



## CALDECOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Personnel, Premises & Finance Committee

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May at 5:00pm**

**Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the meeting was held virtually using Zoom. Following local and national guidelines a shortened agenda was followed which only considered time critical issues.**

**Present:** Pippa Smith (Chair)  
Karen Stanton (Headteacher)  
Cristina Turner  
Renu Martingale (ReM)  
Rebecca Snelling

**In Attendance:** Lesley Whitehead (School Business Manager, Associate Member)

**Clerk:** Vicky Miles

**Apologies:** None

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Reference

Action

**1. Welcome to all and apologies for absence**

PS as Chair formally opened the virtual meeting, extending a welcome to all present.

**2. Declaration of interests relating to items on the agenda**

None declared.

**3. BMR and Financial Update**

LW circulated the latest BMR ahead of the meeting, and took Governors through the headlines noted in the BMR, highlighting and explaining the

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variances. All figures have been agreed and verified by County. LW added that the carry forward is good news, with the vast majority coming from CareClubs as well as the Summer Fair and other contributions. CT added that compared to where we were last year these figures are a fantastic achievement and congratulated the team.

#### **4. Preparation of the Budget Submission for 2020/2021**

KS explained that the documents circulated ahead of the meeting were the revenue financial forecast, which is a summary of some of the headline forecast figures, a copy of the detail by cost centres and a copy of last year's forecast for comparison. KS then took Governors through the funding allocation and started by explaining that the position is a very strange one in terms of budget, the guidance very clearly from County is to carry on with the budget regardless of the effects of Covid 19. They strongly advised us to go through and set a budget based on last year's predictions and funding from this year. KS informed the committee that the biggest part of the budget is staffing, this cannot be completed until May 31<sup>st</sup> as staff can resign before then and TAs can give 4 weeks' notice. There is a structure in place for September and we also have sufficient funds to cover if things should change.

KS explained that the headline income is up by £68,000, a high proportion of which, £28,000, is because there was no top slice for SEND. There will be higher outgoings to cover services that are no longer centrally funded and, of course, SEND services will all be chargeable. As a school, we have benefitted from increased funding. KS added that they have been fairly cautious in terms of expenditure and kept it very much the same as this year because there are a lot of unknowns, and when considering inflation increases and increases in staffing and energy costs it is quite a prudent budget. The staffing has remained the same with no need to consider reduction in TA hours, which was a factor last year.

KS informed the committee that pupil numbers are the main factor that triggers revenue. There are currently 24 children on roll for reception now so have assumed there will be 24 the year after, but have nothing else to base the assumption on as demographer's figures are so way out. A falling roll is predicted but we hope that numbers may increase throughout the year.

SEN funding is slightly up because there are more EHCP pupils. Pupil premium funding is similar as is other income, although, this may be affected by Covid. Teaching staff costs are higher because of pay rises and progression. Support staff slightly decreased, as there are currently two temporary TAs.

To a question regarding extra support in year six, KS informed the committee that this is the reason why support staff numbers going forward will be slightly down as two TAs are employed on fixed term contracts, which will finish.

KS explained that teaching staff goes up from 9.3 to 10.2 due to maternity cover and that this reverts in 2021-2022.

To a question on temporary TAs, KS explained they were put on fixed term contracts, which was always clear to them so there were no redundancies needed.

To a question on whether the budget would support the ambitions for the school, KS responded positively.

KS explained that there are still some funds built in for smaller projects e.g., we still want to get artificial grass, as this continues to be an ongoing problem. LW added that the quotes had arrived, so could move on with it quite quickly if we wanted to go ahead with it.

KS added that the five-year boiler service is due in January and as historically there are always issues with it we have put a sum in the budget to pay for any repairs.

To a question on contingency with carry forward, KS explained that there isn't any guidance. Rob Cottell, the financial advisor, is very happy that we've got the carry forward as he is looking forward to 21/22 from an accounting perspective. Conversely, Jonathon Lewis would say you should be spending all your money on the children in year; funding should be for those children in school that year. There are so many unknowns in terms of funding and children that we need to be prudent so if something big happens we have enough to cover it. As a maintained school, we can expect support from the LA and we are in a healthier position than we thought we would be.

