

WestBerkshireCouncil college alternative education Management Committee

D1 07.02.21 Finance Committee (virtual meeting) Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 4pm

Present: Maureen Sims – Community Governor (from 4.33pm) Judith Fisher – Community Governor (Chair for this meeting) Jacquie Davies – Headteacher Harry James - Community Governor Darren King – Community Governor (from 4.48pm)		Apologies: Darren King – joining later due to work commitment.
Absent: None		Duration of meeting: 4 – 6.30pm
In attendance: Karen Price (KP) – School Business Manager Jill Hills (JH) - Clerk		MC members will be referred to as governors
		Action
1.	Welcome & Apologies Declaration of Any Other Urgent Business Declaration of Business Interests	
1.1	Apologies had been received from Darren King who hoped to join the meeting about 4.30pm due to a work commitment.	
1.2	Maureen Sims experienced technical difficulties with Zoom throughout the meeting and so was not always able to participate. It was therefore agreed that Judith Fisher would chair this meeting.	
1.3	There were no items of any other urgent business raised. There were no declaration of business interests.	
2.	Minutes of the Meeting on 20th October 2020	
2.1	The minutes of the Finance Committee on 20 th October 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed by the Chair once icollege is able to reopen.	
2.2	Matters Arising/Action Tracking Report (where not elsewhere on the agenda) 3.8 Schools Forum/Funding Working Party – Governors asked whether the fact that Lisa Potts (Senior Accountant WBC) did not have a working knowledge of icollege funding was proving problematical for the school. The Headteacher advised that the gap in knowledge was causing some difficulty but that this would be discussed under Item 3 on the agenda. (see 3.7) She had indicated that the icollege funding methodology is complicated and that there must be a simpler way of working.	
2.3	4.6 Safer Recruitment Training for Maureen Sims – The Clerk advised that MS had discussed the training requirement with the AHT Safeguarding & Wellbeing and had established that her Safer Recruitment training did not expire for a further year. It was agreed that the SBM would look to book MS on training provided by either the Virtual College or NSPCC nearer the time. Action: Book MS onto Safer Recruitment training Autumn Term 2021. <i>The meeting was paused briefly whilst Governors logged out and signed back into zoom to try to resolve technical difficulties. All Governors rejoined the meeting except Maureen Sims.</i>	SBM Autumn term 2021
2.4	4.10 Outstanding Debtors – SBM to amend Table 2 Budget Monitoring Report. This had been actioned.	
2.5	4.11 Raising of debtors invoices – The way icollege invoices may change depending on the outcome of the funding review. At the moment invoicing is still being undertaken termly.	
2.6	4.12 Payment of fees for Out of Area placement – The SBM confirmed that the Welsh Authority had	

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	now paid in full but icollege is still waiting for the HNB element of the fees. Invoices are now being invoiced termly and the Welsh Authority are paying and are now up to date. Governors thanked the SBM for her persistence in following this up.	
2.7	5.1 PPG information for website – This had been actioned. PPG information is now on the website.	
2.8	5.5 Transition Funding – A small claim had been submitted as most of the requirements had been met over the summer from existing contracts. <i>Maureen Sims rejoins the meeting at 4.33pm.</i>	
2.9	8.1 First Aid Boxes/CV-19 requirements – a small pack of masks are now included in First Aid boxes within units. Amendments to the policy to ensure they reflect CV-19 precautions/requirements are in hand. This will also include the regularity the contents of the first aid boxes need to be checked.	
2.10	8.2 First Aid Policy – The Headteacher advised that the Health and Safety Co-ordinator is in the process of reviewing the policy to ensure it covers where the First Aid boxes and Red books are kept and how frequently the contents should be checked. Action carried forward: Confirm First Aid Policy has been updated to reflect where First Aid boxes and Red Books are kept and frequency with which contents of first aid boxes should be checked.	SBM/H&S Co-ordinator FC 23.02.21
2.11	The Health and Safety Governor confirmed that he has completed the WBC H&S training course and needs to arrange to visit units with the H&S Co-ordinator (CV-19 permitting). Visits will include monitoring of the First Aid incident log/Red Book. Action carried forward: H&S Governor to arrange visits to units (CV-19 permitting).	H&S Governor FC 20.04.21
2.12	8.3 Feedback of Policy approval – The Headteacher advised that there was a debate about how to approve/sign policies under current restrictions. Recent advice indicated that policies, especially those published on the website should not be signed electronically as there was a risk the signature could be accessed and misused. Action carried forward: Consider how best to feedback to policy holders approval of policies by Committees/MC (including signature) and any queries which need to be addressed.	Headteacher FC 20.04.21
2.13	8.4 Critical Incident Plan – Lockdown practice – The Headteacher advised that lockdown procedures in units could not be practiced until CV-19 restrictions were lifted so as not to burst bubbles.	
2.14	8.5 Pay Policy – The Headteacher had contacted unions about the use of half points and copied this to the MC Chair.	
	Post Meeting Note: Matters Arising From Action Tracker	
2.15	Clerking Hours – It has been agreed as part of the Clerks performance monitoring objectives that hours needed will be monitored to ensure that those currently agreed are adequate. This will be reviewed in March 2021. Action carried forward:- Clerk to complete review of hours needed.	Clerk 31.03.21
2.16	Travel Claims Policy – Re Appendix 2 of the policy which stated that icollege would pay for lunch if a member of staff would be offsite for more than five hours. The Headteacher advised that this would be for example where a member of staff attended training and lunch was not provided. It was agreed that this needed to be made clear that this did not apply to when staff were at a unit other than their base unit. Action carried forward: Confirm that Appendix 2 has been amended to reflect that payment for lunches does not apply where a member of staff was at a unit other than their base unit.	Headteacher FC 23.02.21
3.	Feedback from Heads Funding Group/Schools Forum and Heads Working Group	
3.1	3.1 Heads Funding Group (HFG) The Headteacher had been unable to attend the HFG as she was dealing with a covid positive situation which took priority.	

