MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE BOARD OF RADDLEBARN PRIMARY SCHOOL HELD ONLINE AT 2:30 PM ON MONDAY 7 APRIL 2025

PRESENT	Justine Baker		
	Alex French		
	Catherine Griffiths	-	Chair for the meeting
IN ATTENDANCE	Mel Boden	-	Strategic Finance Advisor
	Alison Hicks	-	Local Authority Board Liaison
	Claire Huxley	-	Deputy Headteacher
	Catherine Silcock	-	Clerk
	Emma Woodhouse	-	Governance Professional
CONSENT TO ABSENCE	Angela Lowry		
	Charlotte Stubbs	-	Chair

In the absence of the Chair, IEB members agreed that Catherine Griffiths assume the Chair

THE MEETING WAS DECLARED QUORATE

0102 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST/CONFIDENTIALITY/CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

There were no new declarations of interest.

0103 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members considered items of Any Other Business and agreed that the following be discussed immediately:

The Chair asked to have her concerns heard by the board and formally entered into the minutes before they discussed the budget. She extended her thanks to JB for supporting the Deputy Headteacher with the preparation for the budget. She reported that SFS and BCC had clarified that the budget could be approved even though it was not balanced provided a deficit recovery plan is completed.

The Chair shared that her main concern was leadership capacity, with no SBM and the Headteacher absent due to illness the school also lacked financial expertise. It was more challenging since DRB had provided no real handover when the school changed financial providers to SFS. She stated that with current capacity and capability it was impossible to meet all the deadlines. She had raised this at a meeting with Chris Etheridge from the LA and he had suggested bringing in a retired Headteacher with financial experience to support.

The Deputy Headteacher reported with only four days left before the Easter holidays there was not enough time to consider staffing or other savings that could be found. **The Chair agreed that she felt there was not enough time to produce the Deficit Recovery Plan (DRP) by the end of April.**

Action: AH
AH to contact Neil Butler and Sabrina at the LA to extend the deadline for the DRP. AH also to contact Chris Etheridge to clarify the offer of support from a retired Headteacher.

The Deputy Headteacher shared that there were two deadlines proposed, one at the end of April and the other on the 31 May 2025. The deficit recovery plan deadline needed to be end May.

A Member expressed concern for the wellbeing of the leadership team especially in the summer term but was aware that an increase in capacity would have an implication on the budget. It was suggested they addressed leadership capacity before the budget was set.

AH shared that the discussions she had been involved with raised questions about where the support was most needed, there was a suggestion that support was needed at ground level rather than leadership. The Chair explained that the DRP had six sections which would need someone with the relevant experience to complete.

MB shared that with the assistance of the Deputy Headteacher and JB, extra financial support would not add anymore expertise to the budget that had been presented and that the school needed time to move forward with the plans. MB offered continuing support considering her financial background.

A Member questioned if the need for strategic or operational support was clear. AH shared there was potential support through the SIP function, she clarified that when she was asked if leadership support was needed, she had declined the offer in favour of classroom support.

AH explained that the leadership support discussion would not stop the budget being set. The Chair agreed that as per advice from SFS the budget can be set with notes for further reviews, she explained that no invoices could be paid until the budget was approved so it had to be approved at this meeting.

The Deputy Headteacher shared that the~~y~~ school needed support in four areas, SEND (due to Inclusion Lead's absence), the Headteacher had previously helped with this area, financial support, elements of health and safety previously overseen by SBM (due to the fact the SBM role was not being replaced – training may be required) and strategic planning. It was noted that the impending OFSTED inspection was a priority.

AH explained that the Headteacher being absent was a valid reason to defer an OFSTED inspection. The Deputy Headteacher shared that SIP had advised

that OFSTED may not accept this reason. AH agreed to raise this issue internally.

A Member questioned whether it was possible to get cover for the Assistant Headteacher currently in Y6 so he could be released back to a leadership role. It was suggested that he taught Y6 up to and including SATS week and then have some agency cover. The Chair agreed to meet the DHT the following day to determine a short term capacity plan which would then be circulated to IEB members.

0104 **SCHOOL BUDGET**

Members received a copy of the Strategic Financial Forecast in advance of the meeting. (Paper 3.3). It showed the end of year cumulative deficit was £400,033, it was shared the main reason for the overspend was agency staffing due to sickness, staffing costs more generally and falling pupil numbers.it was also noted that the deficit for 2023/24 was artificially high as DRB had failed to pay invoices in the correct year, as such the cumulative deficit for 2024/25 was approximately £250,000.

Members received copies of the Budget Assumptions 2025/26 (Paper 3.1), Budget Plan 2025/26 (Paper 3.2) and Summary Budget 2025/26 (Paper 3.3) in advance of the meeting. It was reported that Budget Assumptions had been produced by MB with the input of the Deputy Headteacher and JB. The assumptions were arrived at using information presently held. Costs from SIP support and costs from releasing the Assistant Headteacher for Y6 could be noted as subsequent variations.

