

Minutes of a virtual Governing Body meeting of Cedars Academy on Monday 21 June 2021 at 5.00pm

Governors Present: Gill Morton (Chair), Gordon Neale OBE (Vice Chair), Martin Flowers (Chief Executive), Jamie Cairns, Pamela Finn, Cllr Maria Hall, Paul Hills, Naomi Kelly, Rachel Lane, Joseph McCabe, Liz Neale

Others Present: Michelle O'Reilly (Observer), Julie Vincent (Observer)

Clerk: Kim Ashford

The meeting started at 5.04pm and was quorate.

1. Apologies for absence

- Apologies were received from Joanne Carr, Daniel Hearne and Stuart Kay. Consent was given for their absence.

2. Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

- There were no declarations of interest.

3. Management Accounts

- Governors received a verbal account of the financial status of the Academy from accountants Richard Tate and Kelly Baker.
- The accountants were tasked with getting the Academy's finances on a sound footing, so that the Academy's performance could be properly assessed.
- Richard shared his screen so that all Governors could view the projected budget for the year ending 31 August 2022.
- In terms of the GAG, the student numbers have been uplifted from 207 to 222, to reflect the additional student numbers that 11 Walker Terrace will bring. Pupil Premium numbers and top-up funding have also been adjusted for the additional pupils.
- Richard explained that there is a new line in the accounts entitled Kickstart Income, for £69,504. This relates to a programme which allows the Academy to employ up to 12 Kickstart employees on minimum wage to work a 25-hour week over a period of 6 months. 6 people will be employed for the first 6-month period, and then another 6 people for the following 6 months. This shows as a revenue income of £69,504, which is also reflected as a cost, so that the actual impact on the organisation is zero.

- In terms of income, a revenue of £3.747 million is projected, which is an increase on the current year's income of £3.588 million. The Academy is therefore looking to achieve around £160,000 additional income.
- Expenditure has been broadened out to reflect the fact that the organisation will be expanding. An additional 2.8 teacher salaries have been included. A TA will be moving into a teaching role.
- To reflect the additional pupil numbers, around 10% to 12% has been added across Other Educational Costs, Technology, and Other Administration Costs. Premises and Equipment has been increased by 25%, which takes account of the premises at 11 Walker Terrace.
- Pre-depreciation, the Academy is looking at a surplus for the year of around £151,000.

4. Minutes of the last Governing Body meeting held on Monday, 1 March 2021

4.1 Approval of the minutes

- Governors received the minutes of the last Governing Body meeting on Monday, 1 March 2021, as circulated with the agenda by email prior to the meeting. The minutes were **approved** as a correct record.

4.2 Matters arising

- Item 6: Pet/therapy dog - pilot project
The Chief Executive explained that a pilot project was taking place in one class at KS3 and that feedback and recommendations would be forthcoming in the Autumn Term.

5. Governing Body

5.1 Governing Body membership and vacancies

- Governors received the Governing Body membership and vacancies report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that the school requires one additional Parent Governor. It was suggested that Jamie Cairns could move across to become a Parent Governor, which would resolve this matter. Jamie would need to take part in an election process, to which he agreed. The Chief Executive will arrange for a Parent Governor election to be held during this Summer Term.
- It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have representation from each of the federated partners. This matter will be discussed further with the federated partners.

5.2 Governing Body meeting attendance

- Governors received the Governing Body meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

5.3 Governor training and development

- Governors received the Governor training and development report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- Governors were asked to provide evidence of any training undertaken to Julie Vincent, so that this can be added to their school files. **Action: Governors.**

5.4 Link Governor roles list

- Governors received the Link Governor roles list, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

6. Committees

6.1 Committee membership

- Governors received the Committee membership report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that Naomi Kelly should be a member of the Curriculum & Pupils Committee, and not the Finance & Staffing Committee. The Clerk **agreed** to amend the Committee membership report. **Action: Clerk.**
- It was **agreed** that Stuart Kay would be added to the Finance & Staffing Committee and the Premises, Health & Safety Committee. **Action: Clerk.**

6.2 Committee meeting attendance

- Governors received the Committee meeting attendance report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.

6.3 Committee meeting minutes

- Governors received the following Committee meeting minutes, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
 - Curriculum and Pupils Sub-committee, 7 June 2021
 - Finance and Staffing Sub-committee, 7 June 2021
- The Principal highlighted some points from each of the Sub-committee meetings, as follows:

Curriculum and Pupils Sub-Committee meeting, 7 June 2021

- Item 1.1, Pupil number projection: The Chief Executive clarified that the current projection for student numbers in September are 157 for Cedars School and 62 for Cedars College.
- Item 1.2: Timings of school day: Staff were consulted on the proposed changes to the timings of the school day, and parents are also being consulted. The consultation period will end on 5 July.
- Item 3.5: CPD update: Training days will be 6 and 7 September, and 1 November.
- Item 4.2.4: Summer Activities Club: The Chief Executive explained that we have received funding for Summer Activity Clubs, £16k Summer Fund & £12k . We are proposing to offer the activities club to 9 groups of 12 students at the School, and to 3 groups of 15 students at the College. 41 staff days are allocated to the activities club across the 6-week period. Costs are covered in the 2 grants the school will receive.

