

THE DOMINIC BARBERI MAC
MINUTES OF THE 8TH DIRECTORS' MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY 2014 AT ST. GREGORY THE GREAT

Present: John Hussey (Ex. Principal) JH
Chris Bevan (F) CB
David Forster (F) DF
Duncan Marshall (C.S.) DM
Hazel Murray (F, V.C.) HM
Breda Bowles (Principal) BB †
Robert Dick (Parent) RD
John Kirwan (F) JK
Sue McGarry (Staff) SM
Father John O'Connor (F) JOC

† arrived later

Apologies: Katherine Powley (F, Chair) KP Roberto Barressi (F) RB

In Attendance: Liz Hayes (Clerk) LH

The meeting opened at 7.30pm.

The meeting was Quorate.

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer

In KP's absence, HM chaired the meeting, and welcomed all those present to the 8th meeting of the directors. DF opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Apologies, Declarations of Pecuniary Interests & AOB

Apologies had been received and were accepted from KP and RB.

RD and SM declared that they have an interest in the bids, which would be discussed under item 5.

JH declared an item of Confidential AOB and five other items to discuss.

3. Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the Last Meeting

There were two amendments to be made to these minutes, before they could be approved.

ACTIONS: LH would make the necessary amendment to each set of minutes, and would forward to all Directors.

HM would sign and date them as an accurate record of that meeting, and give them to DM for filing.

Matters Arising Not Elsewhere on the Agenda and On-going Actions

- **BB would suggest the Blue Sky system for all academies at the next meeting of the Principal's Committee.**
- **JH would ensure that the Performance Management of the Principal at St. Thomas Moore would be completed.**

4. FMGS – Action on Validation Visit

DM said that the EFA are happy with how far the MAC has come in such a short space of time, but that there are a number of outstanding issues for the Directors to resolve:

Counter Fraud Policy – This had been circulated to all directors prior to this meeting. It was approved, signed and dated.

† BB arrived at 7.45pm

Asset Management – Only one primary academy within the MAC has a very good structure for the management of assets. It is vital for all the academies to have a clear template, which can be easily updated for accounting and insurance purposes. DM outlined the options, which the directors then discussed. He proposed that the best solution would be to employ an outside agency to do the initial work and to produce the templates, which the academies could then update themselves. The cost would be £500 per day. The external company expects to spend ten days at St. Gregory's and two or three days at each of the primary academies. The software produced would cost £500 for each primary academy and £1,800 at St. Gregory's.

Q. What value does an item have to be in order to go on the asset register?

A. Items costing over £500 are currently included, although the EFA suggested that the value should be higher.

Q. What guarantees are there that the templates would be updated annually?

A. An inventory would need to be kept up-to-date for insurance purposes.

Q. If a baseline could be set in each academy, could the bursar then just add new equipment bought in?

A. Yes.

Q. Could the external company complete the exercise within the necessary time-frames?

A. ACTION: DM would check that this is still the case.

Q. Would this be paid for out of academy budgets or would it come from the top slice?

A. Individual academies will need to pay out of their own budgets, but it should be a one-off cost. It was noted that the smaller primary academies would find it more difficult to cover the cost out of their budgets.

Q. Is there any money left from the initial government grants that were provided to cover the start-up fees of the academies?

A. No.

Directors agreed in principle that it would make sense to ask an outside agency to provide the initial baseline for each academy's asset management.

ACTIONS: Directors would discuss this at the Resources Committee.

JH would then add this to the next agenda of the Principals' Committee.

Board Committees – Separate Audit and Finance Committees would need to be set up. JH suggested that, with the exception of the main budget meeting, these committees might meet immediately prior to the meetings of the Board of Directors. It was agreed that each committee would require a quorum of two, and should therefore have at least three members. Finance Committee: RD, DF and HM.

Audit Committee: CB, DF and KP – although DF would be step down if another director could take his place.

DM had circulated Terms of Reference for each of these committees to directors prior to this meeting.

ACTION: Each committee would review their own TOR at their first meeting.

JH informed directors that there would be meetings held on Thursday 27th February at St. Gregory the Great, when the Chairs or representation of the individual Academy Committees would meet with the directors who sit on the Board's Achievement and Curriculum Committee and the Finance, Health and Safety, Resources Committee.

ACTION: JH would co-ordinate these meetings.

Scheme of Delegation – DM had made changes to A1.6.1, A1.6.2 and A1.6.3. Directors approved the amendments.

Disaster Recovery Plan and ICT Recovery Plan – DM had circulated these plans to directors prior to this meeting, which directors agreed are very comprehensive. Both plans were approved, with slight amendments to the Disaster Recovery Plan, including an additional paragraph to cover A Lock Down procedure.

ACTIONS: DM would forward these plans to each academy, as well as to the EFA to show that they have been completed.

Each academy would need to update their own plan annually.

Appointment of External Auditors – DM had received three quotes, ranging from £18k to £27.5k. Since Critchleys have the most experience, and provided the lowest quote, it was agreed that they should be appointed.

Letter of Comfort for Consultants Approval - The EFA had suggested that such a letter should be used for all external consultants. DM had forwarded it to directors prior to this meeting.

ACTION: DM would amend the letter to include companies as well as sole traders.

