

The Federation of Abbey Schools Academy Trust

Audit & Finance Committee

Minutes

Date & Time: 5.30 pm on Thursday 4th March 2021

Directors who took part via virtual meeting: Dr L Bryant, Mr G Buchanan, Mr M Fryer, Mrs R Hall, Mrs R Kershaw and Mr P M Willson.

Also in Attendance: Mr J Briggs, Mrs C Hurworth (Avec) and Mrs L Hawksby (Clerk to the Governing Body).

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION</u>	<u>ACTION BY</u>
	<p>Note: Employees of the Trust are not involved in audit matters, considerations or recommendations, however the Accounting Officer (Head Teacher) attends to provide information and participate in the discussions.</p>	
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence and Format of the meeting</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence for the meeting. The Directors participated in a virtual Board meeting due to current Covid 19 social distancing considerations.</p>	
2.	<p>Notification of Items of Other Business</p> <p>There were no items of any other business</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>Declarations of Interests:</p> <p>Declaration of personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the Agenda of the current meeting.</p> <p>There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interests declared.</p> <p>Declaration of any updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p> <p>There were no updates for the Register of Business Interests.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Approval of Minutes</p> <p>a) Approval of Minutes – Thursday 1st October 2021</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the meetings of the Audit & Finance Committee held on Thursday 1st October 2021 be approved as an accurate record.</p> <p>b) Matters Arising –</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>STANDING ITEMS OF THE COMMITTEE: SPRING TERM (Items 5 - 16)</p>		
<p>5.</p>	<p>Financial monitoring: Budget /Management Accounts/Cash flow/Spring update report</p> <p>Mrs C Hurworth (Avec) provided a Spring Term update on the 2020/21 Academy Trust's budget and other budget updates. She reported, as part of her school funding update, that as of the 8th March 2021 all children would return to face to face education, which would be supported by a new government £702 million plan to help young people catch up with lost learning due to the pandemic. The recovery package also included a one off Recovery Premium, building on the pupil premium to help support disadvantaged students. The value of the Academy's allocation was not yet confirmed, however the average primary school would be receiving approximately £6,000 with this funding to be received in 2021-22.</p>	

<p>CQ</p>	<p>It was also noted that from the 1st April 2021 pupil premium allocations will be based upon the number of eligible pupils recorded in the October 2020 census rather than the January 2021 census, with a resulting decrease in income for the Academy due to a number of pupils becoming eligible between the two census dates. The Committee asked if a priority could be placed on the registering of pupil premium as early as possible in the next academic year? The Head Teacher confirmed that this would be done.</p> <p>The 20/21 budget had been impacted by Covid 19 with additional costs incurred on purchasing PPE, cleaning materials, lunchtime supervisor costs and agency staff costs, with further reductions in income from the Outs of School Club and lettings. The largest loss of income was from catering (£42,000), as there had been a drop in demand as hot meal catering provision was not been able to be provided whilst implementing Covid guidelines and when trialled had been unsuccessful due to health and safety implications of moving hot food between the two sites. The budget for 20/21 would result in a projected in year deficit of £49,826.</p> <p>The current position in relation to reserves, capital, the DfE's School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (due to be submitted to the EFSA by 15th April), the updated Medium Term Financial Plan, Academy Contracts Register and current performance indicators were also considered and noted by the Committee.</p> <p>Mrs Hurworth also reported upon the latest set of Management Accounts for January 2021. The Directors noted there was a deficit of £25,000. Other key areas of financial performance such as debtors, creditors, reserves and the cashflow forecast were noted to be in a positive position.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Audit and Finance Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Considered and noted the monthly management accounts, cash flow, balance sheet and aged debtors and creditors reports. b) Considered and noted the 2020/21 revenue budget forecast position. c) Considered and noted the 2020/21 capital position. d) Considered and noted the reserves position. e) Considered and noted the cash flow projection. f) Considered and noted the school meals trading account projection. 	<p>SLT</p>
------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------

	<p>g) Considered and noted the School Resource Management Self-Assessment dashboard.</p> <p>h) Considered and noted the Medium Term Financial position.</p> <p><i>(Mrs C Hurworth left the meeting at approximately 6.10 pm)</i></p> <p>6. Discuss the recommendations and outputs of any assurance activities by third parties, including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations.</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised there had been no recommendations/outputs of any assurance activities of third parties, apart from the recently completed internal audit which was considered by the committee at Minute 11 below.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>7. Review of last years' external audit and review actions in response to audit.</p> <p>The Committee advised that they had found no outstanding issues resulting from last years' external audit which required action.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That there were no outstanding issues resulting from last years' external audit and no actions were required.</p> <p>8. Assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor to provide a basis for decisions by the Trust's Board and Members about the auditor's reappointment or dismissal or retendering.</p> <p>The Committee advised that there had been no issues identified with regard to the effectiveness and resources of the current external Auditors who had provided a good service. They suggested and considered whether it would be good practice to complete a price comparison to check value for money was being provided.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That a value for money price comparison of external auditors be conducted and reported back to the Committee and Board.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher/ Finance staff</i></p>
--	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------