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	3.2 Schools Forum	
3.2	The Schools Forum had met on 25 th January. The sections of the meeting relevant to icollege had related to the High Needs Block (HNB) which was overspent. The report to Schools Forum had listed all of the potential areas where savings could be made which included literacy and language support, special needs/ASD, CALTS team and icollege Outreach (£61,000pa). There had been no appetite for making any cuts to any of these services. The report had also identified icollege 6 th Form as a potential area for savings but this was not discussed at the meeting and so could be re-raised at a later date. However, the Headteacher thought it was unlikely that any cuts would be made involving the 6 th Form, as many of the students have EHCP's and therefore the Local Authority (LA) has to provide suitable placements for these students, which would be difficult in a mainstream school. Non statutory areas of education provision tend to be raised every year by the LA as a potential saving but are dismissed.	
3.3	The meeting had discussed the impact of CV-19 on school finances and the LA was anticipating that more schools would be in deficit at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. However, there were no suggestions as to how this could be remedied. The Headteacher advised that icollege was forecasting a smaller surplus than that forecast when the budget had been set. This would have a knock on impact on the ability of icollege to set a balanced budget in subsequent years.	
3.4	An issue had arisen around changes by the DfE around the census date for Free School Meals (FSM) which was currently January but it had been proposed that this would be moved to October. It had been suggested that this might mean schools lose out on six months of FSM. This could also potentially impact on how much Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) schools receive as this is linked to the number of pupils in receipt of FSM on census day.	
3.5	Governors asked whether all of icollege's funding came from the HNB. The Headteacher advised that icollege received base funding of £10,000 per pupil for 66 places plus 6 additional places at The Pod. icollege then receives top up funding for each pupil placed with them. Where a pupil is placed with icollege following permanent exclusion from a mainstream school then the LA fund all of the top up element. Where a place is allocated as a result of discussions with the school and Pupil Placement Panel, then the school and the LA both fund the placement, currently 50/50.	
3.6	The Headteacher quoted from the minutes from the Heads Funding Group "Jane Seymour drew attention to 3.1 of the report on Pupil Referral Units where there was also an increased pressure on the budget. This was however, not of great concern as it was part of a strategic approach. Placements at the PRU are far more cost effective than SEMH places elsewhere and therefore this is helping to manage the overspend." This indicates that the LA is getting good value for money from icollege.	
	3.3 Heads Funding Working Party	
3.7	The Headteacher explained that this had been ongoing for some time and had begun when a member of the Schools Forum asked if it was possible to have an insurance policy, that schools could buy into to help fund places at icollege, should they need to use the service. There is a lack of clarity around what the expected outcome is from these review meetings.	
	<i>Daren King joined the meeting at 4.48pm.</i>	
	The meetings are attended by one Secondary Head, 2 Primary Heads and the icollege Headteacher. The meetings are Chaired by Michelle Sanchos (WBC) and attended by Lisa Potts (WBC Accountancy) and Ros Arthur (WBC Exclusions Officer). The theme of the meetings is around long term funding of icollege including the 50/50 split between the LA and schools for top up funding. There is an issue around the basis of this funding as if pupils are placed on a long term placement i.e. have been permanently excluded from mainstream schools and come to icollege via the Pupil Placement Panel, then it appears that schools may not be legally obliged to meet all or part of the cost of the placement as they become single roll students with icollege. Where the placement is short term, the pupil remains as dual roll i.e. on the rolls of both the mainstream school and icollege, then schools are required to meet part of the cost. However, if pupils remain on dual roll, this causes issues for the mainstream school as they are still accountable for exam results and safeguarding for example. Part of the work of	

