

## Finance & General Purposes Committee

Minutes: 16 March 2020  
F&GP 2/20

**Present:** Mr Roy Gillard  
Mrs Isabel Cherrett  
Ms Nicola Dunford  
Ms Cheryl Mathieson

**In attendance:** Clerk – Matt Matthew

### Welcome:

Welcome by Roy Gillard, Chair of Finance & General Purposes Committee

The Chair opened the meeting with a short discussion about investigating different options to holding meetings in the future in light of Coronavirus – Skype, Zoom etc. The CEO gave a quick update on the impact of Coronavirus so far. Two members of staff have self-isolated along with a small number of pupils. The Trust is following the DfE guidance to the letter.

**Action: Trust risk register to be updated – CEO.**

**Apologies:** Rachel Hill

**Declaration of Business Interests:** Nil

### 1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2020, Part I, were agreed and signed. In the absence of the Clerk, the Committee would review any Part II Minutes at the next meeting.  
**Clerk**

### 2. Matters Arising

- 2.1 Item 2.2 - Alternative Payroll Software  
The Chair provided a brief update and will be inviting two companies to provide a demonstration of payroll software soon.
- 2.2 Item 3.1 - Key Performance Indicators  
Deferred to the next meeting on 1 May 2020.
- 2.3 Item 3.1 Benchmarks for the next financial year  
Deferred to the next meeting on 1 May 2020.
- 2.4 Item 3.2 - Outline costings to support Central Business Unit and School Improvement 2020-2021  
Deferred to the next meeting on 1 May 2020.
- 2.5 Item 3.2 - Charitable Giving  
Deferred to the meeting on 3 July 2020.
- 2.6 Item 4 - Cost effective measures to stop children getting out of schools  
The CEO will be meeting with the Executive/Academy Heads (E/AHs) on 19 May to discuss. Further update to follow.
- 2.7 Item 2.3 - Insurance  
The Trust bought into Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA), which covered the majority of risks needing cover, including Directors' Liability Insurance. The TBM

agreed to provide a brief summary for the next meeting on 1 May 2020, including those risks which were not covered or covered by other policies.

**TBM to provide report at next meeting**

3. **Financial Year 2019-2020**

3.1 **Financial Performance to 29 February 2020 – month 6**

The TBM provided an update on the year to date position across the Trust. The Trustees raised several questions regarding the position for Bearnas, Moretonhampstead and Ilington. Overall, the Trust is on track budgetarily with the biggest unknown impact being the award of Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) at the end of this term. All debtors were less than 30 days.

The CEO gave the Committee an update on a school of concern financially owing to a reduction in pupil numbers. The Committee was satisfied with the CEO's approach to defer a decision on reducing the number of classes immediately in order to give the school more time to recruit more pupils.

3.2 **Any known funding changes, arising from February Budget**

There were no changes to date to report; however, the TBM provided the Committee with an update on the budget planning for 2020-21 onwards. At a network group meeting, the TBM found that several Trusts were being prudent by applying a 3pc year on year increase for staffing costs. The Committee agreed to follow these budget assumptions unless further guidance is provided.

4. **Property**

4.1 **CIF Bids**

Announcement expected at the end of this term.

5. **Draft Scheme of Delegation**

Draft sections of new Scheme were reviewed, in particular items 5.2 Finance & General Purposes Committee and 5.3 Remuneration Committee. The Chair of Trustees reported comments from the Chair of the Standards & Curriculum Committee. The Chair of Trustees would update the draft Scheme with agreed amendments.

**Chair of Trustees**

6. **Internal Audit – Governance, regularity and risk management**

The Committee reviewed the last report from Griffin Accountancy in November 2019. The Chair of Trustees asked that officers ensure all reports which may have an impact for the Board or another Committee are included on the next relevant agenda. The Audit Committee can then monitor that recommendations are implemented.

There were three recommendations:

- Declarations of Interest had been discussed by the Board and the Clerk was supporting Trustees to ensure all related party transaction disclosures were identified
- Members' Independence – the report noted the vacancy for a Member to represent the Bearnas Education Foundation; an appointment was in hand.
- The Academies Financial Handbook requires Trusts to publish on the website attendance at Committee and Local Board meetings as well as the full Board. The Chair will discuss with the Clerk a consistent approach to recording attendance at meetings and posting termly reports. **Chair/Clerk**

The TBM reported that no further internal audit visits had taken place since November. The next audit visit planned for 18 March had been postponed until after the Easter holidays owing to limiting the number of external visitors into schools in light of coronavirus.

7. **Human Resources**

The CEO appraised the Committee that the EAH for Ilington and Widecombe will be reducing to a single headship at Widecombe effective from September 2020. The Trust is currently

advertising for the Ilington headship but will be covering the leadership of that school internally with immediate effect.

8. **Health & Safety**

RPA audits had taken place at three schools – Harbertonford, Yeoford and Cheriton Bishop. Overall, all schools were compliant but the audit raised an issue over the qualification of the responsible person to make judgements.

**CEO/TBM to review reporting lines**

9. **Data Protection**

The Committee noted the GDPR report. The GDPR officer is visiting schools on a regular basis and has identified some minor actions to be completed. Storage of confidential files remains an issue. RG raised the question of who the GDPR Officer would report an incident to; the CEO responded that all instances are reported to her and the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) subsequently consulted. The Committee expressed their thanks to the GDPR Officer for her efforts.

**TBM to thank GDPRO**

10. **ESFA Bulletins**

Nil issues to report

11. **Policies**

11.1 **Gifts & Hospitality**

The policy was agreed following format changes and amendments suggested by the Chair of Trustees; it would be submitted to the Board for final approval. **Chair**

11.2 **Nursery Admissions Policy & Oversubscription Criteria**

The Trust had been advised to include a refund and cancellation clause; the Committee highlighted grammatical changes and asked the TBM to draft an appropriate clause to be added.

**TBM**

12. **Dates of Future Meetings**

F&GP 3/20 - 1 May 2020

F&GP 4/20 - 3 July 2020