

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMITTEE
OF LOSTOCK HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tuesday 10th June 2025

5.00pm

Venue: School

GOVERNORS IN ATTENDANCE:	Ben Sleeman (BSL)	Parent Governor
	Dave Morgan (DM)	Chair
	Clare Heyes (CH)	Co-opted Governor
	Graham Hamilton (GH)	Headteacher
	Mike Duzinkewycz (MD)	Parent Governor <i>(left at 6:07pm)</i>
APOLOGIES:	Robin Muir (RM)	Parent Governor
	Sarah Simpson (SS)	Parent Governor
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Tina Carruthers (TC)	TLP Finance Business Partner <i>(Left at 6:32pm)</i>
	Rachael Palmer (RP)	SBM
	Graham Hamilton (GH)	Headteacher
	Geoff Baker (GB)	TLP CEO
	Laura Furness (LF)	Clerk

MINUTES – PART ONE

The meeting commenced at 5:00pm.

ITEM		ACTION
1.	<p>APOLOGIES AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Governors received and accepted the apologies of Robin Muir (RM).</p> <p>There were no other items of business to consider.</p>	
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no anticipated conflicts of interest with the business of the meeting raised by governors.</p>	
3.	<p>PART ONE MINUTES AND ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING.</p>	

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	<p>a) The part one minutes from the previous meeting on 04.03.25 were confirmed as a true and accurate record of proceedings. Governors approved the minutes.</p> <p>b) The Action log from the previous meeting was discussed and all items were marked as completed. The following actions were discussed:</p> <p>12- To make all governors aware and share link to NSCS online cyber security training as a requirement of the RPA insurance cover. CH confirmed that she had completed this training and is to send a copy of her certificate to the school office. The clerk confirmed that all governors have now completed this training.</p> <p>6a- Tina to share a list with GB of what constitutes capital expenditure. Following a discussion with the CFO, it was confirmed that the Trust’s Financial Procedures Manual, which is currently being reviewed and updated, will include an Appendix defining what should be considered Capital Expenditure and what is considered Revenue Expenditure.</p> <p>Question: When will the Financial Procedures Manual be shared with Lostock Hall governors? Response: TC is unsure as to when this manual will be updated and available for governors but in the interim TC agreed to provide an example capital expenditure vs revenues information document with the committee. TC was confident that the document will be available from the CFO relatively soon.</p> <p>ACTION: To provide an example capital expenditure vs revenues information document</p>	<p>TC</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>FINANCIAL MATTERS</p> <p>a) Current financial management report 2024-25 and budget for 2025-2026 from the Financial Controller</p> <p>TC presented Current financial management report 2024-25 and budget for 2025-2026 from the Trust relating to Lostock Hall’s finances.</p> <p>Documents had been uploaded to GovernorHub by TC prior to the meeting. It was noted that the budget for 2025-2026 was in line with discussions at the spring term finance and staffing committee meeting. Governors noted that due to falling numbers, it has been assumed that the Growth Fund criteria will not be met and has therefore been omitted from future budget forecasts.</p> <p>It was noted that now that Growth Fund for 2024-25 has been received, Educational Materials have been increased by £13.5k to allow for further Curriculum Development and update in Library Materials, identified by GH. An extra £4k has also been allocated to support the redecoration of two classrooms.</p> <p><u>Catering.</u></p>	



It was noted that there is a £4k overspend with Catering Expenditure which is the recharge of UIFSM to Chartwells: budgeted as £2.58 but is being raised to £2.61. Estimated shortfall to be £6k for the year.

GH thanked TC.

TC explained to the committee that the majority of the expenditure is attributed to staffing costs (86%) with the remaining proportion attributed to incidental costs.

Question: There is a 9% increase on total staffing costs as % of total income for the current year versus 2025/26 budget. What is causing this?

Response: *It is because the income has reduced. The school have previously relied on growth funding. Recruitment over the past 12 years was out of line with what the school could afford. 75-78% staffing costs is the benchmark to be a sustainable school.*

Question: Will the school receive growth funding?

Response: *The prudent approach would be to remove this funding from the budget. To show a more representative forecast in future years, the reception intake forecast has been updated to 25 to reflect the actual intake trend over the recent years. It was previously set to 30 (as per the PAN intake).*

National birth rate projections over the next five years suggest a further reduction in pupil number.

TC explained to governors that the in-year surplus (deficit) for 2025-26 budget is -£19,511 and for the 2026-27 plan is -£72,910.

The HT thanked TC for her financial management report and updates. The HT acknowledged that the school is faced with stark financial figures. The CEO explained that the Trust intends to rebalance the costs to each Trust school that have been paid for centrally. The central team aim to reset all Trust schools to support and promote their sustainability. The CEO acknowledged that the HT and TC have been in a difficult position as the Trust have not had 5% top slice and combined end of year reserves. In order to address the imbalance of funds and to ensure a fair and transparent approach across all schools it has been agreed by the Trust Board to implement the following changes for the 2025/26 budgets:

- Central contribution to be set at 6.25% of GAG (and core nursery funding) for primary schools.

It was noted that recent benchmarking also demonstrated that the current top-slice is significantly lower than national average for similar sized MATs.