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	the Working Party has therefore been around single and dual roll, differences in the referral process for long term and short term places and about developing a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The hope is that the process will result in a simpler way of funding icollege but the Headteacher expressed concern that the discussions would be diluted solely into a discussion about the percentage split between schools and the LA. A paper is being prepared by 16 th February to be reported to the next Heads Funding Group on 23 rd February and then to Schools Forum on 8 th March 2021. Governors asked whether it made any difference to icollege how much is paid by either schools or the LA. The Headteacher advised that it didn't but the problem is that where it is unclear or responsibility for paying is disputed, icollege can be out of pocket as it still has to provide the placement, but at the risk of not being paid, or payment being delayed considerably until the matter can be resolved.	
3.8	The Headteacher advised that the process could be simplified if the LA paid upfront for places as it does with the base funding. (72 places at £10k each inc Pod). Regardless of how the pupil comes to icollege, the LA would be required to pay at least 50% under the current funding arrangement, increasing to 100% if the pupil is permanently excluded (PEX). icollege and the LA would know at the start of the year which pupils were PEX and would therefore be staying with icollege for the full financial year and therefore the LA could pay this amount up front too. However, the LA likes to be able to tie up the funding to specific pupils.	
3.9	Governors asked for clarification of the new provision being proposed by the LA as mentioned in the previous minutes. The Headteacher advised that there are two elements to this. The LA is looking to provide a new Secondary Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Special School from September 2022. However there is a gap for pupils currently at The POD who will need Year 7 provision from September 2021 and this is where icollege is aiming to bridge the gap until the new provision is available.	
4.	P9 Budget Monitoring Report	
4.1	4.1 Emerging Issues since budget set. Governors had received a copy of the P9 (December 20) Budget Monitoring Report in advance of the meeting. P8 had also been circulated by email at the end of the Autumn Term. The SBM advised that the year-end forecast was for a smaller surplus than planned of c.£38,000. This was a good outcome given that icollege had not received as many referrals as normal given the amount of time pupils attending mainstream school had missed due to CV-19 lockdowns. The surplus could increase as some of the spending forecasts are still quite generous given the proportion of the financial year left. The SBM intends to close ordering down at the February half term. The Headteacher added that the lower number of referrals was linked to the closing of the PPP during lockdown. icollege was still providing inreach, emergency provision and PEX but it had been agreed that from a safeguarding perspective, icollege could not do more than mainstream schools were already providing during lockdown.	
4.2	Governors asked for clarification of the in-year deficit and whether there was any one reason for this. The SBM advised that without the carried forward surplus of £106,000 at the end of 2019/20, the overall budget position would also have been potentially a deficit position, as overall the service costs more to run than the funding/income it receives. Staffing costs account for approximately 85% of expenditure and overall 80% of icollege expenditure is fixed e.g. premises costs. icollege income is 30% fixed and 70% volatile i.e. dependent on pupil numbers throughout the year. Governors asked how the service was sustainable. The Headteacher advised that without a reasonable surplus from one year to the next, then the budget would be in deficit. If this continued for more than one year, then icollege would need to look at its offer/provision and what and how this was delivered e.g. staffing, premises, offsite activities/provision. Each year icollege goes back to the LA to agree a percentage increase/inflationary increase in funding, but it could be that icollege would need to rework the cost of delivering each element of the service to ensure that the level set for top up funding reflects actual costs.	
4.3	Governors asked for clarification about whether icollege was permitted to set a deficit budget. The SBM confirmed that it was not and that if there was insufficient year-end surplus to "top up" next years	

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	<p>budget then icollege would need to look at how it could adjust the 2021/22 budget so that it balanced. The Headteacher added that since icollege was formed, there has been an inflationary increase of 3% to top up funding. As icollege was now in its forth year there was a need to revisit costs for 2022/23. In addition, as per the Heads Funding Group report, SEN/EHCP needs have to be met by the LA regardless of cost and 30% of icollege pupils have EHCP's. This is unlike other PRU's who tend to provide more of the revolving door provision whereas icollege operates as a semi-special school.</p>	
4.4	<p>Governors discussed a number of strategic prospectives including comparisons with other similar arrangements in other Local Authorities. Whilst icollege has a good working relationship with the LA the funding arrangements are complicated. Governors agreed that in order to ensure the service was sustainable a bottom up review of costs to deliver the provision was needed along side a review of the direction of travel for icollege, its Mission Statement/Vision and Admissions Policy. Discussions would then be needed with the LA to explore the level of service which can be provided within existing funding limitations. Supported by the bottom up review, this would identify gaps between expectations and funding and that to remove any of the current provision would undermine the credibility of the provision and the outcomes for students. icollege would then be able to evidence to the LA that based on the existing level of funding, the extent of the service it could provide whilst remaining financially viable in the short and medium term. It would also identify areas where icollege provides added value that may be currently hidden within the service it provides. The Headteacher advised that unlike many PRU's where students are mainly placed for short periods of time before returning to mainstream school, icollege deliver their entitlement to education provision for between 1 and 3 years for a significant proportion of its students. This would make it difficult to pull back from providing what students are entitled to. Expenditure is reflective of operating over four sites. This includes additional administration arrangements and staffing. Administration staff provide a higher level of support to the day to day operation of units than purely a traditional administrative role. Action: Undertake a bottom up review of the costs of the provision of the service to inform future funding and service provision discussions with the LA.</p>	<p>Headteacher/SBM End of Autumn Term 2 2021</p>
4.5	<p>4.2 Staff Changes/Budget implications There had been no staff changes since the last meeting. There would have been additional expenditure on agency staff to cover a member of staff on long term sick leave, however due to the current lockdown, PE provision has had to cease and therefore any residual cover requirements can be managed in house. This may however, impact on the 2021/22 budget.</p>	
4.6	<p>4.3 Outstanding Debtors As discussed under matters arising, the Welsh Authority are now paying invoices for the out of area placement.</p>	
4.7	<p>4.4 CV-19 related expenditure The SBM advised that icollege had received £1,840 and £2,100 respectively on the first two covid claims. However, expenditure currently totalled £10,500. Governors asked why there was such a large difference between the additional costs incurred and the amounts icollege had been able to reclaim. The SBM advised that the difference is partly due to changes in what the government will fund between claims. However, whilst there is funding available to cover staffing costs for example, these can only be accessed once/if schools have used up their surplus. Additional covid related expenditure has been offset by savings on other budget lines where less resources have been needed due to the first national lockdown, when icollege was closed and then partially open. icollege had also claimed £2,670 in Transition funding which should be received either on January or February budget reports from the LA.</p>	
4.8	<p>Governors discussed the provision of laptops etc for students and were advised that the LA had provided 6 laptops, although icollege had been required to top up some of the cost. Governors asked if this was sufficient and the Headteacher explained that providing laptops for students was not necessarily appropriate given the nature of the cohort and that some would see them as "currency" and so alternative solutions had been needed. The Headteacher explained that whilst there would be funding nationally for the provision of equipment for students when there was wider opening of schools,</p>	

