

Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Governing Committee of Liskeard School and Community College held in the conference room of the School on Tuesday 7th February 2018 at 7pm.

Present:

Davina Finch (Chair), Ian Williams, Alex Lingard (Headteacher), Jenny Brown, Mark Graham, Helen Arnold, Dereen Carnegie-Rance, Ian Goldsworthy, Sue Brownlow and Mark Wigley

Absent:

Annette Lee-Julian, David Young, Katie Conway, Trudi Hocking

In Attendance: Dan Buckley (SMART CEO) and Paul Taylor (Business Manager)

1. **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Procedure for evacuating the building**

The Chair outlined the procedure for evacuating the building.

3. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest – verbal**

None

4. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Katie Conway due to work commitments, Annette Lee-Julian due to the cold weather, David Young due to his car breaking down and Trudi Hocking due to the late start to the meeting.

5. **To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2107**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2017, which had been previously circulated, were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to an amendment to item 13 on page 4 changing “the Chair had inspected the single central record on 16th November 2017” to “the Chair of the LGC had inspected the single central record on 16th November 2017.” In terms of the action points from those minutes, it was noted that the Headteacher had thanked all staff involved in the IL plan process. It was also noted that the managed move process has changed under the SIP and that in this respect, it has been agreed that a student will not go on a managed move until certain procedures have been followed.

6. **Matters Arising**

The SMART CEO explained that he attended a meeting with other CEOs and the RSC at which the new MAT frameworks and the experience of the RSC’s education advisors was discussed. It was noted that there is a new education advisor for SMART who will be undertaking a series of visits to schools in the MAT, the first of which will be Dobwalls. He said that, at a national level, there are no set criteria for assessing whether a MAT is good or bad and that to put criteria in place for such assessments is a challenge for the DfE. The SMART CEO said that SMART has a good relationship with the RSC. He thanked the Headteacher for hosting a meeting with the RSC and said that those who attended were very impressed with the feel of Liskeard School. He said that whilst the report from the RSC, as a result of a visit to Saltash School, was not very positive, the school had responded in a positive way in an attempt to address some of the concerns that had been raised. He said that the ability of SMART to choose priorities across the MAT is one of its strengths. He said that in all

areas in the schools in the MAT where exam results are lower than the national average, the schools have plans in place. The SMART CEO said there is a new Chair of the MAT board who will introduce himself to Liskeard LGC in due course. He explained that a cross MAT union meeting has taken place which will take place on an annual basis. He said that such a meeting could take place termly if this was required. He explained that the Student Leadership Board will be presenting to the Trust Board and LGCs in due course. He said that the SMART policies that have been ratified are all on the SMART website. He said the Heads Forum has been renamed the MAT Leadership Team. He said that one of the SLT from Liskeard School has been working at Looe School, sharing best practice, and this has been very well received. He said that leadership best practice is also being shared across the primary schools. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain if there is money available within SMART for external staff to be employed.** He said that there is not currently finance available for this as the budgets are being stabilised across the MAT. He said that the money in the budget to finance central services is currently very small and therefore, this has a minimal impact on individual schools' budgets. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain how the finance of the SMART has capacity and is sustainable in the long term.** He said that SMART is attempting to get contracts aligned across the MAT which will lead to huge financial savings. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain if the staff in the CBU are able to cope with the cross MAT work.** He said that there is not capacity to expand the CBU until savings have been made. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain what other central services the MAT should have but cannot afford.** He said that a single network, a single data analysis system and centralised HR are examples. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to address concerns regarding the lack of budgeted capacity to achieve school improvement lead work.** The SMART CEO said there are three models to address these concerns: identify consultants to undertake this work; employ SIP staff centrally; new appointees have a dual SIP and school role. He said that some of the existing staff have been prepared to undertake SIP work across the MAT and that when new senior leaders are appointed, they can be offered posts with a senior leadership role for the individual school and a wider role within the MAT. **A governor asked who agreed this latter model.** The SMART CEO said that the Heads Forum has discussed the model. A governor commented that there has to be a question over the capacity to do this which is essentially firefighting an issue in a school within the MAT when the need arises. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain what the impact will be on the school and the MAT of the slow expansion of the CBU in providing central services.** He said that the MAT is in a stabilising state and to expand more rapidly would necessitate investment from individual schools. He said that the schools within the MAT are used to being single operating bodies but he considers that sharing expertise across the MAT presents a win-win situation. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain what the time frame is for the expansion of the CBU and the development of the MAT as a whole.** He said that there is a five year strategic plan which is published on the website and as this is a working document, LGCs will be consulted on updates before it is finalised. It was agreed that the five year plan for the MAT would be an agenda item for the next meeting of the LGC which will be on March 13th 2018. A governor commented that if individual schools could deliver more budget savings across the MAT, the CBU could expand more rapidly and the savings which would accrue as a result of centralised services would happen more quickly. The SMART CEO confirmed that this is the case.