To a further comment CT added that it is a much better position than where we were, looking at the start of the year with the uncertainty of the SENDs budget and the carry forward seemed prudent.

To a question on guidance from local authority, KS explained that the budget for CareClubs had been put in at £55,000 to take account of the closure due to Covid. However, on the financial adviser's advice this was changed to £80,000 based on 19/20 income, which was £83,000. KS added that the hope was to Furlough the CareClubs staff and get part of their salaries back in, but was told to put a budget in based on what it normally would be. If CareClubs and other income had been put in, there was the possibility of our budget going into deficit. This is the

case for many schools. There is a Covid fund where we are allowed to claim up to £25,000 back but there are criteria attached.

KS explained that Rob Cottell has been through the budget with KS and agreed with all income and expenditures.

To a question on TA hours and the need for a shadow plan, KS explained that a shadow plan of staffing had been done. There is always a possibility that TA hours would be cut, however, the guidance is that we cannot consider anything like that at the moment. There is always a 'shadow plan' of sorts, which outlines staffing options. If numbers start to drop, which affects funding, that is the trigger to look at these options in detail. PS clarified with members that as a committee we understand the general principles of the shadow plan and that details are to be worked out if the need arises.

To a question on laptops, KS explained that desktops had been put in all classrooms, some teachers have laptops that aren't great, and the amount of work they are doing on laptops normally is significantly less. All of the donated laptops have been rolled out. If the PTA raise some money, we can replace some of the children's laptops and iPads and keep stock up.

To a further question, KS explained that the desktops are for teaching. Unions acknowledge that schools cannot provide teachers with laptops in the anticipation of an extraordinary event such as Covid and so long as teachers have access to IT for PPA etc. that is what is expected. There is also a professional expectation that if someone would like to work at home, it is their responsibility to provide the technology. All the teachers are managing to provide online learning and engage with virtual meetings.

LW informed the committee that there are no planned contractual changes, if anything the phone system is the next thing that will need updating but this is not urgent.

KS added that there is a change in how Pupil Premium can be spent following government studies on the effectiveness. Schools have much more freedom to use this more broadly e.g. CPD, groups, etc. rather than accounting for spending for each individual child. This will be better as some of the Pupil Premium children are high attainers. When the briefing paper comes through the policy will be changed.

KS informed the committee that:

- 2% pay award for teachers and support staff built in.
- Per pupil funding top line figure is £3958, which is above the government figure of £3750.

- Have received £33458 to cover teachers' pay & pension grant for 1 year only.
- Universal Infant Free School Meals – lower uptake, small clawback, offset as fees have been increased.
- Building Maintenance @ £30,000 is high; similar schools around £20,000 built in some contingency as due 5-year boiler service.
- Received £2,000 to offset against court costs.

PS added that it is sensible to have a large amount in the maintenance budget due to the uncertainty around the upcoming boiler service.

The committee agreed to recommend the proposed budget to the FGB.

#### **5. Policies to be reviewed:**

Appropriate use of staff laptops - RM

Discipline & Dismissal - PS

Grievance - CT

Personal Information - PS

Bad Weather – suggest we change title to Emergency Closure including Bad Weather (overlooked in meeting; KS will amend and send to PS for comment)

Environment - Is this needed? - VM

ICT Waste - RM

Equality & Diversity - RM

Trade Union Members -CT

Energy - VM

KS to email policies

KS

#### **Policies to be ratified:**

Special Leave of Absence - reviewed by CT

Ordinary Paternity Leave & Pay - reviewed by CT

Maternity Leave & Pay - reviewed by CT

Adoption - reviewed by CT

Lettings - reviewed by DH

#### **6. Date of Future Virtual Meeting of this Committee**

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June @ 6pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.00 pm.

Signed as a true record..... Date.....

Chair