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	icollege would not be eligible because as a PRU/Alternative Provision, all pupils are considered vulnerable and as a result has remained open during the current lockdown.	
4.9	The Headteacher advised that icollege had been donated two laptops from members of the community for student use. Governors discussed that it would be good to publicise these donations along with the need for equipment generally to raise awareness and to encourage further donations. It would also provide some much needed publicity of the work icollege does. The Headteacher advised that whilst donations of equipment are helpful, staff resources also had to be available to enable them to be set up to work with icollege systems and for safeguarding measures to be set up prior to use by students. A company based in Thatcham had volunteered to provide learning materials in colour print for any students who needed them. This had been publicised in the latest icollege newsletter. The initiative being set up by the Greenham Trust was also discussed. They are providing support with the icollege music project although this is currently on hold due to CV-19 restrictions. Action: Look into publicising good news stories such as laptop donations and printing within local press (going via the WBC press office).	Judith Fisher/ Darren King FC 23.03.21
4.10	Governors asked what was provided for the £1,319 & £1,349 for staff laptops as shown on the CV-19 expenditure spreadsheet and by the additional Vodafone payment of £176. The SBM advised that the spend on staff laptops was to replace old kit and/or to provide new kit for staff who would have to work from home either providing remote learning, lesson prep or admin support. Each amount of money was for 3 laptops - 6 in total. It became very difficult, very quickly, to purchase IT equipment. icollege would normally buy from the IT department at West Berkshire Council but they were unable to source equipment due to high demand nationally. An alternative supplier was found but at a higher cost than we would normally expect to pay. Due to the work from home directive there was no option and 3 laptops were purchased initially followed by a further 3, by which time the price had increased even though there had only been a few days between orders.	
4.11	The spend on Vodafone (VFDD) was additional staff handsets and contracts. The monthly direct debit increased due to the small handset charge (£7.00 per handset) and the increase in the contract charges. The monthly charge has fluctuated as contracts have ended, but new charges are agreed regularly to manage these. Handsets were needed so that senior staff could work from home could still be contacted and could leave their number with suppliers, other schools and agencies rather than use personal phones for school contact. Staff contacting students as wellbeing mentors were provided with basic PAYT handsets.	
4.12	Whilst these costs, were originally logged as Covid spend as the school was under the impression that it could reclaim costs back from the Government, the rules on claiming changed from March to the first claim window (August) and none of these charges were valid. It was then suggested that these could be claimed in the Autumn, but the rules changed again and no claims for costs on 'other' would be accepted.	
5.	Format of Finance Papers for Governors	
5.1	The Chair advised that the format of the Budget Monitoring report provided to Governors had featured in discussions with the LA for some time. The aim has been to strike a balance with providing Governors with sufficient information and in a consistent format. The view is that Governors do not need all of the information contained in the current report format and their production adds to the workload of the SBM. The LA had provided a revised format which had been circulated separately from the committee papers to avoid confusion. The Chair asked Governors and the SBM for their views on the current and suggested format. New Governors felt that the revised format seemed slightly easier to understand and asked whether the reports were solely for Finance Governors or all Governors. The Clerk clarified that although predominantly produced for Finance Governors, all Governors receive copies of all Committee papers. The SBM felt that there were some elements of the revised format which were more complicated to produce. The SBM advised that Governors would still need to receive the CFR (Consistent Financial Reporting) spreadsheet as this forms part of the monthly sign off/review process by the Headteacher and is something the auditor would expect Governors to receive. Governors agreed that there was a need to strike a balance between reports being easier to produce,	

