

The Viridis Schools Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Schools

Resources Governing Body Sub-committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

On Thursday 19th May 2022 at 4.30pm

Committee Attendees

Sara Walshingham (SW)
Laura Theobald (LT)
Giuseppa Colella-Mare (GCM)
Clerk: Manna Ghidey

James Gowland (JG)
Hanna Lownsborough (HL)
Rachel Davie (RD)

1. Welcome

a. Apologies / consent for absence

No Apologies. All present.

b. Acknowledgement and agreement that the meeting will proceed virtually

All in agreement.

2. Governing Body Organisation

a. Membership

No declarations.

b. Acknowledgment of TOR

No changes or comments made.

c. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda & register of pecuniary interests for 2021/2022

RD noted that there have been some updates from individual governors.

d. Code of Conduct

No changes or comments made.

e. Governing Body Annual Calendar

No changes to the current governing body annual calendar.

A provisional Governing Body Calendar for the 22/23 academic year has been shared with the governors for their review and feedback.

3. Agreements of the minutes from the last meeting

All agreed. – No corrections or changes.

4. Budget Monitoring

a. The Viridis Schools Year End 2021/2022

21/22 Year End Viridis Report was presented to The Resources Committee prior to the meeting.

(GCM) Reported that the budget has been on target for the 21/22 financial year. The 1st section of the report shows that there has been minimal change to the initial forecasted budget. The revenue income has been on target with the total amount received from the LA in 21/22 was £10.531mil. In addition to the C/F amount from the previous financial year of £1.5mil, gives The Federation a grand total of £12.03mil.

(GCM) Stated that there has been some variation in the actual expenditure in 21/22.

- Premises and administrative staffing costs have remained consistent. However, as reported during the 9 month expenditure review, there has been some variation across teaching and class based support staff. This has been compensated by the increase in E26/27 – agency teaching and support staff.
- £122k has been spent in building and maintenance and all jobs that were listed during previous resources meetings have been completed.
- The increased cleaning costs incurred during the pandemic have remained in place to maintain the high standards of cleaning and sanitization across the federation, including the extra hours for cleaning during lunchtime. This will continue to be a feature in The Federations cleaning contract.
- There has been a reduction in catering expenditure due to less children having dinners.
- E30 – Direct Revenue Financing - £210K moved from revenue to capital due to the government capital funding not covering capital costs.
- E31/E32 – Community Focused School Costs – has been on target.

(GCM) Confirmed that the carry forward from the 21/22 financial year is £1.2 million. However, this does include the money set aside for the refurbishment to the caretaker house at Hoxton. GCM stated that the refurbishment is due to take place in the 2022/23 financial year, once the façade works are completed. By the end of the 22/23 financial year end, the carry forward should be reduced once the cost to refurbish the house has been paid. The project is being taken forward to be achieved by the end of the financial year.

(GCM) Stated that the government had given £27K in funding for capital works for the three schools. However, this is not enough to fund any large projects. Therefore, £210k has been transferred from the revenue to finance capital and IT works.

(SW) Noted that there is a deficit in B06 – Community focused school revenue balances.

(GCM) Explained that B06 is the cumulative amount that the school subsidises to cover the costs of running the clubs and buying resources.

(GCM) Noted that the amount of £484K spans over the last 10 years.

(SW) Questioned if this was a good method of monitoring the expenditure.

(GCM) Stated that an analysis of the clubs will be conducted to establish the amount the schools have been subsidising all extended school activities. This will be done for each club, including what the

parents pay and how much the school is subsidising. This will determine whether an increase in parent contributions is needed, given that the costs of running those clubs have increased. Next year the figure will be more accurate and will be based on the expenditure costs of that financial year.

(RD) Stated that the figure in B06 is misleading and that a breakdown will help to establish exactly what is happening as it is not clear in this context.

(SW) Asked, whether the Federation was at risk of clawback from the LA given that the amount of the surplus is significant.

