



An Daras Trust
Igniting Curiosity Growing Capabilities

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26/02/2020

Minutes

Finance and Strategic Development Committee Spring 2020
Wednesday 26th February 2020 at 9.30am at ADMAT Central Office

Note that actions are highlighted in bold and red, and will be carried forward to the next meeting and questions or challenges during the meeting are highlighted in bold and blue

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Present: Graeme Barriball (Chair), Claire Paul, Peter Hague, Jonathan Sharpe, Will Hermon

Apologies: Tim Woodward

In Attendance: Governance Officer, Emma Gilbert (CFO), Jo Callow

The Chair welcomed everyone and JS introduced himself to the committee.

2. **Declarations of Interest/Pecuniary Interests relevant to this Agenda**

None declared at the start, although GB declared an interest under item 8b when he realised that there was a conflict (and subsequently took no part in the discussion or decision making).

3. **Confirm minutes of previous FSD Autumn Meeting (30th September 2019) and Matters Arising**

No actions. Committee agreed the minutes and the Chair signed a copy.

4. **Confidential Agenda Items**

A business case was discussed and recorded in the confidential minutes.

5. **Actions from Autumn Full Board**

- a. Ascertain the catering funding issues at SSCA with Chartwells (re Holsworthy Primary). EG gave some background on this potential issue and noted that Chartwells are not being forthcoming with numbers and information. It is assessed that SSCA is owed money to cover catering and utility costs for producing meals for Holsworthy school. This will continue to be chased.
- b. Confirm all KS1 FSM funding is being received and also those eligible at KS2. EG confirmed that funding received is the funding based on the figures but the numbers of children present on the census days is not the full number of children. Hence, there is little that can be done other than ensure more children are present on census days.

6. **Review Financial Benchmarking Data**

WH discussed the financial benchmarking data provided by Bishop Fleming; the committee reviewed the figures against the other schools and there is no evidence that An Daras is overspending or under-spending in any area and is sitting in line with average across Cornwall. There was nothing of note to discuss.

7. Review MAT Improvement Plan

WH noted the allocated priorities in AIP 2020 for the FSD are:

- **6B: IT Infra-structure – complete curriculum level IT hardware improvements at remaining Trust schools and start wider IT improvement as identified in Autumn Term 19 full Trust IT Audit.** The committee discussed the issues of internet connectivity across the MAT schools and the restrictions this places on the use of IT. **The committee challenged whether an assessment of each school’s needs have been done and costed**, and WH confirmed that it is in hand with assistance from ICT4. **The committee also challenged that we should be shopping around to get the best cost for any infrastructure required.**
- **6C: Financial Controls – complete minor improvements identified in Autumn Term 19 full Trust annual external audit.** These are the financial controls that need to be addressed prior to the next audit. An update will be provided to the full Board on 18th March 2020.

8. Present Finance Matters

a. School Self-Assessment Tool

Assessed that this will not change regularly enough to warrant discussion at every committee and Directors will be updated when there are sufficient changes or issues to discuss.

b. Income and Expenditure Against Planned Budget

EG noted the additional funding that the government has promised schools which will hopefully result in healthier budgets and updated the committee as follows:

- CG – likely to be in deficit this year due to the historical staffing levels but this has been addressed and therefore next year’s budget should fall in line.
- LT – running to budget and now has money to invest into the IT, internet and internal telephone system.
- NP – should break even this year and is now running to budget. It was noted that there are ways of saving money on staffing costs without losing efficiency or capability. The capital expenditure for the sewage plant, fuel tank and woodworm was taken from MAT reserves as a CIF bid application was unsuccessful. However, as all MATs are directed to hold reserves, there is only so much that can be done to the aging infrastructure without additional funding to support it.
- PT – should break even, although numbers of pupils is a concern and there is capital expenditure required for the new front door.
- SC – budget should break even and may have a slight surplus but expenditure required on IT. The nursery and pupil numbers are at full capacity.
- SSCA – should break even, however, the MAT has freehold on SSCA and there are issues with windows and the boilers. The windows around the hall are leaking and need to be replaced; WH noted that 3 quotes have been obtained. **GB noted a conflict as he deals with one of the companies (Horizon) and abstained from the discussion and decision making.** The committee agreed to the expenditure of the work and that the company Horizon should be used at a cost of £13,937. **As this is over the CEO’s delegation, the committee agreed this expenditure.**
- Wer – expecting to break even but again there are issues with wireless infrastructure expenditure. There are other major infrastructure issues for which CIF bids have been submitted but not expecting success with those bids.
- WHA – should also break even and there are no major issues.

The Chair noted that there are a couple of instances where staff are doing a particularly good job and represent very good value for money, but **challenged that they should be paid appropriately and rewarded appropriately for their work.** WH stated that their pay is in line

with normal pay requirements and there is opportunity for incremental increases to pay during the performance management process.

c. **Measure Budget Against Financial KPIs**

The committee were content with the expenditure against KPIs; all schools are within the restrictions on total staff costs less CG but this is being addressed. It was noted that the PE money needs to be spent so that there are no surpluses remaining.

d. **Virements and other transactions in accordance with the MAT Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation**

None.

e. **Approval of Expenditure of Sums over agreed Financial Regulations**

Including any expenditure over CEO delegation – see item above re windows.

Payment has been made for the previously approved expenditure on the sewage system at NP.

f. **Receive Finance Director's Report (if applicable)**

Will be completed for audit committee.

9. **Future Finance**

a. **Review/Agree Draft Budget Forecast Return**

To be submitted by 21 May and due to timing, GB and PH will check this before it is submitted.

b. **Agree KPIs for Next Academic Year**

Committee agreed that KPIs should remain the same.

c. **Review Utilities Usage and Providers**

Carry forward to next FSD (WH/MB)

10. **Strategy**

Review 3-5 year MAT Strategic Growth Plan – this was done out of synch on 1st July 2019 so committee considered it unnecessary to do a full review again so soon. However, the Chair noted that with the increase in funding, it is worth discussing how this funding can be used wisely for the good of the children, and if this affects the strategy in any way.

Action: Add 'Consider Strategy against new funding levels' to full Board agenda (TM)

11. **Policy Review**

- **Investment** - carry forward to Audit Committee on 11th March 2020.
- **Critical Incident** – minor amendments and approved. WH noted that emergency planning is undergoing a review, which may incorporate the critical incident policy in future but it is up to date as at now. The committee discussed emergency planning at length.
- **Business Charge Card** – Approved. **GB challenged whether the cards are credit or debit, and if not credit cards, whether they are covered for fraudulent activity.** WH confirmed that credit cards are not permitted but they will check the cover for fraudulent activity under current arrangements.
- **Finance** – WH explained that this is an overarching financial policy that was dictated by the external auditors despite having all the relevant individual financial policies in place. The committee agreed that this does seem an unnecessary extra policy and just doubling up on what already exists, but WH & MB will draft something simple to cover the requirement. This will be produced for full Board on 18th March 2020. **Action: Finance Policy to full Board (WH/MB)**

12. **AOB**

WH updated the committee on a business case and this is recorded at confidential minutes.

13. **DONM**

Date of next meeting is Monday 22nd June 2020 at 9.30am at the central office.

Meeting closed at 11.30am.

TJH Martin

Governance Officer

Distribution List:

G. Barriball – Director (Chair) T. Woodward – Director (Vice) C. Paul - Director P. Hague – Director J. Sharpe - Director	W. Hermon – CEO Director E. Gilbert – CFO J. Callow – Ex Officio Observer
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