# MINUTES OF THE 86TH FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT ASHCROFT TECHNOLOGY ACADEMY ON WEDNESDAY 17 MAY 2017 AT 16.15

**Present:** Dick Whitcutt (DW - Chair), Angela Entwistle (AEE), Douglas Mitchell (DMI), Tony Bothwell (TB), Rachel Jarvis (RJ) & Keith Wilson (KW)

**Observing:** Stewart Harris (SH)

**In Attendance:** Richard Perry (RJP), Clare Sallah – Minutes (CS)

**Meeting Started:** 16:20

**1. Welcome to new Principal**

DW welcomed DMI to the FRC. He added that DMI was very well qualified to take over the role of Principal and DW said he would leave him to introduce himself more fully to Executive Board members at the following meeting and to introduce any new members of senior staff. He had nothing further to add concerning the resignation of Marcus Barker beyond what had already been well documented and circulated to members.

DW also welcomed RJP under a new title – Vice Principal. He said that this was in rightful recognition of all the work that he does in the Academy and for the Trustees. He said RJP was a vital part of the management of ATA and could stand in for DMI if he was absent. DW said that RJP's role as VP would be very different from the more academic VP role that Paul Sardar previously undertook.

It was noted that Paul Sardar was finally retiring after going part time this academic year.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**3. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Minutes of last Meeting *(08/02/2017)***

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record and duly signed by the Chair.

**5. Matters Arising**

*Fire Detection, Intruder Alarm & Controlled Access* – RJP said that this was covered further on the agenda.

*Annual Report & Accounts* – DW said that the FRC were pleased with the current ATA payroll ratio of 74.7% although recognised this would be likely to increase as budget allocations tightened over time.

*Auditorium Upgrade* - DW said that the Auditorium project had been an expensive undertaking and he urged the academy to ensure that the new facilities were used fully. He said it might now be the best school auditorium in the country and he didn't want it to be a white elephant. RJP said that it was encouraging the amount of use that was already being made of it and especially from a curriculum perspective. DMI will take some photographs to demonstrate this.

*Staffing Issues* – Recruitment remained very difficult. The FRC would like a presentation on the difficulties encountered in recruitment and staffing matters in general. It would be best for general awareness if this took place at the Executive Board meeting, although the FRC was the body officially charged with resource matters. DMI had agreed to do this and show what is currently being done and what could be done. ATA would like to keep the good staff members for longer and continue to develop them. DMI said that this presentation will take place at the next meeting.

*Policies* – RJP said that the updated Academy Financial Procedures had been put into operation.

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DMI

DMI

**6. Capital Developments**

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RJP explained that Appendix 1 to his report related to the costs and level of necessity for upgrading some of the Academy's central hardware and infrastructure services connected with the CCTV, fire and access control systems in place. At the last meeting it was decided to examine the relevance of replacing the CCTV, fire detection, intruder alarm and controlled access provisions now, as well as a look at the associated costs and what could reasonably be deferred. RJP had been reassured that the fire detection and intruder alarms are not in need of upgrade at this stage but that the CCTV need to be addressed now as it was an old analogue system that had no clarity of picture and was slow to access. The required equipment would cost in the region of £54,000 excluding replacement cameras.

DW noted that there were 109 analogue cameras and asked who watched what they recorded. RJP explained that they were for external security and throughout the Academy, including at reception. They record constantly, although they are not watched constantly. They help to deter external intrusion, ensure staff, student and visitor wellbeing and protect Academy resources. They also have a positive influence on our insurance premiums. Internally they are useful for sanction and protection purposes concerning students and the fabric of the Academy. The numbers of cameras has grown over the years and RJP said they are all sited in strategic locations across the Academy and therefore act as a deterrent too. They can be upgraded over time if we upgrade the central server and hardware.

RJP said the Academy used ADT as the supplier for security products and were fortunate to get a very good deal from them, as they were part of our original sponsor's organisation back in the days of ADT College. However, we now want the most competitive price we can get. So far we have only got a quote from ADT. RJP consulted the FRC on whether we should try to get the best price from ADT or look to other companies. FRC members thought we should try and get quotes from two other companies. AEE advised RJP to find another company of a comparable structure to ADT. Alongside this, she said she was sure that someone could be found in ADT who could offer us a highly competitive "special price". RJP said that this was still achievable over the summer break if a final decision is made on this at the next meeting.

RJP announced that the Academy now had a new, blue bus. He thanked the FRC for agreeing for this to go through between meetings. He said it should last a good few years. He confirmed that it was a diesel vehicle and that it met with current and known future requirements for emissions testing.

Regarding the potential further ventilation works on the top floors of Zones C and D, RJP said that we had undertaken improvements to the roofing and cladding last year but had been looking at further improvement options, although these plans had been shelved for the present.

The lighting upgrades would continue.

The Academy continues to invest in ICT and ICT upgrades. The Academy will be phasing out one dedicated space that we no longer need, as curriculum changes have reduced the need for them. RJP said the Academy needed to upgrade some of the kit in other ICT suites. In answers to a question on virus control, RJP stated that the Academy has robust systems in place against viruses. AAE recommended a company called Glasswall Solutions to advise the Academy on this issue. She said they had been called in for Crimestoppers and they come and have a look and see if you have any viruses, with no obligation to use them.

**7. Revenue Funding**

RJP referred to Appendix II in his report and said that the Academy was in the same funding position as it was at the same stage last year, which showed a small excess of expenditure over income. RJP added that the mid-column (yellow section) of the front sheet gave summary detail on any variances and he asked the FRC to let him have any comments or questions either now or subsequently.

The auditors' additional report shows how ATA compares to other academies. 77% of typical academy income on average is spent on staffing but this is increasing quite rapidly as the amount of income being received is decreasing. ATA spent just under 75% on staffing. Our reserves are significantly higher than

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many other academies; however the funding situation is getting more difficult though and these reserves will reduce. This year the Academy is expected to experience a small overspend in keeping with the current situation and the Academy will be cutting back where it is able to do so, without impeding operations. Next year it is estimated that the Academy will be more significantly overspent and in two years time the situation is expected to be even worse. We are continuing as normal with Trustees backing and hoping that the future funding situation will be improved.

RJP distributed the budget forecast outturn returns, showing the figures to be submitted to the Government and explained them to the FRC members. It was explained that this additional return was required to enable the DfE to fulfil its requirements as part of the whole government reporting cycle which operated on a financial as opposed to academic year basis. He asked them to approve the document. DW asked colleagues to go through these figures at home and raise any queries with RJP. RJP said that there was nothing significant to bring to the Committee's attention, as the figures are extracted from the likely outturn numbers from earlier within his report.

**8. Staffing Issues**

RJP said that staffing would be reported in more detail at the Executive Board meeting.

**9. Trading Company**

RJP said there was nothing to highlight on this beyond what was stated within his report.

**10. Policies**

RJP advised that the updated Academy Financial Procedures had been put into operation.

**11. Administrative Matters**

RJP gave members a copy of Buzzacott's audit analysis paper which he'd received earlier that day. It included data from 210 schools, although 150 of these were part of Multi-Academy Trusts.

**13. Any Other Business**

No other issues were raised.

Meeting ended 17:20

The date of the next meeting will be Wednesday 19 July 2017

**Signed:** _____ **Date:** 19/07/2017

**Richard Whitcutt**
**Chair of Finance & Resources Committee**