(GCM) Noted that the amount of the surplus does exceed the threshold of 8% of the total funding. The Federations percentage is at 13.66%. GCM stated that as long as The Federation can produce a clear plan of how the surplus will be spent, then there is little chance of Hackney clawing back the money. GCM noted that in the coming years there are proposed changes to the formula funding and a small surplus allows The Federation to have a contingency when the changes happen.

(RD) Added that senior leaders at HE have been made aware of the challenges around the Hoxton Caretaker House Project and how this has impacted the carry forward. This has supported the narrative for ring fenced funding whilst going through the procurement process.

(JG) Asked whether there were any surprises in the Year End Budget compared with what was in the original budget.

(GCM) Stated that there were no unknown quantities other than the variations in salaries and agency staff expenditure.

(GCM) Noted that the Year End Budget Report has been finalised and needs to be signed and sent to Hackney Education.

b. The Viridis Schools New Year Budget 2022/2023 (including forward projection)

Income

(GCM) Stated that as there have been no changes to AWPU and the deprivation index this year, the amount pledged to the schools is similar to last year. PPG has increased by £20 per child. I01 – Delegated funding from LA, is calculated based on the October's census and will not change during the year despite fluctuations in pupil role.

PPG/SEN can fluctuate depending on any changes to the number of high level needs children throughout the year. The funding is calculated based on the three school censuses throughout the year. The remaining income budget consists of sales of facilities in the schools. (E.g. uniforms, bank interest, sales of dinners, educational visits and donations.) Other funding includes UFSM and sports grants. Plus the additional COVID recovery funding, which will stop this year.

Expenditure

(GCM) Stated that an evaluation of the staffing structure was conducted to ensure an accurate budget of the salaries. The amount allocated to Building and maintenance this year has increased due to other building projects being carried out in this financial year. Including works to the playgrounds to ensure that structures are compliant with Health and Safety. The amount allocated to energy has also increased. There are two reasons for this. One is because the new electricity company have not charged Orchard for electricity usage for the last 18 months. This will hopefully be resolved this financial year. The other reason is because of the current energy price cap increase and the one expected during the winter.

(JG) Queried if the figure had almost double compared to last year.

(GCM) Confirmed that the amount in the budget is double to cover all the expected increases. GCM noted that the money allocated for rates is consistent.

(SW) Queried whether Hackney had started taking the business rates centrally.

(GCM) Stated that the schools are still receiving the money. GCM was initially told that the rates would be taken centrally but Hackney have since backtracked.

GCM stated that the amount allocated to Learning resources is based on the expenditure in 21/22. There is a slight increase in the IT budget to buy more IT hardware. GCM noted that there will be one final payment for the iPad leases. Catering supplies has increased slightly despite the reduction in children having dinners last year. Caution has been taken in light of the upcoming tender and contract renewal and the potential increase in prices. This may result in an increase to the amount payable by the parents. All other administrative and insurance costs are similar to last year. E26/E27 supply costs has increased in the budget due to more children with high level EHCP funding allocated one-to-one specialist support.

(RD) Clarified that the number of EHP Children at Level 4/5 funding has increased across The Federation. This means that a higher percentage of adults are needed to support the full time supervision of those children, ensuring their needs are met.

(GCM) Stated that E28 – Hackney Services remains constant. £400K has been budgeted in E30 – revenue contributions to capital – for the house refurbishments. E31/32 – the amount allocated for club costs has increased slightly.

(GCM) Explained that the total expenditure is predicted to be £11.1million in 22/23 and without the carry forward The Federation would be in a deficit of £664K given that the total amount received from the LA is £10.5million. GCM stated that as a measure of contingency a small carry forward would be ideal as a buffer for any unexpected costs throughout the year.

(GCM) Stated that the last section in the report is the money allocated to Capital Income and Expenditure. The Federation receives £28Kc in total from the government for capital works. Using the

carry forward surplus, an additional £400K will be allocated to finance the Hoxton House Project. £50K will be put towards IT Hardware. The plan for IT is to replace the remaining old PCs around the shared spaces in the school and to invest in iPads for SEN.

(JG) Noted that in the 22/23 financial year, the majority of capital will go towards the house. JG asked if there were any plans for other building or playground works.