The committee agreed that the school need to reduce expenditure and increase income. GH acknowledged that he has experienced such financial constraints previously in his career.

Question: Is the committee familiar with the School Resource Management Advisor's (SMRA) document?

Response: *No. The School resource management advisers (SRMAs) are accredited sector experts who provide peer-to-peer advice to schools and academy trusts on using revenue and capital resources to provide the best possible educational outcomes for pupils.*



The HT confirmed that he received 29 applications for an 0.6 teaching post and is to shortlist 3 applicants. The current ECT teacher at the school has secured a position at another school.

The CEO shared the following Trust developments:

- The opening of a Trust professional development centre from September 2026 with TLP teachers qualifying from September 2027. GH will be paid to host additional staff.
- Trust to trust work: RW to support a school in Bury generating circa £10k additional income
- Consideration to economies of scale- does every TLP school need a DHT and SBM.

The committee agreed that the school need to take action now and whilst the 2025-26 deficit does not appear of significant concern, the situation will quickly change in 3+ years. The CEO confirmed that all Trust HTs have a PM target relating to ensuring a balanced budget.

Question: Where is the school in this process? Is there an options paper drafted?
Response: The CEO is to meet with the HT in September 2025, set PM targets and consider all possible scenarios. It is expected that there will be a clear plan by October half term. The governors agreed that this is a discussion for the autumn term.

The committee recognised that governors need to consider and understand the most influential factor in financial sustainability: pupil number. The school needs to be more attractive and any scenario that is chosen needs to have the least impact on quality of education. Governors are keen to maintain the ethos of the school.

The committee agreed that there were huge benefits in moving to a seven-class structure and single form entry, with some committee members opposed to returning to a mixed year group model.

The HT respectfully disagreed with this opinion and does not agree that the standard of care or delivery of education was impacted by mixed age classes. The HT has not noted a significant increase in the improvement of standards since moving to single year teaching.

The board debated the difference between mixed and single age classes further, noting the benefits and downfalls of both structures.

It was noted that an extraordinary LGB meeting could be called to discuss the future direction of the school and potential scenarios.

It was reiterated to the committee that the budget is to be set with a deficit of -£19,511 for 2025-26 and this must be turned during the next financial year. As always, the school must try, wherever possible not to exceed costs. The committee agreed that a strategy and timeline is to be considered at the summer term LGB meeting on 17.06.25.



The clerk agreed to add Budget recovery strategic plan' to the FGB summer term agenda.

ACTION: To add 'Budget recovery strategic plan' to the FGB summer term agenda

The Finance and Staffing committee **approved** the budget for 2025-26.

MD left at 6:07pm

Parts of this discussion were moved to part two.

- c) Wrap around care provision & j) Proposed costings for lettings, before and after school clubs and pre-school for consideration ready for implementation in September 2025 – The summer term price review document was circulated via Governor Hub prior to the meeting. RP compared costings with other schools in the local area and proposed a small increase for BASC and pre-school. The HT and governors agreed that the costings looked reasonable and acknowledged that the costings are significantly below inflationary rates, with the preschool increase by less than 1%. The committee acknowledged that these costings could be increased further but would then be out of range when compared to other local providers. It was agreed that Lostock Hall cannot be an outlier to other providers as the school would be less likely to attract young families.
The committee thanked RP for her efforts in reviewing all costings.

TC left the meeting at 6:11pm

- d) Contracts register – It was confirmed that a H&S review was undertaken with the RPA and the report has now been received. RP has considered different models for contract management to understand how much the work undertaken at a school level feeds through to the Trust on a larger scale. RP noted that all contracts are under constant review to ensure that the school is securing the most competitive prices for goods and services.
- e) Asset Register- A new system has been introduced, and a new model is being considered. All assets are being logged which will help to define the main budgets.
- f) School Risk Register- The Risk Register is to have further detail added following the outcomes of the RPA report. The register is to evolve over time.
- g) The School's Critical Incident Plan- The plan has been updated. The HT confirmed that a Cyber plan is to be added. The board acknowledged the excellent work of the Trust in devising a robust plan. The school noted its reassurance in having access to this plan.
- h) &i) Use of the Sports Grant and the impact on pupils.
Use of Pupil Premium and the impact on disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for the funding. Details of the use of the Sports Grant and the Pupil Premium Grant were included in the HT report.