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	easier to read and providing the level of information needed.	
5.2	The Chair asked if there were any elements of this months reports which Governors considered were superfluous to their needs. The SBM advised that with the production of a different format given the additional workload resulting from CV-19 would prove challenging. New Governors may have additional questions initially as they are unfamiliar with the way icollege is funded etc and are new to the format of reports. It was agreed that the SBM would continue to produce the current format of Budget Monitoring Reports and circulate the CFR spreadsheets to the Finance Committee. The format would however, be kept under review so once the new committee membership had settled, changes could be made if necessary to simplify reports etc.	
6.	Internal Audit Feedback	
6.1	The Headteacher advised that the draft Internal Audit report had not yet been received. A zoom call would be arranged with the auditor once the Headteacher and Chair of Governors had had site of the report to discuss the outcome. The report would be circulated to Governors as soon as it becomes available and would be added to the agenda for the next scheduled FC. Action: Include Internal Audit report on FC agenda as soon as available.	Clerk
7.	Funding Implications – Strategies	
7.1	7.1 PPG icollege receives just under £7,000 a quarter and expenditure is on track.	
7.2	7.2 SPG An update on SPG had been included in the P9 Budget Monitoring Report. In response to a question raised at an earlier meeting, the Headteacher confirmed that the Lead Teacher at Inspiration had clarified that some of the SPG would be used for additional swimming sessions for weak learners and was therefore in addition to what is provided for within the curriculum. At the moment swimming is not taking place due to lockdown.	
7.3	7.3 Transition Funding This had been discussed under 2.8 above. The use of the grant would be discussed at the MC on 2 nd February 2021.	
7.4	7.4 Catch Up Funding Catch up Funding is paid over an academic year and therefore spans more than one financial year. A payment was received in the Autumn Term and features in the P9 Budget Monitoring Report. Further payments will be received later in the Spring and Summer Terms. Governors queried that there was no information on the website as to how the funding was going to be used and its impact, in the same way schools are required to publish information about Pupil Premium and Sports Premium. Schools are required to be able to demonstrate how funding is used for Ofsted and Governors have a duty to scrutinise the impact of its use. Action: Research and forward information relating to requirements to publish information relating to catch up funding. Action: Add catch up funding information to website.	Chair FC 23.02.21 Headteacher FC 23.03.21
8.	Capital/Building Maintenance	
8.1	8.1 New Build at Integration The Headteacher advised that WBC had agreed to a 50 year lease for the site and this had been put forward to the Parish Council and their solicitors, but their decision had not as yet been received. As it has been so long since the quotations for the build to commence, WBC is now outside of the timescales for the tendered price to be binding on the contractor. A new tendering exercise will be needed which will delay the process further in the event that the Parish Council agree to a 50 year lease.	
8.2	8.2 Garden at Intervention and The Pod The SBM advised that there had not been any progress on these projects due to other priorities arising from CV-19. The Admin Officer at Intervention will be obtaining quotes shortly with the aim of	

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	completing the work either at Easter or the May half term. The area requires leveling and a patio.	
8.3	<p>8.3 IT replacement and upgrade This had been discussed in part under 4.8 – 4.10 above. The SBM confirmed that a replacement programme is now in place and as far as possible refurbished equipment will be procured following a successful trialing of equipment.</p> <p>8.4 The POD damp The roof has been mended and the damp seems to have settled, appears to have dried out and has been fixed visually by the caretaker. The Door has also been fixed.</p> <p>8.5 The SBM advised that icollege received c£7,000 per year for capital works from the LA. Funding for larger projects has to be bid for e.g. the replacement of the brick built garage at Intervention which is in progress. Any balance at the end of a financial year can be carried forward.</p>	
9.	Health and Safety	
9.1	The Headteacher advised that the main development is the requirement for schools to test both staff and students for CV-19. An update had been provided in the Headteachers CV update report 19 and a further update would be provided to the MC on 2 nd February 2021. The test kits had been provided free so the only financial implication was for staffing needed to undertake the tests and process the kits etc. As there is a mix of in person and on line learning/teaching, this can be managed within existing resources.	
9.2	There had been one confirmed CV-19 case relating to a member of staff.	
10.	Arrangements for the completion of the 2020/21 SFVS.	
10.1	<p>WBC Internal Audit had emailed to confirm that the DfE had not cancelled this years SFVS and so needs to be completed for 31st March 2021. It was agreed that the process would be started by MS and then when the Chair of Finance was appointed at the MC on 2nd February, they would take on this task.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note: The DfE published on 4th February that “due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, it has decided that the SFVS return should be delayed this year. This is to take account of the current pressures schools and local authorities are facing. For the financial year 2020 to 2021, schools should submit their SFVS to their local authority no later than 28 May 2021. Local authorities should submit their assurance statement to the DfE within 6 weeks, no later than 9 July 2021.”</p>	
11.	Annual Inventory Check	
11.1	The Clerk advised that this had been added to the meeting plan some time ago so that Governors could receive confirmation that an annual check on inventories had been completed and any significant issues/losses reported. However, under the current circumstances it was agreed this was not a priority and could not be completed easily due to the need to maintain bubbles. Action: Clerk to add to 2021/22 meeting planner.	Clerk 20.07.21
12.	Policies	
12.1	<p>The Headteacher had provided a summary of policies for review at this meeting and their currents status:-</p> <p>First Aid Policy – this had been discussed under 2.10 above.</p> <p>Lockdown Procedures – practice – this had been discussed under 2.13 above.</p> <p>Pay Policy – This policy has not yet been approved pending the outcome of the working party review.</p> <p>Charging and Remissions Policy – This policy had been circulated with the agenda and was unanimously approved.</p> <p>WBC Terms and Conditions – The terms and conditions were adopted by the FC.</p> <p>WBC Scheme for Financing Schools – This is a WBC document and will need to be updated subject</p>	

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WestBerkshireCouncilcollege alternative educationManagementCommittee

