

Finance, Premises and Personnel Committee – Minutes

13 May 2020

Attendance – online Zoom meeting

Governors - Louise Russell, Claire Bolderson, Jodie Reed, Sajni Patani, Rej Bangar, Mickel Ghebreyohannes, Dan Hamilton
Mark Owen, Headteacher
Sara Wright, Business Manager

1. Budget for 2020/21

We reviewed the draft budget for 2020/21. The carry forward from 2019/20 for the school budget is £104K, the full carry forward figure is £126,922 but that includes funding dedicated to the Science for Life project.

Sara explained that LBI advice is to budget as usual this year, not taking into account the Covid-19 related changes including school closure. There may be some savings related to school closure – but there are also additional costs, some of which (eg cleaning, PPE for staff) can be claimed back from the DfE, up to £25K.

We considered any major changes from 2019/20

- The reduced budget for grounds maintenance reflects that a number of projects were done in 19/20, some with fundraised income. Any further work this year will need to be fundraised for.
- After school clubs are budgeted for 2 terms only as there will be none this term.
- Agency costs have increased
- Energy costs have reduced – these come from LBI
- Reduced photocopying costs due to new contracts
- Reduction in budgeted curriculum expenditure was queried by governors. It was suggested that there may be additional costs related to the ‘recovery curriculum’ needed following children being out of school for some time. The focus will be catch up for key literacy and numeracy skills and on pupil wellbeing, so there will not necessarily be significant additional resource requirements but Mark agreed to consider and review. [The budget for curriculum resources has subsequently been increased by £6K]
- Catering costs – not reduced despite school closure and less provision. LBI are seeking to negotiate with CaterLink to reduce the contract costs.
- ICT equipment – have upgraded the ICT suite during 2019 so budget reduced. Will continue to look at ways to bring in additional money for additional kit, eg through FOG support, grant funds etc. Currently there is high demand for tablets due to increased working from home – LBI is looking to provide additional for more vulnerable children without access.

The final proposed budget will give an in year deficit of £77,000 – this is covered by last year’s surplus, but we need to consider reducing costs in the future as the ongoing deficit will not be sustainable.

Mark continues to consider ways to reduce teaching costs, which our benchmarking indicates are higher than similar schools – but we have prioritised the appointment of high quality teaching staff who are at, or move quickly to, higher salary grades. For the time being, while the budget allows, we

are also retaining the specialist SEN teacher who was funded last year by LBI for a particular pupil who is now leaving the school.

Governors agreed that we need to look more fully at the 3 year financial plan in the autumn term, as there may be more difficult decisions in the future.

Action: Sara will circulate final budget with proposed changes.

Committee will consider 3 year plan in more detail at autumn meeting

2. Capital

Capital budget for 20/21 is £9630 – no major works currently required or planned, other than those being funded by LBI in relation to flat roof repairs and rebuilding of outsider shelter. These works are currently on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions but hope that they will restart soon.

Action: MO to chase LBI about restart.