(GCM) Clarified that there is a separate code in expenditure for those works; E12 – building improvements and maintenance.

(RD) Noted that there are five smaller scale projects planned in 22/23. This includes works on the back lands at ORC which was anticipated to need accounting for in the next 24 months due to the lifespan of the wooden structure. There is also plans to renovate the PPA room at HG.

(JG) Asked for an update on the possible window renovations at SW.

(RD) Stated that the façade works at HG were still ongoing due to a few delays but the works are due to be completed by August. ORC and SW are in the 5/6 tranche of façade works being carried out by Hackney. RD doesn't anticipate the works to happen until next Jan/Feb at the earliest. RD does have written confirmation with an agreement that the windows will be renovated during SW's façade works. RD plans to hold Hackney to this as it would be a costly project for the school to facilitate.

c. Risks & Planning (including carry forward)

(GCM) Stated that the Surplus Spending Plan explains how The Federation envisions to use the carry forward surplus across three years. The plan is to use some of the carry forward for cover teacher costs and SALT TAs over the next 3 years. A portion of the carry forward has been allocated to IT Hardware in order to purchase computers and iPads for SEN pupils. £20K will be used to top up the stock of Reading Books across The Federation and £60K will be used to fund the refurbishment of the libraries at ORC and HG. £100K will be used for building improvements and £450K will be allocated to Capital works and building improvement.

A further £50K will also be allocated to building improvements in year 2.

(SW) Noted that if the costs of IT and Capital it adds up to £480K but in the 22/23 budget, only £428K is stated. SW asked if that was because the costs are expected to increase.

(GCM) Stated that the indicated costs are still approximately £400k. However, the project needs to go through Hackney's protocol for procurement process, so the figure may fluctuate. Once the tendering process is complete, the costs will be more accurate.

(RD) Clarified that three assessments were undertaken and all three quotes produced were similar. From the initial assessments this will be a project management procurement, whereby a company will be sought to oversee the entire project. RD noted that this would also be brought to the FGB for discussion.

(HL) Asked if best practice in sustainability is considered when considering companies for projects like the house.

(RD) Stated that sustainability will be considered in the tendering process. RD noted that it was interesting that each company had a different approach, but as part of their wider company drives, there is dialogue about sustainability. It's just the extent to which it manifests itself in the projects. Sustainability will be a very important point of discussion in the next process.

(JG) Asked what is needed from the FGB with regards to the house.

(RD) Stated that the situation has been in constant process of change across the last couple of weeks. More information is being uncovered about the process, especially around the UK/EU changes in the procurement process and whether it would be an open or closed tender. The Federation has now been appointed a point of contact at Hackney who will be leading the procurement process and providing advice and guidance throughout.

(GCM) Announced that Hackney have since confirmed that The Federation can opt for a closed tender.

5. Benchmarking Analysis

(RD) Stated that since the last resources meeting, RD and GCM have completed a benchmarking analysis to ensure there's a more precise approach to the evaluation and comparison across federation contexts. During the analysis and comparison, New Wave (NW) has been selected as the most comparable federation due to its similarity in size. NW has 200 children more than Viridis (VS). The Leap Federation, Millfields and Daubeney are all very different and are less comparable due to the number of children in the schools and not being federations themselves.

RD and GCM have also discussed the DfE benchmarking toll alongside the Hackney benchmarking analysis report to provide additional data to support the analysis of the benchmarking report.

(RD) Noted some of the key findings from the last resources meeting were the queries around the areas of the benchmarking analysis documents that didn't have a clear enough narrative. RD noted on page 4 of the benchmarking document that the cost of spend per pupil at NW is approximately £500 more than it is at VS. NW spend £800K more on teaching staff but only £150 more per pupil (pg. 5&6). Some of the reasons for this could be teacher experience and teacher salaries, which would then change the banding of funding attached to per pupil spend. Another point noted was that the other schools have not coded for supply staff (pg. 7). This could mean supply expenditure has been coded into teaching staff directly, and that would also impact per pupil spend for teaching and education support staff (pg. 5-9). Educational support staff is also considerably less, at £600 per pupil spend.