D1 07.02.21 Finance Committee (virtual meeting) Tuesday 26th January 2021 at 4pm

		Actions
	to the outcome of the funding review by the Heads Funding Working Party and the findings in the Internal Audit report. Health and Safety Policy and Procedures – This policy had been circulated with the agenda and was unanimously approved. Data Protection/GDPR - This policy had been circulated with the agenda and was unanimously approved. Premises Management Policy and Procedures - This policy had been circulated with the agenda and was unanimously approved.	
12.2	A number of non statutory policies were due for review. It had been agreed previously that these policies did not require Governor approval but instead the Headteacher would report that their review had been completed. The Headteacher confirmed that the following policies had been reviewed:- Arson Prevention, Lockdown Procedure, Guidance – Specific Incidents, Visitor/Contractor Information, Traffic Management Guidance, Parent/Learner agreement and Manual Handling. The following policies were in the process of being reviewed:- ICT & online security, Driving at Work Risk Management, and Smoke Free Policy. Action: Confirm the review of the ICT & online security, Driving at Work Risk Management and Smoke Free Policy has been completed.	Headteacher FC 23.03.21
9.	Any Other Urgent Business	
9.1	Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) The Headteacher advised that preparation to get units ready to undertake LFT had been demanding for the SBM and her team. The kits had been received at 8am on 4 th January and all units had been partially up and running by 6 th January including staff training at three sites as well as merging in the primary testing. The majority of staff have settled into taking the tests really well. Governors thanked the SBM and her team for the hard work they had put into setting up the LFT's along with other CV-19 related workload.	
10.	Date and Focus of Next Meeting – The next meeting is 23 rd February 2021 at 4pm. The focus will be:- P10 Budget Monitoring Report, Budget Strategy – update, Draft budget 2021/22, Integration – New Build update, H&S, Policies	
10.1	The Clerk asked if there had been any further discussion of the timescales for producing the 2021/22 Budget given where the Easter holidays fall this year. The SBM advised that it had been agreed that the budget would be produced early so it could still be approved by the 1 st May 2021 deadline.	

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 6.30pm.

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Finance Committee (FC) - Actions Follow up Report 2020/21 for 26.01.21
(incorporating H&SPIT)

FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
28.01.20	3.51 Debtors Invoices not provisioned. Invoices not provisioned – Governors queried the Park House invoices for £593.60 and £23,332.40 = £23,926, noted as “paid - amount in dispute” and whether this meant the income had been received. If so then would that make total outstanding for Summer Term £17,407 rather than £41,333. The outstanding invoices not provisioned from Park House were for Summer Term 18 so wouldn't be counted in the Summer Term received. The total outstanding not provisioned for Park House is £29,738.80. A cheque for £23,918.40 has been received – this is outstanding due to the fact we are still chasing outstanding money on the invoices. Park House added their own credit to the invoice for charges they did not want to pay. The SBM had contacted Park House asking for position to date on the outstanding invoices, and will chase for a reply by 29.1.20. Action: Update Governors on whether outstanding monies have been received at next meeting.			
30.04.20	In Pd13 report / budget strategy.			
07.07.20	Ongoing debtors position continues to be regularly monitored by FC as part of Budget Monitoring Report.			
20.10.20	No further payments have been received from Park House for historical debt. All debt paid, with exception of queried. Ongoing	SBM		
25.02.20	2.18 Clerking Hours. The Clerk advised that she is contracted to work an average of 7 hours a week. The Clerk maintains a spreadsheet of hours worked and is reviewing hours needed for the rest of the year to determine if this is sufficient. Action: Clerk to provide breakdown of hours worked/needed to Chair.	Clerk Chairs Briefing 13.03.20	Outstanding.	
30.04.20	The Clerk advised that she had not been able to review hours needed due to other priorities. Additional hours have been incorporated into the 2020/21 budget if needed. Action: Clerk to complete review of hours as soon as possible.	Clerk Chairs Briefing 18.05.20		

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
07.07.20	Clerk had not completed review of hours. Action: Clerk to complete review of hours as soon as possible.	Clerk Autumn Term 1		
25.02.20	2.25 SLA with WBC. Governors agreed that it is key that the LA is clear on the nature of the service icollege is operating/is able to provide and that this needs to be developed into a formal SLA which includes clarity around funding arrangements. Action: Work towards agreeing a formal SLA for icollege services provided to the LA.	Headteacher & Chair September 2020		
20.10.20	See 3.1 of minutes 20.10.20. Action carried forward. Action: Work towards agreeing a formal SLA for icollege services provided to the LA.		Included on FC agenda 26.01.21	
30.04.20	Finance/Funding Review. The Finance Review with the LA had been postponed due to lockdown. Once this has taken place the Chair and Headteacher can work on the SLA with West Berkshire.			
07.07.20	Finance Review had not taken place and so no further progress had been made. Action carried forward. Action: Work towards agreeing a formal SLA for icollege services provided to the LA.	Chair and Headteacher Autumn Term 2020		
20.10.20	Finance Review pending – see HFG up-date 3.1 of minutes 20.10.20. Action carried forward. Action: Work towards agreeing a formal SLA for icollege services provided to the LA.		Included on FC agenda 26.01.21	
30.04.20	5.12 & 5.13 Out of County Learner Funding. Governors referred to “ <i>The 20/21 budget may benefit from an additional surplus of £13,545 related to an OOC primary learner where there is an ongoing legal dispute regarding responsibility for payment. As this is very optimistic, this hasn’t been included in budget planning for 20/21” and asked whether the pupil will continue to be placed with icollege for 20/21 and if so has funding been agreed for this year as well. Has the cost of having the pupil been included in the 20/21 budget. The Headteacher advised that the funding problem resolved when learner received EHCP on 11.03.20, when it is clear that placing authority are responsible for funding. The £13k relates to 16.10.19 - 11.03.20 when referring authority dispute ‘ownership.’ Figures have been requested and sent to IP for consideration. Costs for this pupil are not individually budgeted – the budget is set out on 74 generic places and the</i> ”			

