterborough, Eye Primary School had implemented the programme with excellent results.

Purchase of the programme would include all resources, including text books for the children, and comprehensive training for teachers, including online training resources. The Headteacher noted that the cost of the programme could be balanced against the savings the school would make in terms of training for maths, as well as savings through discontinuance of other maths interventions and subscriptions, and incidental costs such as printing and photocopying.

Governors asked about the cost of the programme in subsequent years and were advised that the initial start-up cost of £22,000 would be followed by an annual charge of £13,000, for continuing subscription and updated resources.

Governors asked about staff views and were advised that a group of teachers had visited Eye Primary School to observe the programme in action and had reported very positive opinions about the potential value of the programme to The Beeches. Governors emphasised that the approach could only prove successful if all staff were committed to it. The Headteacher confirmed that implementation of the

programme would be a non-negotiable for all staff at the school, and that staff were conscious that radical action was necessary to address the issues identified in this year's SATs outcomes for maths. Although the programme came at significant cost, there were costs to the school's current maths provision in terms of resources and interventions, and these savings would partially offset the new outlay.

Governors asked whether the Curriculum and Standards Committee had expressed their views on the scheme and were advised that this had not been possible due to time constraints, however, the scheme had been introduced and discussed at the meeting of the full governing body held on 5th July. The Headteacher emphasised that the school's professional days in September would be utilised for training for the scheme. Governors asked whether sufficient time capacity would be available for comprehensive staff training for the programme and were advised that staff meeting time would be utilised through the year, in addition to the autumn training days. Support for planning and training videos would also be available to all staff online.

Governors asked how the impact of the programme would be monitored and were advised that this would be through the normal monitoring process for pupil achievement and standards, and may also include monitoring by the local authority if the school's outcomes triggered a letter of concern.

Following discussion, the committee approved a revision to the budget to include the expenditure for the Maths No Problem programme. Governors asked that savings in other areas achieved through implementation of the programme should be monitored and reported, for example printing costs, training, and costs of other maths subscriptions.

- 6.5 The Headteacher advised that arrangements had been made for secondment of the SENCo to support another school. This would result in increased income for the school. Two other members of staff had undertaken training for covering the SENCo role at The Beeches. The secondment was for a one-year period.
- 6.6 The budget included an additional level 3 Teaching Assistant (TA), as requested by the Deputy Headteacher/SENCo Helen Marsden.
- 6.7 Funds had been newly allocation in the budget for the employee assistance programme, as this would no longer be provided through the local authority from November 2017.
- 6.8 The Finance Manager advised that, taking the budget revisions into account, the school's outturn would be positive; however, a deficit budget was indicated in-year, supported by the surplus from previous years.

Governors recognised that deficit budgets were not sustainable in the longer term, and asked for an indication to be provided to the autumn term meeting of savings in other budget lines achieved through implementation of Maths No Problem, as well as areas where other costs could be reduced as a way of addressing the deficit.

- 6.9 Financial Decisions Requiring Committee Approval
The Chair summarised that the following financial decisions had been approved by the committee:
- Staff secondment
 - New three-year contract with Think IT
 - Maths No Problem

7 Staffing Update

- 7.1 The Headteacher advised that an apprentice had been appointed to work in the school office.
- 7.2 The Headteacher advised that a level 2 TA had been promoted to level 3 for the support of high needs children due to join the school in September. Consideration would be given as to whether the resulting level 2 vacancy would be filled. It was suggested that the school could consider recruitment of an apprentice TA.
- 7.3 Bill Peasley reported that he had carried out some exit interviews with staff who were leaving the school at the end of term; no significant issues had been raised and interviewees had expressed positive views

about the school's governors.

8 Premises Report

- 8.1 The Finance Manager referred to his Premises Report to the Resources Committee, copies of which had been circulated.

It was confirmed that work to the Reception hatch had been completed under warranty, and that staff toilets had been refurbished. A new school bell had been installed.

Planned projects for the summer holidays were reported.

- 8.2 In response to governor questions it was confirmed that additional carpark spaces had been installed, in the main carpark and adjacent to the community room, as previously agreed.

- 8.3 The Finance Manager confirmed that asbestos removal had been completed at the front of the school and in the disabled lift shaft. Further asbestos remained at the back of the school and removal of this would be arranged by Peterborough City Council for a date to be confirmed.

- 8.4 **Governors asked about the safety of cladding on the building** and were advised that the Finance Manager had completed a survey to provide information to the DfE about the school's cladding, and including information on the number of floors in the building, and dates and outcomes of fire risk assessments.

In response to governor questions the Finance Manager advised that the most recent fire risk assessment had identified that work needed to take place on the lightning conductor; this work would be arranged by Peterborough City Council.

- 8.5 **Governors asked for an update to be provided to the next meeting regarding progress on the asbestos removal, and the lightning conductor.**

- 8.6 Copies of the Asset Management Plan were circulated. It was confirmed that the Plan included reference to the lightning conductor, and that an addition would be made to include the removal of the remaining asbestos.

Action: Finance Manager to update Asset Management Plan to include removal of remaining asbestos.

- 8.7 It was confirmed that an overhanging tree in a neighbouring property was to be removed.

9 Lock Down Procedures: Update

Governors asked whether a drill had taken place for the school's lock down procedures and were advised that this was to be arranged for the autumn term. The Finance Manager updated governors, advising that the new school bell had been installed, which allowed for different tones and tunes to be programmed for different messages, including one specifically for lockdown. Locks had been fitted to classroom doors. Blinds were due to be installed.

Governors asked whether systems were in place to cope with a large volume of calls into the school if any incident were to take place, for example if there were an incident during a school trip. The Headteacher advised that comprehensive risk assessments were undertaken for all off-site visits, and that processes included arrangements for trip leaders to keep in regular contact with the school. Parents of children on a trip were issued with an emergency contact number.

Governors discussed contact procedures with the school in a lock down situation and were advised that the school's procedures for lock down were to be notified to parents, and that parents could be provided with information via social media following any incident.

10 Review of Policies

- 10.1 Data Protection Policy

The Data Protection Policy had been reviewed by the Finance Manager and circulated to governors, with changes highlighted. In response to governor questions the Finance Manager confirmed that the policy would be issued to staff following its approval by governors. The committee approved the Data

Protection Policy.

10.2 Staff Leave of Absence Policy

The Staff Leave of Absence Policy had been previously circulated and was based on a model policy issued by EPM. The committee approved the Staff Leave of Absence Policy.

10.3 Staff Induction Policy

Postponed to the next meeting.

11 Any Other Business

11.1 The committee approved renewal of the school's subscription to the Peterborough Clerking Service.

(The Finance Manager left the meeting at this point)

11.2 See separate confidential minutes

12 Date of Next Meeting

Agreed as Thursday 19th October 2017 at 6:15pm

The Chair closed the meeting at 8:10pm.