

Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee – Minutes

13 November 2019

Attendance

Governors - Louise Russell, Claire Bolderson,, Ashley Smith, Mikel Ghebreyohannes, Jodie Reed
Mark Owen, Headteacher
Sara Wright, Business Manager

1. Budget monitoring

Budget is on track. Some variances noted including

- Additional spend on curriculum resources to prepare for new Ofsted framework
- Investment in new ICT suite – MO and SW looking into further fundraising opportunities for ICT
- Ongoing pressures on supply staff budget - additional requirement to cover non-contact time for curriculum leaders in developing new curriculum

SW will circulate December budget monitoring to Committee for review.

We continue to project a deficit budget which will eat into our carried forward surplus. LBI projections for 20/21 are that schools will have similar or possibly slightly higher funding. Will need to look at more fully in spring term.

2. Capital

We have made some big capital investments this year – in the top hall improvements; ICT suite upgrade and a range of health and safety improvements. We have received grants for much of this but also eaten into our own capital. We are only expecting to carry forward £1000 capital to 20/21. The Committee were assured that the building is now in a good condition and we have done some key improvement works which will stand us in good stead even though capital allocation remains low.

3. Science for Life project

The Committee reviewed the separate SfL project budget – looking to the final year of LBI funding we are working up plans to ensure a more strategic allocation of resources and Mark is working with Meg, new project lead, to enable this.

MO also looking at future funding and sustainability options for for Science for Life project. LBI and Institute of Physics keen to extend the project – to secondary schools (LBI) and beyond Islington (IoP). Whilst this is exciting, we need to be clear with both that Gillespie and Mark can support but not lead this project development work.

Action: Mark to liaise with LBI and IoP on this basis

4. Schools funding consultation

Committee considered the LBI schools funding consultation. They propose to continue to move to the National Funding Framework allocations and with the agreement of schools retain funds for falling rolls and certain shared services. The Committee was broadly supportive of this. Agreed that FutureZone will continue to look at whether there are better options for joint purchase of services.

4. FutureZone

Sara and Mark provided an update on Future Zone exploration of savings potential of additional joint purchasing. This has included the option for volume discounts on supply agency costs – but no indication this would provide significant savings. A more radical option might be to develop our own supply agency to serve FutureZone schools.

Also exploring joint purchasing of ICT equipment – there may be potential savings, eg in relation to photocopying.

Other options include a centralised approach to advertising lettings for school premises.

The main conclusion from explorations so far is that any savings are unlikely to be massive but will continue to pursue where we can.

SW/MO to continue to update the Committee on progress

6. School Financial Value Statement and schools dashboard

We considered changes to the requirements of the SFVS – one of these is that Committees should consider budget monitoring 6 times a year. We currently do this in Committee three times yearly. It was agreed we would circulate budget monitoring between each meeting for questions and issues to be raised by email and followed up at the next meeting.

SW to identify best dates to circulate to Committee

We also noted that the Committee needs to consider future contracts up for renewal.

SW to provide a list of those coming up to next Committee meeting

We reviewed the schools dashboard and noted that we appear to have higher costs in relation to teacher costs and pupil to adult balance.

Mark to review further and report back our understanding of reasons for these.

Committee queried whether there was any risk of falling rolls which is affecting other local schools. MO reported that demand for places at Gillespie is still very high and interest seems to be on the increase.

We will sign off the SFVS at March Committee meeting.

LR and SW to agree draft to bring to Committee.

Next meeting – Weds 18th March