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
07.07.20	<p>income and expenditure that will generate.</p> <p>Governors discussed that whilst they were sympathetic to the needs of the child, the situation whereby icollege may have to bear the cost of the placement up to the point the EHCP was awarded was outrageous. The Headteacher asked whether icollege should waive the recovery of the cost from the LA in light of its year end surplus. Governors agreed that this was not appropriate as it was the principal of the situation rather than there being a surplus which was the issue. Any surplus was needed by icollege to enable it to be able to deliver on its strategic objectives. Governors accepted that if an emergency placement, then it is not possible to agree funding up front. The Headteacher advised that the situation was complicated by the fact that prior to placement, the pupil had been in a mainstream setting. Action: Headteacher to update Governors on funding situation at next meeting.</p> <p>Information relating to the funding of the OCC Learner had been provided to Ian Pearson (Head of Education). A response is awaited from the LA and the Legal Team has become involved. The learner has been awarded an EHCP and the Welsh Authority are now funding the placement. However, funding pre the EHCP is unclear and Ian Pearson has been sent a breakdown of the costs incurred by icollege for which no funding has been received. Governors discussed that it is not feasible for icollege to follow up payment with the Welsh Authority. The learner was taken on by icollege on behalf of the LA who have a duty of care to ensure that they receive an education. WBC need to fund the placement with icollege and then claim back the cost from the Welsh Authority. Action: Update Governors at the next FC.</p>	<p>Headteacher FC 07.07.20</p> <p>SBM Autumn Term 1</p>		
20.10.20	<p>4.12 Invoices to Wales have been raised with Internal Transfer for remainder to WBC. The Welsh Authority have now agreed to pay the outstanding invoice but this had not yet been received. Payment will be by Bac's transfer. The HNB element prior to the EHCP being approved has not been received from the LA. . Action: Update at next meeting.</p>	<p>SBM FC 26.01.21</p>		

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
30.04.20	5.23 Appendix A of Policy Governors referred to Appendix 2 of the policy and questioned the section which stated that icollege would pay for lunch if a member of staff would be offsite for more than five hours. The Headteacher advised that this would be for example where a member of staff attended training and lunch was not provided. It was agreed that this needed to be made clear that this did not apply to when staff were at a unit other than their base unit. Action: Amend Appendix 2 – lunches to reflect that this did not apply where a member of staff was at a unit other than their base unit.	SBM 31.05.20		
20.10.20	Action: Need to confirm policy has been amended. Not on Sharepoint.	Headteacher/ SBM FC 26.01.21		
30.04.20	6.1 Health & Safety The Health and Safety Governor had completed a visit on 3 rd February 2020 using the H&S Checklist provided by WBC's Senior Health and Safety Adviser. The following points were discussed:- 1.18 Annual Online Checks. This role had been undertaken by the HR Admin Officer but they have stood down from this role. Governors discussed what annual checks were required and whether this related to SIMs and checks on staff photos. Action: H&S Governor to check with the H&S Co-ordinator and report back to the SBM.	Health & Safety Governor 31.05.20		
07.07.20	The Health and Safety Governor advised that Monica Romano the H&S Co-ordinator/IT Co-ordinator would be checking unit Inventories over the summer holidays and this included updating photos of rooms which formed part of the Inventory record. Risk Assessments, COSH and Health & Safety checks were all being worked on and Monica had produced some good work around what needed to be in place in respect of social distancing etc. The Health and Safety Governor thanked her for the work she had undertaken.			
20.10.20	It is still not clear what the annual checks are SBM has not been advised so is unable to comment. Action: To be picked up by new H&S Governor.	Health & Safety Governor Spring Term 2021		

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
20.10.20	3.1 Heads Funding Group. The HFG had met on 6 th October. The Headteacher had been unable to attend as it clashed with the Management Committee. The meeting had discussed the SEN Strategy and in particular savings which needed to be made and how these would be achieved. The High Needs Block (HNB) is overspent but it was not clear what the strategy is to address this. Secondary Heads wanted to meet outside of the HFG to discuss this further, but this has not happened. For example the increasing number of EHCP's being accommodated within schools is saving the SEN budget but potentially impacting on the HNB. The Headteacher advised that 30% of students placed with icollege have EHCP's. This is where a SLA with the LA is needed as the funding position is becoming more complex. Action: Forward HFG pack to Chair for information.	Headteacher		
20.10.20	4.6 Governors Training Budget Governors asked if there was a budget for Governors training outside of that offered by WBC, to cover areas such as Safer Recruitment. The SBM advised that there is. Action: SBM advised how to book Chair of Governors onto Safer Recruitment Training.	SBM FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	4.10 Outstanding Debtors Table 2 in BMR. In respect of Table 2 Funding Forecast, Governors noted that the sentence at the top "Funding from 1 April 2020 has not been requested. This is being prepared and invoices will be sent by 17 July 2020" needs to be removed. Action: SBM to amend table.	SBM FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	4.11 Raising Debtors Invoices. Governors asked if the invoices could be issued earlier. The SBM advised that under normal circumstances, invoices would have been raised at the May half term, however, the impact of CV-19 had meant that there were other priorities. Governors asked whether there could be two sets of invoices raised per term, one at half term and then at the end of term. Governors were advised that currently schools were being invoiced three times a year but in the past this had been half termly. It was agreed that the SBM would invoice half termly moving forward, especially in light of the comment in the Schools Forum report around P7 invoiced amounts not being available. Governors discussed whether it would be possible to invoice right through to the end of the Autumn Term given that those students currently with icollege would be remaining for the rest of the term			