Finance and Staffing Sub-Committee meeting, 7 June 2021

- Item 2.2: Staff Development/requests: all points under this item were ratified.
- Item 2.4.2: Building Development Update/College Accommodation: Terms for 11 Walker Terrace have been agreed. The school will be taking on a 10-year lease for the building. The lease will be signed, and the key will be obtained within the next few weeks.

7. Chief Executive's Report

- Governors received the Chief Executive's Report, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that there was an error in Item 1.1.5. 70 referrals were made throughout the year, rather than 40 which was stated in the report. There is currently a waiting list of around 20 students. The school is in discussions with the local authority as to which students on the waiting list should be prioritised.

The Chief Executive gave the following responses to questions from Governors:

- *Long term, is there scope for growth beyond those numbers, or are you simply restricted by the size of the rooms?* Our plans for student numbers are based primarily on the capacity of the rooms and other available space, as given in Building Bulletin 104. It is anticipated that the School number will go up further as we respond to individual cases on the waiting list (ie making the judgement 'unless to do so would be unsuitable or incompatible with the efficient education of others or with the efficient use of resources'). Where parents wish to challenge this position then they may go to tribunal.
- *[Comment]: Some of the children have been on the waiting list for 18 months*

to 2 years. We are trying to accommodate as many as we can, however we cannot take in all of the children. If we go to tribunal over this, it is likely that we will lose our case.

- Has anyone approached you in terms of part time schooling? Not on an outreach basis, although we have had other schools approach us asking for assistance.
 - *[Comment]: Confidentially, regarding Blaydon Youth Club, I am confident that we will get the Sure Start from Blaydon, which will free up space at Blaydon Youth Club for alternative education provision.*
- Regarding Item 1.4, the Chief Executive has asked the Student Council to consider what should be done in relation to the results and analysis of the student questionnaire. The Student Council is currently looking at this.
 - Regarding Item 4.1.2, School Facilities Development, Gill and Gordon have seen the proposals and have **given approval** for these works to go ahead. The cost of the works will be around £110,000.
 - The size of the school's current reserves is £1.3 million, and a further £140,000 will be received from VAT. £450,000 of this money is for next year's fixed costs. The Audit plan has been circulated to Governors.
 - The proposed date for the AGM is Monday 6 December, 4:30pm at Cedars School
 - There will be a draft audit meeting on Wednesday 17 November and draft accounts will be sent to governors on 26th November, in preparation of the AGM

7.1 Update on School Improvement Plan

- As presented at Committee level, it was noted that the Academy Development Plan has been RAG rated. The cycle ends in July with a new cycle to run September - July. The development plan has been hit significantly by Covid, and it is envisaged that a more meaningful plan will be in place in September.
- It was noted that the term 'Academy Development Plan' will be used going forward, instead of 'School Development Plan.'

7.2 Safeguarding

- It was noted that a full safeguarding report had been presented at the Curriculum & Pupils Committee. The Chief Executive **agreed** to send this to the Clerk, who would then circulate the report to all Governors. **Action: Principal, Clerk.**

7.3 Arrangements for Headteacher's (Chief Executive's) performance management

- It was noted that the last Headteacher's performance management took place in the Autumn term 2020.
- It was **agreed** that the next performance management would be scheduled for Autumn 2021. The date will be determined nearer the time. **Action: Chief Executive.**

8. Self-review of Governing Body (SEF)

8.1 NGA twenty questions and NGA Skills Audit

- Governors received the NGA Twenty Questions document and the NGA Skills Audit document, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that the 20 Questions and Skills Audit had been completed by Governors in September 2020. Julie Vincent **agreed** to forward Governors' responses to the Clerk. **Action: Julie Vincent.**

9. Policy schedule

- Governors received the Policy schedule document, as circulated with the agenda by email, prior to the meeting.
- It was noted that the RSE Policy had been updated. Governors **agreed to review and re-adopt** the RSE policy.
- In terms of the Financial Scheme of Delegation, the Clerk **agreed** to check whether this needed to be readopted, or whether the Academy could continue to use their own Scheme of Delegation which is currently in place. **Action: Clerk.**

10. Dates and times of future meetings for all clerked meetings for 2021/22

- Governors **agreed** future meeting dates as follows:

Autumn Term

Monday 18 October 2021, 5.00pm

Spring Term

Tuesday 1 March 2022, 5.00pm

Summer Term

Monday 20 June 2022, 5.00pm

11. Any other business

Therapy Centre video

Michelle O'Reilly played a short video to Governors, showing the progress that is being made with the rebuilding of the Therapy Centre.

The meeting finished at 6.05pm.

Date..... Signed.....