A governor commented that she was concerned that the agenda for this meeting does not contain an update on standards in the school and that the LGC seems to be monitoring progress less often than it did when there were individual finance and curriculum and learning committees. The SMART CEO said that the calendar for 2018/19 will start being reviewed soon and this comment can be borne in mind. **A governor asked if directors had left the board.** The SMART CEO said that two directors had resigned due to work commitments and that one member has resigned and has been replaced by Brian Cooke. **A governor challenged the SMART CEO to explain the policy regarding cash payments being made for revision resources, books and school trips.** The governor said that the LGC agreed to a system which would be principally cashless and that whilst the use of cash as a method of payment would not be promoted, it would still be able to be used in exceptional circumstances. She said that there have been occasions when cash payments offered by students

have been refused and this is not acceptable. The SMART CEO said that the SMART policy is for a cashless system but cash can be used in exceptional circumstances if the individual schools are willing to accept cash. The Business Manager said there is a cost to the school in taking cash in terms of banking and reconciliation but that cash will be taken in exceptional circumstances.

Governors challenged the issue that cash can only be used in exceptional circumstances stating that there are families who only deal with cash and have no bank account or access to one in order to make cashless payments. The Headteacher said that the Finance Office will take cash and that there were only two occasions when the use of cash had been questioned, both of which have now been resolved. He said that the matter will be kept under review.

The Headteacher explained that it was proposed to have a school trip to London in May 2018 aimed at developing cooperative values. He said the cost of the trip is £140. Governors agreed to this trip.

7. **Headteacher's Report**

This had been circulated in advance of the meeting which the Headteacher summarised. From this:

School Uniform

The Headteacher said there were two options in respect of school uniform. The first is to retain the existing school uniform which allows parents freedom to choose where they purchase the uniform. He said this allows for flexibility and keeps the costs of uniform as low as possible. The second option is to insist on standardised trousers and skirts which have to be purchased from a given supplier. He said this will result in less work for the pastoral team who endeavour to uphold uniform standards. He said there is a small minority of students who will not wear suitable skirts or trousers and that the majority of schools ask parents to purchase uniform from one supplier. He said that the school could buy some suitable skirts and trousers and give them to persistent offenders of the uniform code. He said that he is considering changing the school tie to reflect the house system. A governor commented that different colour school ties may result in the school losing its identity with the community. Governors agreed that this was not an appropriate time to make significant changes to the school uniform due to the recent introduction of universal credits and the change to SMART. It was agreed that further consultation would take place with parents and students and the matter would be considered further at the next LGC meeting on 13th March 2018.

8. **Finance Report**

The Business Manager explained that there is a new software system for budget management and that under this system, a report on period 4 management accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting. He said that the management accounts report includes details including the year to date actual figures and the year to date budget figures, the total for the year and the forecast figures and the actual and budget figures for each half of a year and the variance against that figure. He emphasised that budgets are not fixed in year as income streams alter and expenditure varies. He gave an overview of the income data for period 4 explaining that it included overall external government funding (GAG funding) which is shown as more than the budgeted figure in period 4, other government grants which is shown as slightly less than the budgeted figure in period 4, parents' contributions to the school fund and other income. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain if the forecasted figure of £16,000 deficit in the other income budget was a certainty.** He said that it is based on the current situation in December 2017 and the situation, in reality, is that the other income figure is likely to have less of a deficit as the income being generated is more than the budgeted figure. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain if income is generated from the solar panels.** The Business Manager said that the electricity bills are reduced as a result of the solar panels. **A governor asked when the comparative figures in the management accounts would be presented.** The Business Manager said he would follow this matter up with Jo Lumbard. **In terms of expenditure, a governor challenged the Business Manager to explain why the figure for educational support is so high.** He explained that there were some errors in setting this budget in that some salaries had been omitted. In addition, he said that overtime and extra costs incurred by TAs accounts for some of the expenditure. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain why the overtime and extra costs for the TAs was so**

