

MINUTES



Noadswood

BOARD: Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

SCHOOL: Noadswood School

DATE: Monday 8th November 2021

TIME: 19:00hrs – 21:30hrs

VENUE: Remotely – via Teams

ATTENDED:

Tim Sunderland (TS)	Chair of the F.A.R. Committee
Kathryn Marshall (KM)	Headteacher
Helen Sanderson (HS)	Parent trustee

ATTENDING:

Matt Abbott	left the meeting at 20:18
Sheryl Cardwell (SC)	Interim BM left the meeting at 20:18
Angie Drabble (AD)	CFO
Matt Hewitt (MH)	Deputy Headteacher
Sam Lock (SL)	Internal scrutineer left the meeting at 20:18
Steven Pike (SP)	Staff representative left the meeting at 20:18
Luke Wells (LW)	IT Manager left the meeting at 19:43
Louise Instone	Clerk

The Code of Conduct for Governors requires governors to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Governors must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a governor who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked * are those in which a majority of Governors may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Governors should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as governors and to act in the public interest.

Item	
1	Welcome and Apologies: Those present were welcomed by the Chair.
2	Procedural items: 2.1 Apologies for absence Lisa Taylor has decided to step down from this committee to ensure she can fulfil her roles fully on the other committees. Paul Goater and Neil Cotton, didn't attend the meeting. 2.2 Confirmation of Quorum (3 Trustees, one of which must be the Head Teacher or appointed representative) The meeting was confirmed as quorate throughout 2.3 Declarations of interest No pecuniary or personal interests were advised for any agenda item for this meeting
3	Any Other Business: Nothing to be added
4	Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting 17 th June 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.
	Matters Arising from the Minutes: See update of matters arising at the end of the minutes.
5	Correspondence: To note any correspondence received by the Trust / Chair No correspondence was received by the Trust / Chair to be discussed.



6

IT Strategic Document (Part 2 from GPC)

LW advised that documents have been added to the GovernorHub for review by Trustees

LW summarised the document and explained various issues in detail.

IT have reviewed the age of a lot of the equipment, some items have been replaced but some will need updating.

Wireless infrastructure is used around the whole school with all the applications. It affects how effectively equipment can be used.

Need to look at what the school has and how it is being used. Is it fit for purpose and how is the school investing in the future? How will it affect the Teaching & Learning of the future.

LW considered that staff are well trained in how to use the equipment and software.

Some areas of the school DT/Science have what they need and it is running well, however, other areas like PE may need some of their equipment replacing or maybe they would prefer an alternative source of IT?

One of the main issues coming up will be the suite of iMacs in the Music department. They are all out of warranty. If replaced like for like they will be £800 each for logic pro. This is something that needs to be thought about. Do we invest in this or look for something cheaper?

Wireless – this has been in school for over 8 years. Previously a support agreement has been renewed each year but “HP” have advised that they will no longer support this as from the end of November. To mitigate this, we have purchased another controller, configured all of that so we now have a backup so if the other one fails it will move over to the new one. This current wireless system can no longer be developed as there is no support. Service points are another issue around school. There are some areas of school, for example the Art Department that couldn’t use a suite of laptops in the area. DT and Science were covered well 10 years ago but now every dept wants to use IT at this level. Access points aren’t necessarily in the right places. We need to do a full refresh with access points in each of the learning spaces.

LW explained he has arranged for an independent survey of the whole site to be done and the results can then be given to each company looking to quote. They will all then be able to quote for the same set up.

The School House runs on a different system so if students bring their laptop to main building they have to log in again.

Q Trustees asked what does the school need?

A Wireless upgrade without a doubt

Q What does the curriculum require you to have by subject?

MH explained the equipment and infrastructure currently in place does work. It is about making sure the kit they have is up to scratch. While it is currently working it is aging and there needs to be a plan in place to refresh it.