CQ

<p>9.</p>	<p>Review the Trust’s Autumn Census returns to ensure they are accurate and compliant with the funding criteria</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Autumn Term census and noted they were accurate and compliant with funding criteria.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That no issues were identified.</p>	
<p>10.</p>	<p>Confirm the Trust’s land and building collection tool (LBCT) has been submitted to ensure it is compliant with funding criteria</p> <p>The Head Teacher advised the Trust’s Land and Building Collection Tool (LBCT) had been submitted in January 2021 and would place the proof of submission on the Governors’ Learning Platform.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Internal Assurance Report</p> <p>The Committee considered the internal assurance report provided by the Trust’s internal auditors Azets. The audit had been extensive, taking in the equivalent of two visits.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there were no issues or recommendations of major concern, with the recommendations relating to opportunities to implement a good or better practice, to improve efficiency of further reduce risk.</p> <p>It was recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Gifts & Hospitality and Whistleblowing Policies be reviewed annually (rather than the current 3 years). This has been actioned on the Policy Table. • Staff are required to sign a form confirming they had read the Whistleblowing Policy. This was currently being actioned via an electronic system. • The Governors’ induction pack include the latest signed financial statements. This had been actioned on the Governors’ Learning Platform. • To ensure the credit card request forms are all dated when signed by the Head Teacher. This would be actioned going forward. 	<p><i>Head Teacher/ Clerk</i></p> <p><i>SLT/staff</i></p> <p><i>Clerk</i></p> <p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That signed agreements are held by the Trust for assets taken offsite by staff. The Trust will ensure signed agreements are held by the Trust by September 2021 • Review annually resilience in terms of exposure to cyber security risks. This was being looked at with the school's current IT providers. <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the recommendations and resulting actions be noted.</p> <p>12. Internal Scrutiny Work Programme</p> <p>Further to Minute 13 (Audit and Finance Committee 1st October 2020) the new internal auditor's work programme was brought to the committee now that they had been appointed.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the work programme be approved by the Committee.</p> <p>13. Premises Report</p> <p>The Head Teacher presented the premises report. He advised that a new full time Caretaker had been appointed, who would build upon existing processes and work with the premises manger to develop maintenance and servicing programmes.</p> <p>He also advised that an emergency lighting survey had been completed which identified additional lighting requirements in the region of approximately £7,000. This was currently being investigated further.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted</p> <p>14 Report from Human Resources</p> <p>The Head Teacher updated the Committee from September 2020 with regards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff that had left • New appointments – including the appointments of a Full time caretaker and three new lunchtime supervisors. • Maternity leave • Changes to contracts 	<p>Head Teacher/ Business Team</p> <p>IT Providers</p>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term sick • Covid 19 <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>15. Service Level Agreements</p> <p>A list of the current Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and their costings were presented to the Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p> <p>16. Risk Register (strategic review to report to Board and report any changes made during the term).</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Risk Register and noted the updates received by the Teaching & Learning Committee at their meeting on the 10th February 2021 when reviewing their delegated risks (Minute 10. Teaching & Learning Committee 10th February 2021 refers).</p> <p>The Committee considered whether the return to school for all pupils required any changes to the risk register and noted that reference to risk assessment being updated were included within the section 13 Covid/pandemic section of the Risk Register.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That no changes or updates were currently required to the Risk Register.</p> <p>17. To review the school staffing structure</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided a verbal report and advised that the current staffing structure remained largely the same as the last academic year. There was a slightly higher number of Teaching Assistants due to a higher number of children requiring support.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted and a school organisation chart be placed on the Governors' Learning Platform for Director's information.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher/ Clerk</i></p>
--	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------

<p>18.</p>	<p>Further Review of Terms of Reference and Standing Items for the Audit & Finance Committee and Pay Review Sub Committee</p> <p>Further to Minute 11 (Audit & Finance Committee 1st October 2020) the Clerk presented the updated terms of reference and standing items for the Audit & Finance Committee and Pay Review Sub-Committee. The changes reflected further the new requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2020 and helped ensure items were considered at the most appropriate time in the academic year to ensure timely reviews.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the updated terms of reference and standing items for the Audit & Finance Committee and Pay Review Sub-Committee be approved.</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
<p>19.</p>	<p>To note a fee reduction for Hiring of Facilities</p> <p>A fee reduction was noted by the Committee as Sporting Futures were running their club on reduced numbers for Abbey children only (at the school's request). The daily hire fee would be reduced from £75 - £50 for this period.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the above reduction in fee for this period be noted.</p>	
<p>20.</p>	<p>Investments & Reserves Policy</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Investments and Reserves Policy.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Investment & Reserves Policy be approved.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>
<p>21.</p>	<p>Charging & Remissions (Lettings of Premises)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Charging and Remissions (Lettings of Premises) agreement.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Charging and Remissions (Lettings of Premises) agreement be approved.</p>	<p><i>Head Teacher</i></p>

<p>22.</p> <p>23.</p> <p>24.</p>	<p>Agenda Items for the Next Meeting :</p> <p>Standing Items and Policies due for review.</p> <p>Approval of Documents for Public Inspection</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the Agenda, supporting documents and approved Minutes be made available for public inspection with the exception of the reports and supporting papers at items 5 and 7above in accordance with Article 125 c.) as they contain commercially sensitive financial information.</p> <p>Date & Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the next meeting of the Committee be confirmed once the date had been approved at the Governing Body scheduled for the 15th March 2021.</p> <p>The Meeting concluded at 7.00 pm</p> <p>Approved by the Audit & Finance Committee</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Signature (Chair): _____</p> <p>Name: _____</p>	<p><i>Clerk</i></p>
-------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------

(Note: CQ – Challenging Question)