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
	at least. The SBM advised that student numbers at Integration and Inspiration may vary, but those at Independence, Intervention, The POD and PEX students could be invoiced for the full financial year. Governors discussed that this would mean all parties would have a clearer idea of committed expenditure and would reduce the SBM's workload. If students did leave icollege a credit could be raised and used against another learner placed by the school. HNB funding from the LA had been received. Action: Wherever possible, raise invoices for students to the end of the financial year. Where this was not possible, invoices to be raised half termly.	SBM FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	4.14 CV-19 Related Expenditure. The first claim covering additional expenditure from Easter to June had been paid and £1,840 had been received. This related to resources/PPE etc when icollege was open for keyworker and vulnerable children. Expenditure during the Summer Term had been £3640 which related to the purchase of additional computers. This would be claimed in the Autumn Term. Governors asked if icollege was able to claim back the full cost. The SBM advised that the system for claiming the grant had changed and it was unclear if all expenditure could be claimed. This was being followed up by the SBM. Action: SBM to update at next meeting.	SBM FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	5.1 PPG. The PPG statement, Overcoming Barriers and Primary Impact 2019/20 had been discussed at the MC on 6 th October 2020. The Chair expressed her disappointment that the information was not available on the icollege website. The Headteacher advised that she would follow this up with the website provider as not all documents sent to them had been uploaded. Action: Follow up with website provider to ensure PPG information is added to website.	Headteacher FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	5.5 Transition Funding. Angie Palmer and Ali Haines (Independence) are in the process of pulling together a summer programme. More work is needed to look at whether learners are engaging with where they are now. The claim is due to be submitted by the end of December so more will be known by then. In order to claim learners will need to have stayed in P16 education. Use of Transition funding will be a focus of any Ofsted visits. Action: Provide update on use of Transition Funding at next meeting.	Headteacher FC 26.01.21		

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FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
20.10.20	<p>8.1 – 8.3 First Aid Policy.</p> <p>Governors asked about keeping the contents of the boxes up to date and whether this includes masks given the current CV-19 situation. The Headteacher advised that PPE needed for CV-19 is kept in a separate box in the Isolation Area in each unit. The policy refers to standard first aid boxes not CV-19 first aid.</p> <p>Governors queried this as staff may need to get closer to students than social distancing permits in order to administer first aid. Governors were advised that secondary age students are likely to deal with cuts etc themselves so would not involve contact by a member of staff, whereas the need for contact is more likely with primary age pupils. Action: Check whether masks etc are included in First Aid boxes and whether policy needs to reflect that they are needed to comply with CV-19 precautions.</p> <p>Governors asked how often the boxes are checked as this isn't documented in the policy. Likewise, where the First Aid boxes or the Red Book are kept is not included. This may vary from unit to unit e.g. at Independence they are in the Headteachers office. Governors discussed the need for regular checks of the Red Book/record of incidents by the Health & Safety Governor and whether the incidents are reviewed to look for trends/common problem areas etc. Action: SBM to feed back discussion at meeting to Monica Romano.</p> <p>Action: Health and Safety Governor to include monitoring of First Aid incident log/Red Book as part of their checks.</p> <p>The Headteacher discussed with Governors the system for feeding back to those members of staff responsible for each policy when it had been approved. For example, the Child Protection Policy had been approved at the MC on 6th October 2020 but the policy holder had not been advised. Governors discussed that it is ultimately the policy holders responsibility to check when approval has been given. When there are questions raised about the content of the policy this also needs to be fed back. In these cases the Clerk is not always going to be aware of the detail which needs to be fed back. Action: Consider how best to feedback to policy holders approval of policies by Committees/MC and any queries which need to be addressed.</p>	<p>SBM FC 26.01.21</p> <p>SBM FC 26.01.21</p> <p>Health & Safety Governor - ongoing</p> <p>Headteacher FC 26.01.21</p>		

FC Date	Agreed Action	Responsibility	Current Status	Further Action Required
20.10.20	8.4 Critical Incident Plan. Governors asked if there had been any recent practice of lockdown procedures. The Headteacher advised that there had not been any practices since CV-19. There had however, been a real lockdown at Independence just pre CV-19. Action: Headteacher to raise with Health & Safety Co-ordinator and bubbles about setting time aside for practice lockdowns.	Headteacher FC 26.01.21		
20.10.20	8.5 Pay Policy The Headteacher advised that there had been feedback from the consultation with unions around the use of half point increments which was not consistent with the national guidelines. The unions had also commented on the criteria used to quantify performance as good, very good or exceptional. Their argument was that good performance is what is expected and therefore this should warrant a full point not a half point incremental progression. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the Personnel Committee on 1 st December 2020. Action: Headteacher to email from unions to Chair in advance of Pers Committee.	Headteacher PERS 01.12.20		