LW explained when it was first set up in Science and DT that was what was needed but now English want to use IT for their Media Studies and Reading plus and PE want to use IT. There are access points around school that give light coverage but you couldn’t use a suite of laptops with it. Upstairs in the main block there is very little in the way of wireless coverage because at the time it wasn’t necessary but things change all the time.

Q What you are proposing is needed across the whole school?



LW explained there is access across the whole school but it is the volume being used at once. They have what they need in DT and Science but that isn't the experience in other areas.

MH explained students need to use the laptops and chrome books wherever they are. WiFi needs to be accessible across the whole school with enough coverage. Teachers' expectations are higher and students need to be able to access the network.

SP asked what was the IT strategy for staff and renewing laptops?

LW – in order to save money it was decided to stop renewing laptops every 3 years some while ago. Some staff use their laptop all the time while others not at all. This is open to review.

SP asked when a review may take place?

KM explained this would be a conversation for SLT and would review the impact for colleagues and the curriculum.

MH explained a lot of staff now already have their own laptops, there are fewer staff asking for a laptops.

LW explained staff have got used to being told they wouldn't be getting a new laptop so they have stopped asking.

MH explained previously when staff use of laptops at home was analysed, some weren't being used at all. Must make sure they are being used properly by staff. Strategy going forward would be to replace terminals on teaching desks for docking stations and use laptops. Some staff have an office space and a classroom and would benefit from one high spec laptop and docking stations.

TS explained there needs to be a strategy for the infrastructure and a strategy for the laptops, desktops and iPads etc. I would suggest that ICT would have the best machines and the departments that use them less will have the hand-me-downs. This plan would be backed up with a strategy. The only time you would purchase a fixed station would be maybe in the IT suite, even then they may prefer laptops.

MH agreed that could be rolled through but it does go hand in hand with good Wi-Fi. If you are encouraging staff to go mobile you would only do that once you are confident with the Wi-Fi.

LW explained that docking stations in classrooms would be wired in.

It was discussed that most staff would prefer one high power laptop to use in their classroom and the office.

TS suggested the need for a 3/5 year IT strategy. Including the rolling use of laptops so that in 5 years everyone would have a laptop no older than 5 years old.

MH explained regarding the Music Department and their iMacs, these are industry standard and we must make sure that our students have the knowledge and are ready for 6th form or college. The curriculum can't be harmed by what equipment is chosen.

TS explained there just needs justification for this in the strategy. It should be the curriculum that is driving the strategy.

TS asked if there is a proposal for the Wi-Fi?

LW explained once the RF survey is complete he will then be in a position to put this out to tender. Costings could then be drawn up and costings for rolling out laptops and or docking stations and discussions can take place on how this would work.

Q What is the lifespan of the RF survey?



	<p>LW explained that as it doesn't include any major structure works it will last for a long time. They will come in and look around the school and see how the Wi-Fi signal travels. This will be impacted by whether you have got bricks or steel walls and the new fire doors will affect it once they are closed. Should last for a good 5-10 years.</p> <p>LW explained unlike previous wireless technology is now much more modular and you can put this in sections of the school at a time, this can also be rolled out.</p> <p>SC asked that when they are looking at costing they use a framework and speak to AD or SC as there are specific tender requirements that have to be followed.</p> <p>KM advised that there is already £35,000 in the budget for 21/22 ringfenced for the Wi-Fi so we have got that set aside already but we don't know how much it will come out at.</p> <p>SP explained that the work LW and Ian do to support the staff is brilliant, they are amazing and a lot of negative things would happen without them.</p> <p>KM reiterated the school is very lucky to have them.</p> <p>LW left the meeting.</p>
7	<p>Internal Scrutineer's Annual Report:</p> <p>SL was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees suggested rather than going through the whole document it would be better to discuss the items that haven't been closed.</p> <p>SL confirmed that this report is to go to ESFA.</p> <p>SL explained so much work has been done this year most things have been actioned.</p> <p>The points from the first 2 sessions are complete and in place.</p> <p>One outstanding point in cashflows. They are going to be looking at new software to see if there is a better way of doing them. However, the school has been compliant throughout the year.</p> <p>We have to show what is happened in the year and that it is in place and they can identify what has happened and most are closed.</p> <p>Q in some places it says it is not in place but it is in place but that SL has put it in place and not the team.</p> <p>A it was suggested that they could add that the point is closed to reiterate the point.</p> <p>Competition tendering policy Sheryl now has this in place.</p> <p>2 points</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Financial Manual is in progress, this has been a couple of years in the making to get it up to scratch. 2. Contract listing – not sure where we are up to with that? Carys has the premises side of things in place. <p>As roles have moved and changed in the support staff there is a chasm of who is responsible for this and it just needs deciding who is best to do that so there is a central record of the contracts and commitments.</p> <p>SC reiterated there has been massive progress this year.</p> <p>TS fully agreed the team has done an excellent job everyone has worked hard and it is showing on what we are seeing.</p>



