



MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION TRUST EXTRAODINARY MEETING

Friday 11 June 2021, 8.15am
The Gallery

Present

Ian Dodd, Emma Gautrey, Rob Guthrie, Guy Magrath (via Teams), Martyn Rhowbotham, Stuart Williams (Executive Principal).

In Attendance

Sheryl Wilson (Clerk).

Welcome introductions and apologies for absence

Stuart Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies of absence were received from Sam Hearsh, Andrew Holt, Sally Kirkby, Judith Gilboy, Sally Kirby, Alex Mould and Natalie Ray.

Declarations of Personal Interest and Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interest.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed Catmose College expansion and the grant agreement between the local authority and the College.

Consultation Letter

Stuart Williams has written a draft letter which will be used for the consultation process to expand the PAN from 210 – 240. Trustees discussed the content of the letter. The letter will be circulated to a number of stakeholders as part of the consultation process and legal advice will be sought before issue, in conjunction with the Admissions Code. The local authority instigated the expansion based on a School Capacity Survey (SCAP). Currently the College is oversubscribed by approximately 40 students per year.

Question: Is this all first-choice applications?

Yes.

Stuart Williams presented the proposed plan of phase 1 of the project. Trustees agreed with the plan. Parking will also be a consideration and it is possible that some of the existing parking bays can be reconfigured. The second phase will involve a new block being built at the back of the existing building, which will create additional science labs and a technology room. The College has started to engage with partners that were involved in the construction of Harington School and Catmose College and were able to provide expertise. The third and final phase of the project will be to adapt the existing building to accommodate 240 PAN.

Grant Agreement

Trustees were handed a paper copy of the final iteration of the Grant Agreement. Stuart Williams confirmed that both the lawyers and the College were happy with the final version.

Question: What has been done to ensure that £5 million will cover the planned project?

The local authority commissioned a survey with a contractor and they based the costings on this survey.

Question: When the project is complete who takes ownership?

The Rutland and District Schools' Federation Trust.

Question: What is the plan for catering facilities?

There are already three serveries and there is the opportunity to add another external catering facility. The College has more catering facilities than most schools of this size. Due to Covid, staggered lunchtimes had been introduced and this has made a difference to the queues.

Question: Are there any implications to staff numbers?

As the increase is 30 students per year group, there will be some minor adjustments and the potential to recruit in core subjects.

Question: Has insurance been considered and there is no mention in the agreement of consequential loss.

The Federation uses the government insurance scheme and the lawyers were happy with the agreement.

Question: Is there the facility for calling forward payments?

Grant C is indicative that dates could be amended with the local authority's agreement.

Question: Please provide a summary of the advantages of expanding.

- 1) Economies of scale which will allow for a broader curriculum.
- 2) The opportunity to employ more colleagues.
- 3) Student numbers into Harington School will be more secure.

Stuart Williams advised that the downside to expanding will be that the site will be more congested with large numbers of students moving around. The theatre will not currently house a full year group so this is a consideration. Some of the more individualised aspects of the College ethos could be challenged. It will also become more difficult for the Principal to meet with every Year 11 student to discuss their future plans following GCSEs.

Trustees acknowledged that there is a culture embedded within the Catmose community of not running in corridors during lesson changeovers and that it is very orderly. Additional students would not easily compromise this.

Question: Would children from the new build areas such as Barleythorpe gain a place?

The Admissions Policy is based on distance, not catchment area. Barleythorpe students would be admitted to the College most likely as they are now. This could also benefit villages further out.

Question: Are toilets a problem?

The new languages block will have additional toilets.

Question: What will happen to the sports facilities and music practice rooms?

It is hoped that the sports area will be remodelled. There is currently not a plan for music practice rooms. These are key areas that need further consideration.

Question: What are the three biggest outstanding risks from the proposed contract and what is the contingency plan if they occur?

- 1) If the cost of the new build goes over the allocated budget the Federation will have to use its own reserves.
- 2) Potentially an increase in behavioural difficulties with more students at risk of exclusion.
- 3) Reputation with key partners, e.g. other secondaries who would be impacted by greater admission.

Question: On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied is the College with the proposed expansion?

Stuart Williams confirmed 8. Capacity has been brought into the Finance team to assist with the project and due to previous experience with expansion projects, there is no concern of working to timelines and within the agreed budget. The risk is the cultural side.

Question: Did Rutland County Council solely approach the College?

A full report including consultations was done with all three secondary schools in the county and it was found that Catmose was best placed to respond.

Question: Will the existing infrastructure for Client Services be sufficient?

The College has also employed an additional advisor.

Trustees commented that they agreed with the cultural concerns, however, overall, they unanimously agreed that the expansion was better for Oakham and for Catmose. Trustees gave delegated approval for Stuart Williams and the Company Secretary to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Trust.