	<p>The HT noted that James Marsh, external SIP is to meet with the PP lead to review processes and procedures. The HT agreed to share the report, following the visit on 19.05.25, on Governor Hub.</p> <p>ACTION: To share the external SIP report with governors via Governor Hub</p> <p>The HT noted the following strengths from the visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders continue to have high expectations for all pupils at this school. School's pupil premium strategy is compliant and available on school's website. • School have identified specific actions linked to the curriculum, attendance and enrichment, which is supporting pupils in receipt of the pupil premium to access the high-quality education that school provides, but also to be provided with a wide range of experiences to develop their cultural capital. • The way in which the school conducts regular pupil progress meetings impacts positively on pupil achievement at school. <p>The HT noted the following recommendations from the visit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders to establish a more consistent approach and an agreed set of judgements for all summative assessments undertaken. • Leaders should consider using the DfE template for their pupil premium strategy, as school's current strategy does not clearly identify barriers for pupils in receipt of pupil premium or challenges for these pupils. • Leaders to consider the pupil premium lead presenting achievement data for this vulnerable group during all pupil progress meetings. • Leaders should continue to raise the profile of the pupil premium across the school, ensuring that staff are fully aware of these pupils and targeting them when necessary for additional support in lessons. <p>The HT explained to the committee that he was reassured by the report. JM confirmed that the school deals effectively with pupils in receipt of PP. The school does not have a high percentage of PP pupils and therefore does not have a significant amount of additional funding.</p> <p>j) Capital expenditure plans. Capital expenditure has been used to support the ICT infrastructure project during May half term. A proportion of DFC has also been used to cover this project.</p> <p>The HT noted that all SCA bids have successfully been approved. Capital works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The replacement of roller shutter between the kitchen and School Hall. • To upgrade the internal fire alarms to include visual warning. • To repair the ground works and replacement of artificial grass surfaces in main playground. • To resurface the tarmac to school entrance. <p>The committee acknowledged and commended the efforts of the Trust in securing the funding for these projects.</p> <p>The HT informed governors that funding to refurbish the school library, including the replacement of the carpet and repainting in the entrance area has been secured through PTA fundraising initiatives.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
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	<p>It was noted that the pre-school room has had a flooring upgrade with half of the area being carpeted and hard flooring laid on the other half. The committee agreed that these small improvements will help to support the marketing of the school. The HT outlined the long-term strategy for the preschool: to house the preschool in a separate building. The CEO and HT have identified a funding stream for this project. It is likely that such a project would be considered with more certainty in circa 18 months. It is anticipated that the preschool and nursery will be led by a qualified EYFS teacher. The HT noted that 21 out of the 22 new starters in September 2025 will move from preschool.</p>	GH
5.	<p>GDPR</p> <p>There have been no data breaches or Subject Access Requests (SARS) requested since the last meeting.</p>	
6.	<p>PREMISES</p> <p>a) Health and Safety update. It was noted that there have been two H&S audits; one conducted by CE, with no major actions or concerns flagged and one conducted by RPA. The RPA reports identifies actions that can be addressed to further streamline operations. No major concerns were noted. The report provides opportunity for learning to ensure that the school is able to hit the highest H&S standards.</p> <p>b) Review of SCA bids for 2025-26- This item was discussed in item 4.</p> <p>c) Priorities for future SCA bid applications for 2025-26- This item was discussed in item 4.</p>	
7.	<p>STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>GH reported that a wide range of training is being undertaken by staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted regional Inspection Update NW: 03.04.25 (HT) • Maths Hub • Weekly subject meetings; staff coaching 	
8.	<p>SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE</p> <p>The SDP was available for governors on Governor Hub. The HT was confident that all priorities on the plan are on track to deliver. The HT explained that the ICT upgrade provision has allowed the school to reevaluate the IT classroom setup. It is an option to extend Windows 11 by one year.</p> <p>The HT and governors thanked the Trust for approving the SCA funding bid to facilitate the replacement of the artificial grass.</p>	
9.	<p>DIRECTOR'S REPORT</p> <p>The summer term Director's report was circulated via Governor Hub prior to the meeting. The committee noted the report.</p>	



10.	<p>POLICIES: To receive and review the following policy: None</p> <p>The HT noted that policies are to be considered at the FGB meeting on 17.06.25</p>	
11.	<p>GOVERNOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>No comments were made regarding governor development and training.</p>	
12.	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>It was noted that staff wellbeing previously was a standard agenda item on all FGB and committee agendas. Governors agreed that it is important to consider staff wellbeing regularly and to receive frequent updates and developments.</p> <p>ACTION: To add 'Staff Wellbeing' to all F&S committee agendas</p> <p>The HT noted that one staff member is currently off sick and receiving treatment. This staff member is in good spirits and responding well to treatment. There are no concerns with regard to staff wellbeing at this time.</p> <p>Question: When are the SATs results published? Response: 08.07.25</p>	Clerk
13.	<p>POINTS TO HIGHLIGHT/COMMUNICATE TO THE LGB AND TTLP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate the school's thanks for their successful SCA funding bids. The committee agreed that it was a more understandable process for this application period. • To have financial clarity, guided by AM, TH and the TLP finance team, is helpful and supports informed decision making. 	
14.	<p>IMPACT OF THE MEETING</p> <p>Governors helped to move the school forward in the following ways during this meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governors have held honest and open discussions and recognised the need for further in-depth discussion. Alternative staffing structures are to be considered by the CEO and the HT. • Governors welcomed the possibility of a pre school new build, with the confidence of the HT. It is hoped that this project will transform pupil number and make the school sustainable. 	
16.	<p>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:</p> <p>ACTION: To propose F&S committee meeting dates for 2025/26</p>	Clerk

Part 1 of the meeting Closed at 6.34pm.

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There were no Part 2 documents from the previous meeting or Part 2 items on this agenda, so the meeting closed at 6:34pm