	<p>SC explained it has been a difficult year for forecasting across the academy sector, it has been a difficult period.</p> <p>TS would now like to understand the plan for 2021/22.</p> <p>KM we haven't had particularly detailed discussion about this, we identified key areas but not the detail of what needs looking at this is the next step. Board has agreed those as the main areas for us.</p> <p>TS suggested they do the same again, we are still seeing people changing within the team. You have still got the basic controls to bed in, at least for the first/second visit just make sure that we have got everything in place. Don't want to be going off at a tangent too soon.</p> <p>SC I think we could just refine it to ensure it is risk based to ensure we have compliance.</p> <p>KM when are we looking what is the best route in terms of the best risk practice?</p> <p>SC confirmed they will look at risk-based strategy, we have had lots of controls to be ensure they are in place, and while they are resolved we could check. Not repeating the work of the auditors but looking at other strategic areas.</p> <p>KM do we need to do this after audit as a team first and then bring it back here to SL and TS?</p> <p>SC explained we could do, we can look at the Risk Register and the audit and see if anything has hanged and look at key areas where we have a risk and bring it back to trustees to approve. We may come up with an annual plan but it can still change. If cyber security is thought to be a bigger risk we can pick that up as necessary.</p> <p>SC and S to discuss this at their meeting rather than bring back to next meeting in April as that was deemed too late.</p> <p>Decisions can be ratified at an FGB</p>
8	<p>Action Plan from Internal Scrutineer's Report: to check any outstanding items from Management responses</p> <p>As discussed above</p>
9	<p>Summary of monthly finance review – Year End Position</p> <p>Period 12 accounts still need to be reviewed.</p>
10	<p>Bi-monthly meeting plan agreed between Sca, ADr & TSu</p> <p>SC shared with the committee the plan for these meetings. The three will meet and have arranged a draft plan of items to be discussed to give a real focus. They will use the skills assessment management tool kit throughout the year. Items to be discussed will include Income and Expenditure, cashflow, condition improvement fund, pupil numbers etc. These items will be split over the months.</p>
11	<p>ICFP Plan update</p> <p>SC explained the ICFP plan is where the curriculum is looked at with the finances and a review is done of where resources are being deployed.</p> <p>SC & AD have reviewed this against the 2021/22 budget to see what progress had been made.</p> <p>In 2019/20 85% of budget was spent on staff this year it is 82.8% next year it will be 80%. This is an improvement in the budget but still above average 75%.</p>