The Chair asked if there were any challenges to the baseline assumptions, **a Member questioned why there was no longer an allowance for peripatetic music, if this was no longer available or funded by parents.** MB clarified that it was being funded by parents.

A Member asked how long the IEB would continue, it was set to be disbanded at the end of the summer term and why no figures had been entered for Governor Expenses or Governor Training. MB clarified that although Governors could claim expenses they generally did not, as such the assumptions were zero in the budget. AH stated that a discussion was needed about extending the term of the IEB until December 2025, she suggested that this be added to the agenda of the next IEB meeting.

JB suggested that a nominal £100 was entered into the budget for Governor Expenses, and £1000 for Governor Training, she raised that a new Governing Board would need appropriate training to function. The Chair proposed that they approve the budget today with two amendments adding £100 for Governor Expenses and £1000 for Governor Training.

MB stated she did not see any savings that could offset the money needed for SIP support or Y6 cover, she explained that they needed to approve the budget today with the current assumptions.

A Member questioned why there was no allowance for PAT testing, the Deputy Headteacher reported that this was done inhouse and did not incur a charge.

MB reported that changes would be shown in the outturn, **the Chair shared that even though there are future unknowns the baseline assumptions were sound and she commended the work carried out by the Deputy Headteacher and MB.**

A Member asked if the SLT had felt like they were able to challenge any of the budget decisions. The Deputy Headteacher shared that she felt she had been heard and hadn't been pressurised into agreeing to anything (such as cutting roles, which would not be in the best interests of the children). She ensured that the school had the correct staffing realistically planned in for September.

The Deputy Headteacher shared that there were members of staff that were actively looking for new employment/promotion and if they were successful in securing a new role, school —could replace some teachers on the higher end/upper pay scale with ECTs or main-scale teachers and it would save money. She suggested that funds would also need to be found for marketing to increase intake. MB shared that every upper pay scale teacher replaced by an ECT or main-scale teacher would save approximately £20,000.

It was noted that within the assumptions a replacement for a 0.6 wte teacher retiring in the Summer would be recruited for September on 0.4wte. The assumptions were also based upon a full establishment from September 2025.

MB suggested that they would have more information at the meeting in June, the Chair agreed that they needed to review budget assumptions in June and the Deputy Headteacher reported that they would have any resignations by May half term. A staffing plan could then be finalised.

Members received a copy of the Deficit Recover Plan 2024/25 (Paper 3.4) in advance of the meeting, it was explained that they were required to use the template provided by the BCC, the Deputy Headteacher and SFS had agreed to populate the baseline data. The Chair explained that help was needed to complete the rest of the sections. It was shared that there were still questions regarding SEND costs and funding, money owed from the BCC and additional costs to be allocated to marketing. A member asked if the money owed by the BCC was due to utilities for the Oak Dale building/Stans Café, the Chair confirmed this was correct.

The Chair suggested a Teams meeting with AH to look at some of the outstanding issues, she reported that SFS had given them the methodology, but they did not have the time to complete. She suggested a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher and SFS after Easter.

The Deputy Headteacher reported that in the absence of the Headteacher the school needed support with identifying and allocating SEND funding (including any ring-fenced money) in the 25/26 budget. It was important to ensure the school has all SEND funds available as well as accurate information for the DRP. JB offered to spend half a day looking at SEND income and staffing after Easter, MB suggested it was important to make sure they had the correct EHCP funding and the current SENDCo was up to date with all the forms that need to be submitted.

The Chair agreed that they needed support on SEND funding and proposed staffing and to complete sections on the contracts and money owed from BCC. She also would seek advice on marketing from The Oaks

AH asked if the board wanted to meet before the next scheduled meeting on 19 May, the Chair suggested an interim Teams meeting focusing on Leadership Capacity.

The Chair shared she would meet with the Deputy Headteacher tomorrow for further discussions and the Deputy Headteacher reported that they would know whether the Headteacher would be absent for longer by the next meeting. **A Member suggested that SIP be involved in this meeting.** MB confirmed she would not be able to make the next meeting but assumed SFS would be involved.

0105 **RESOLVED** That the budget be approved with associated assumptions subject to the agreed amendments.

0106 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk requested Governors to identify any agenda items for the next meetings and the following were agreed:

2 May 2025 - Leadership Capacity and duration of the IEB.
19 May 2025 – standard agenda

Governors confirmed that the next meeting of the Interim Executive Board would be held at 10.30 am on Monday 2 May 2025 on Teams.

The meeting closed at 3:40 pm.

Signed: Alex French (Oct 10, 2025 14:14:45 GMT+1) .....
(Chair of Committee)

Date: 5 June 2025