high. He said that there has been significant support staff absence this year and that TAs have been paid to cover for this absence. In addition, he said that agency staff expenditure is high due to high teaching staff absence. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain the situation in respect of insurance for staff sickness.** The Headteacher explained that the insurance only covers sickness for teaching staff. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to inform governors how much will be able to be claimed to date from the insurance policy for staff sickness.** He said that he estimated the figure to be £26,000. The Headteacher explained that cover supervisors can cover some short term sickness for teaching staff but there have been insufficient cover supervisors this year to cover for long term absence of teaching staff too. Therefore, he said that agency staff have had to be employed. **A governor challenged the Headteacher to outline some of the reasons for the large amount of staff absence.** He said that for teaching staff, the reasons included vertigo, surgery, bereavement, chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer and a difficult pregnancy and for support staff, the reasons included chronic fatigue syndrome, mental health, bereavement and surgery. He said that in terms of short term absence, the D and V bug and the flu bug has resulted in significant short term staff and student absence. He said that on several occasions, 10% of students were absent. It was noted that in terms of long term staff absence, the majority have been physical issues with only one relating to stress and this was not solely work related stress. He said that staff welfare has not been a major reason for absence but inevitably, absence of staff members does impact on staff welfare which is then reflected in the short term absence. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to consider insuring absence for support staff.** The Headteacher said that it is not simply a question of insuring the absence but about assessing exactly what the role of support staff is to enable this cover to be effective. **A governor challenged the Headteacher to explain how well the occupational health process is working.** He said that it seems to be working well and it was noted that Tic Tac is always willing to help wherever possible. It was noted that flu jabs are offered to all staff free of charge but there was only a 25% uptake as the perception is that the flu jab is ineffective. Governors agreed that they were happy that the school is doing all it can to reduce staff sickness.

In terms of other expenditure lines, the Business Manger brought governors' attention to the other occupational costs line which includes electricity and gas. He said that these are large areas of expenditure with electricity being £7,000 over budget and gas being £3,000 over budget. He said that accruals have been included in these figures based on previous expenditure so the figures may not be accurate. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain if the school owns the solar panels.** He said that the school owns one array for which they receive the feed in tariff and free electricity but Cornwall Council owns the other array so the school only receives free electricity from these. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain where the money comes from to balance the budget when there is a large over spend at the year end.** The Headteacher said that as many cuts in year take place to avoid a large overspend and that it has not been a structural problem in the budget year on year and therefore, not a major cause for concern provided there is a 3 year plan in place to rectify the overspend. He said that in the MAT, a balanced budget has to be set. He said that the SMART CEO will be looking at the curriculum structure to see how effective it is and whether savings can be made in this area. **A governor asked if a large over spend will result in staff redundancies.** The Headteacher said it will not as there is enough staff employed on fixed contracts to avoid redundancies. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain what ICT costs include.** He said they include licences, broadband and smoothwall. **A governor challenged the Business Manger to explain why capital expenditure is £200,000.** He said this is because the Pfi costs are detailed as income and expenditure. **A governor asked if the electricity and gas contracts are negotiated by the MAT.** The Business Manager said they are not at the moment but will be done by the CBU in due course.

Premises

The Business Manager explained that works to the window walling on the north side of the building have now been completed. He said the contractors praised the school for their cooperation and they will be returning in the summer to undertake works to the library and to the nursery canopies.

He said there is only a small section of window walling left to be done. The Business Manager said the refurbishment of the heating is complete although the commissioning of the heating has been an issue. He said that the heating is not completely working in that there are areas which are not controllable so some areas of the school have been heated constantly during holidays and weekends; hence the bills are so high. He said that he will be investigating making a claim from the contractors for this excessive energy use. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain how old the boilers are.** He said they are approximately 10 years old and will probably last for another 2 years. He said that the programme of works for next year will soon be discussed and that he will report this to the meeting of the LGC on 13th March 2018. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain if the heating in the Dance studio is now working.** He said that it is but the roof is leaking in the dance and drama studios which has been caused by the installation of the solar panels. He said that that he will be investigating making a claim for these repairs from the contractor who installed the solar panels and from Cornwall Council as the owner of the array. **A governor challenged the Business Manager to explain what progress has been made in terms of the resurfacing of the tennis courts.** He said that he had obtained a quotation in the sum of £48,000 to £65,000 but the school cannot fund this so he is looking at the possibility of grant funding for the project.

Health and Safety

The Business Manager said there have been no incidents of significance and that there has not been a meeting recently of the Health and Safety Committee. He said there is a national initiative for schools to register their radioactive resources and to review how chemicals and other scientific materials are handled. It was noted that David Young is the Health and Safety Governor.

9. **Governor Training**

To be discussed at the next meeting.

10. **Reports from Governor Visits**

The Chair said that the Chairs of SMART are working on a policy for governor visits which will, in due course, be discussed by the LGC.

11. **Report from the Chair**

The Chair asked governors if they had any specific training needs. The Chair said it would be beneficial to have training in the new software system that has replaced RAISE online. The Chair informed governors that the governors' day in school would take place on 13th March 2018 and that the SMART day was on 19th February 2018. She said that governors are receiving details of the dates and times of the faculty reviews so that there is a governor presence at these meetings.

12. **Safeguarding**

None

13. **Confirm Date and Time of Next Meetings**

The date of the next LGC will be on Tuesday 13th March 2018 in the conference room at LSCC commencing at 8:30am.

The meeting finished at 9:35pm.

ACTION SUMMARY	