	<p>Pupil to teacher ratio in 2019/20 it was 16.6 but this year, now in line the medium threshold figures, it is 17.</p> <p>Contact ratio this was 0.67 and is now currently at 0.72, this again shows an improvement. It shows the curriculum has been tailored appropriately. The aspirational target is 0.78 but it is very rare to achieve this, most secondary schools achieve 0.74/0.76. This is very pleasing and has offset some costs.</p> <p>Q Has this reduction had an impact on the education given to the children?</p> <p>A No, this has been natural wastage and the way that we deploy people. Last year there were a few more temporary staff, these have been replaced with employed colleagues now so they can be deployed more.</p> <p>SC explained it is nice to see that it hasn't affected the students. Whatever is recommended can't impact on pupil outcomes it is finding the balance. The school has taken massive steps in the right direction and looking to be more financially stable and everything is ticking along nicely.</p> <p>SC explained all the data and the metrics ensure we can check we are doing the right thing. It is about the school and the pupils being in the right place.</p> <p>Q what is the plan and the way forward this year for the Leadership Team and Trustees?</p> <p>A could either look at updating the metrics every half a term or once a term, this can be done on the working budget and you can see the impact. MH can do this with AD, because figures are up to date this is an easy exercise.</p> <p>MH explained the way it works effective is every half term, looking through all the names alphabetically.</p> <p>KM checked with AD she was happy with this plan? AD was happy with this along with checking FTEs are correct.</p>
12	<p>Academies Financial Handbook Points/questions from Chair</p> <p>SC explained this will be gone through for Trustees and all the "must haves" in the AFH will be put down and comments will be made of where the school is compliant.</p> <p>SC will go through every point and provide evidence for Trustees so they know it is done.</p>
13	<p>Risk management: Top 3 risks for this committee from last year's register and plans for updating the register for next FGB.</p> <p>Top 3 risks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictability of forecasts v actual • Budget model which continues to show deficit • Risk from cyber-attack and not being prepared <p>This list has already been approved by the board and now needs to be pared down to look at the key areas to focus on.</p> <p>SC explained she has already covered cyber-attacks while carrying out other internal scrutineering and is willing to liaise with SL if she has any questions on the key risks. SC agreed it is a big risk because of the language that is coming out from DfE. SC suggested maybe this is something LW could review and go through the self-assessment check list. SC agreed on the 3 areas of risk.</p> <p>Trustees suggested that while looking at the Wi-Fi it should be ensured that the most secure Wi-Fi is being put in.</p>

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	<p>SL agreed cyber-attack is a huge area to review but there is a check list. SL explained she always welcomes new information not forgetting there are experts if it was felt that was necessary and can carry out a more detailed look. There are companies who will hack into you to see how successful they are. There are LAs that provide this service which may be a bit more reassuring, there are options out there. The Academies Handbook has highlighted other areas around safeguarding and health and safety.</p> <p>KM explained with regard to Safeguarding the school is already looking into this with deep dives across the school. The H&S audit will be going ahead once the colleague involved has returned to school. However, she felt that cyber safety would be something for school to have a structured look at this year.</p> <p>SL agreed and explained that IT are busy keeping the IT systems running and don't always have the space to look at these risks.</p>
14	<p>Any Other Business:</p> <p>14.1 HS explained that she is a member of the Waterside Musical Society and her group have emailed about a booking next October half term. They haven't received a reply and asked that someone could chase that up. AD and KM agreed they would look into this.</p> <p>All Noadswood teaching staff were asked to leave the meeting. 20:18hrs</p>
	<p>Meeting Dates 4th April 2021 – 7pm 14th July 2021 – 7pm</p>
	To identify any matters to be recorded in the confidential Part B minutes – Item 14.2 AOB will be kept confidential
	The meeting was adjourned by the Chair 20:27 hrs

Matters arising from the minutes of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 17th June 2021.

Item	Action	Actionee	Status
6	TS to liaise with KM to write off these actions against the ESFA Report Financial Management & Governance Review in September 2021	TS/KM	Complete
9	Ask Sam Lock to write an analysis behind why these KPIs have been chosen	KM	Ongoing
12	Advise DW & CM to amend the depreciation of minibuses	KM	complete
13 3.2	Advise CM to go ahead with the PPM contract	KM	Complete
13 3.2	Advise CM to organise the extension to the current cleaning contract and tender for the new one	KM	Complete

SIGNED BY:	
DATED:	