(RD) Noted on pg. 10 there is a higher spend per pupil for agency staff at £100 more. RD stated that upon further analysis it may be the way things are coded and the way VS approaches staffing compared with the other schools. One difference the availability of staff, the recruitment process, and the quality and calibre of teaching assistants that the schools are looking to recruit.

(RD) Noted on page 12, the reason for less spent on premises is due to VS holding separate cleaning contracts. On pg. 18, Viridis has significantly less spend per pupil for other staff compared to the other schools. This is because there is only two members of staff across The Federation that have midday supervisor contracts. Teaching Assistants hold midday responsibilities at VS. Pg. 31, the amount spent on Water and Sewage is considerably more compared with NW. this is due to a leak under the YR4 classrooms at Southwold School, which was investigated and repaired, and cost has since rebalanced. Page 39, Learning Resources spend per pupil shows a really strong comparable between VS and NW. Pg. 45 shows a strong disparity in per pupil spend. This is due to NW moving into support another school. This is also because at VS, Special Facilities includes very small nominal amounts of things such as school, uniform bags and photos. Pg. 50 shows a significant overspend from VS compared with all the other schools. This is because of the use of Unlocking Potential, supply TAs (LT and ST), which is all allocated to E27.

(RD) Stated that the DfE benchmarking tool will continue to be used alongside Hackney's benchmarking analysis as a measure of supporting the narrative of the benchmarking analysis each year.

(LT + JG) Noted that the evaluation was helpful.

(SW) Stated that the DfE has lots of tools on their benchmarking analysis.

(GCM) Noted it is interesting to see how the other schools code the CFR. GCM stated that the coding is the main issue when comparing the schools in the benchmarking process as each school codes different things to different codes depending on how each school interprets the CFR.

6. Marketing Analysis

(RD) Stated that targets for the Communication Manager (CM) was to ensure that there was clear strategy and direction going forward in terms of evaluation of where The Federation is in terms of pupil numbers, staffing, retention and also where The Federation is in comparison with Hackney and nationally. The reason for the marketing analysis is to ensure that The Federation is forward planning and evaluating the wider market consistently.

The core fundamental parts of the CM role have been established and an accountable structure of the role has been created to move forward with this year. The CM has successfully done this terms of establishing systems and processes for up levelling our communications structures. Including brand sophistication and embedding that responsive evaluation consistently.

The analysis highlights The Federations promotion of that wider context, particularly around the strength and consistency of the schools, the partnership with parents, pupil voice, the achievement for children when they leave at the end of the YR 6, our core curriculum offer presence of diversity and inclusion, our outreach action research, leadership development and CPD opportunities for staff. One of the challenges in this current climate is sustaining attainments following COVID-19, as part of the national agenda and the projections of potential falling role numbers, and the national outlook which would carry a significant financial risk.

The aim is to reach pre-pandemic levels of outreach opportunity, which The Federation is on course, but also reflecting on high living costs and the danger that might pose to recruitment in the long term.

RD noted the per pupil mobility on pg. 5 of the marketing plan which has been tracked over two years. There is reasonable stability within the pupil numbers. This is positive compared to other schools in Hackney who have quite a vast disparity. Once three or four years of data is collated, a more accurate prediction can be made. The staff leavers across two years and the reasons for leaving were also evaluated. This is in order to track across the schools and The Federation. Over 50% of staff have left due to relocating to other areas of the country.

RD noted a positive outcome of recruitment this year has been the number of people moving in and relocating back it to London, which does just suggests a better health in terms of that movement of teaching population overtime. RD stated that the final May half term resignation date was approaching, so the numbers may fluctuate but based on what is already known about resignations, there will be slight movement but the numbers will be in line with last year.

(RD) Noted that some strategic objectives include the awareness of schools and federation to new families, the development of target marketing materials and promotional vehicles to support that federation recruitment and the school website to ensure that Community priority is efficiently addressed, and the interactivity is embedded, which are the two next steps to moving that on from where it is and the opportunity to create that breadth of outreach. To emphasise what The Federation has to offer, particularly around things like our ECT program, which will be ready to roll out to other schools outside of the federation from September 2022.