MAC Business Manager's Job Title – The EFA had said that DM's current job title is misleading, and had proposed it should change to Director of Business and Finance. Directors approved this change.

JH told directors that the contacts made with the EFA had proved useful, and that the EFA had been impressed by the work achieved by DM in such a short space of time. Directors thanked DM.

5. Standing Items:

- **Safeguarding:** One of the academies has had to make a temporary exclusion, which may prove to be permanent, and may need to make a further exclusion of another pupil. All the policies and procedures have been followed. This had only been brought to the directors' attention because a representative from the academy sits on the Board.

Q. Is there a director with responsibility for Safeguarding?

A. Each Academy Committee has a lead representative for Safeguarding, and all academies should have Safeguarding as a standing item on their agendas. JH receives the minutes from all the Academy Committees, and is therefore in a position to bring any concerns to the attention of the Board of Directors.

ACTION: Directors would discuss the best reporting route for Safeguarding concerns at the wider meeting of the Finance, Health and Safety, Resources Committee on Thursday 27th February.

- **Risk Management:** JK had looked at this with JH and DM before Christmas. Once the risk audits have been returned from each of the academies, there will be more for the Risk Management Committee to assess. Directors were satisfied that Risk Management is being developed, and will be reported to the Board when it is complete.
- **Budget:** DM reported that Marie is currently working through the budgets of each of the primary academies.
ACTION: DM would collate Marie's findings in a template format, which he would expect academies to use in the future.

Only four bids had been received by the deadline that had been set for capital funding. JH suggested that there was no need for RD or SM to leave the room for the discussion around the bids, as there were no clear criteria set against which they could be checked. The Board agreed that clear criteria should be set before large bids could be approved.

Q. Where is the money for these bids coming from?

A. The combined devolved capital from each academy.

Q. Are there any guidelines on how to spend devolved capital?

A. Yes. The Board agreed it should keep broadly to the guidelines used before conversion to academy status.

Q. Do the four bids meet the criteria set in the guidelines?

A. Yes, they all do.

Q. Is there a time by which the bids have to be approved?

A. The academies wish to move forward with their projects as soon as possible.

Q. Do the bids tie in with the strategic MAC vision?

A. Yes.

Q. Would the bids use up all the available capital?

A. No.

Q. What will happen to any money that is not spent?

A. It will roll forward to the next quarter.

Directors agreed that they should authorise the three bids under £10k, but that the larger bid should be discussed in detail at the next meeting of the Board's Finance Committee.

ACTIONS: The Finance Committee would discuss the larger bid, and would agree a set of criteria for approving all future bids before the meetings to be held on Thursday 27th February. DM would speak with Janet Rowe at the diocese about guidelines.

6. A.O.B.

There was one confidential item - see separate minutes.

Principals:

JH summarised that the adverts for principals for St. Gregory the Great, St. Joseph's, Thame and Our Lady's, Cowley had been placed two weeks ago, but that there had not yet been much interest. JH is consulting fully with each of the Academy Committees. Shortlisting for all positions will take place at St. Gregory the Great on Thursday 13th February. Pita Harris will join BB, DF and JOC for the shortlisting, and JH will report back to the Academy Committees as soon as their decisions are made. Letters will then be sent to invite candidates

to interviews on 25th February at St. Gregory the Great, 26th February at Our Lady of Lourdes, Cowley and 27th February at St. Joseph's, Thame.

Q. Who should sit on the interviewing panels?

A. These panels should mainly comprise representatives from the Academy Committees, together with one director from the Board. The diocese has also been invited to join in the process.

Directors agreed that references should be obtained before the interviews, to enable appointments to be made the same day, although the Chair of the Board of Directors will need to be consulted before any offers are made.

Q. With the market place full of adverts for Headteachers and Principals, what will happen if there is not enough interest in any or all of these posts?

A. Directors will need to consider what to do in the interim, as well as in the longer term.

St. Aloysius:

JH told directors that St. Aloysius have expressed an interest in meeting with members of the Board to discuss the possibility of joining the MAC.

Q. Why now?

A. It is a small school, which feels isolated and vulnerable. It loses several KS2 pupils to private schools each year.

Directors agreed that they should be mindful of what the school could bring to the MAC, as well as whether the MAC should grow further.

ACTION: DF and JH would meet with St. Aloysius.

Mass at St. Gregory the Great:

JH invited all the directors to attend the mass, to be held at midday on Tuesday 11th March at St. Gregory the Great.

Cricket Road Development:

JH shared the plans for the Cricket Road development with the directors. He told the Board that the funding and agreements are now in place. Phase 1 will take place between 3rd February and 4th April. Phase 2 will take place between 10th February and 27th October, and should be finished in time for January 2015.

Communicating with Academy Committees:

Directors discussed how to make Academy Committees feel more involved with the MAC.

ACTIONS: DM would send the MAC minutes to the Chairs of each Academy Committee, who should then add this to their agendas.

Chairs of committees would be asked to voice their concerns, and to suggest remedies at the meetings on Thursday 27th February.

Q. Who do the Principals of each academy report to?

A. This is still not clear. They should report to the Board.

ACTION: This would need to be resolved for the long term.

Date of next meeting:

tba

The meeting ended at 9.55pm with a prayer.

EH/21/01/14