(JG) Stated that the analysis was impressive and the CM did an excellent job.

7. Health & Safety / Premises Update and Staffing Update

(RD) Stated that the façade works were due to finish mid-June. However, the current focus of those works on the outfield in the car park is having minimal impact on the operational running of the school. The reason for the delay is due to the discovery of asbestos and rats nests in the back of the outbuilding. There is an ongoing issue with a leak on the back staircase at HG which is being investigated by the façade contractors and has a bit of an ongoing issue at the moment.

RD is waiting on timescales and plans for the façade works at SW and ORC. The 2nd phase of the decoration programme is scheduled to happen during the summer holidays to minimise the impact on classroom learning. The graffiti art on the inward side of the external walls of the schools is also going through some re-patching work in the summer holidays to ensure the external and internal-external of the school is kept at a high standard.

There's ongoing work being undertaken at Orchard School as a result of identified asbestos which was picked up as part of the annual asbestos assessments that's being addressed and dealt with, and they will continue to do routine surveys regularly under their responsibilities at Hackney Council. The back lands play structure at ORC is part of the forward planning works and researching how to increasing its life expectancy or looking at where parts of it can be replaced.

Defibrillators have been purchased for each school in line with recommendations that every school should have one on sight. No additional training is needed, it just means that there's a safeguard should an emergency or extreme situation occur for a member of staff or a child. It is expected that emergency services will provide instruction in the event of an incident.

8. Policies

a. ICT Policy

(RD) Noted that the IT policy was carried forward from then last resources meeting. The policy has been reviewed to remove some of the layers of jargon and simplifying some of the processes within the policy and the expectations. There are two amendments. One of which is the changes to email retention. It has been noted in the policy that emails are held within the school for 24 months and will be automatically be deleted after 24 months. This is due to go live in August this year.

The reason for this is to ensure that subject access requests that might happen are reasonable and proportionate to deal with. Emails going back 7, 8, 9 years are really unmanageable and there is a small but increasing number of subject access requests that that could that take place across the school academic year because of the changes to the data protection.

The second change is clarity around the use of USB. Whilst The Federation doesn't ban the use of USB's within the school; it does discourage the use of them and expects non personal data to be held on them. This is also being reiterated to staff as a key part of safeguarding, but also as part of revisiting and refreshing the policy with all school staff.

(JG) Noted the recent ransomware attack on the Mossbourne Academy and asked what The Federation has in place in terms of security.

(GCM) Explained that an IT audit of all three schools was conducted with SBS on the infrastructure of the school, and an action plan is set out to be worked on during the summer holidays. There are a few highlighted areas to address such as regularly changing passwords. SBS have ensured the highest level of security is in place on all emails and the internet across The Federation.

(RD) Noted that there has been no feedback from Hackney Education with regards to the ransomware attack. However, RD expects wider dialogue and discussion to happen next academic year.

9. Any Other Business

(LT) Asked for an update on the HTs.

(RD) Confirmed that SOB is moving to ORC. There have been two rounds of Headteacher recruitment that have been unsuccessful due the calibre of candidates that were not best suited to The Federation. There is a proposed interim plan in place where RD would become interim Headteacher at SW. However, in the 24hrs prior to the meeting a member of SLT has agreed to step into an interim leader

at SW with re-recruitment in the second half of the Autumn Term. This model will allow for EHT capacity and strategic overview of the three school provision.

(GCM) Noted that all three finance documents need to be signed by the chair of governors and to be sent to HE.

(SW) stated that a vote is to be made on the budget proposal. – All resources governors in agreement for the budget proposal and to be taken to FGB.

All governors have agreed on the surplus spend plan.

10. Glossary of Common Terms

11. Viridis Governing Body Calendar 2022/2023 – DRAFT

Included in the pack for governors to review for next academic year and feedback to RD any conflicts.

Meeting Concluded: 5.55pm