

APPROVED FLT Resources Committee – Meeting Minutes

11 March 2021 at 6.30pm via Teams

Attending Committee Members (Trustees) Anthony Cook (AC), Chair Ian Wright (IW) - from 7.10pm Duncan Millard (DM) Mark Greenwood (MG) Carrie Insley (CI)	Attending Committee Members (not Trustees) David Hancox (DH) Tim Clark (TC) Duncan Jenkins (DJ) – from 7.10pm Alex Bond (AB)	Attending Others Joanne Ray (JR) Operations Manager Jane Cole (JC), Finance Manager Tori Ray (TR), Clerk
Apologies noted in advance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anne Lynn (AL) COO Ian Wright (IW) and Duncan Jenkins (DJ) advised they would be unavoidably delayed joining the meeting 		

1	Welcome new members, guests or staff presenting and note any resignations The meeting opened at: 6.35pm. AC welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that sadly it was also DJ's last meeting with the committee – as announced at the last meeting.
2	Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy Apologies noted. AC sent best wishes on behalf of all committee members to AL who was not able to join the meeting. AC asked if there was anything being raised confidentially in the meeting, that this be noted at the time. Due to attendance levels, the meeting was quorate: <i>50% of committee members of which 2 attendees are Trustees. Current total committee number is 9.</i>
3	Matters to be raised under A.O.B agreed as being urgent None
4	Declaration of any personal/business interests relating to this meeting MG gave advance notice that a family member will be employed by FCC from Sept 2021. AC requested MG update his personal declaration of interest before then. ACTION: MG to update declaration of interest documents on GovHub before Sept 2021
5	Agree and sign minutes and confidential minutes of previous meeting on 14 January 2021 Both sets of minutes were agreed as an accurate representation of proceedings and were APPROVED .
6	Review and update Action Lists x 2 Carried over actions were confirmed as either completed or included in the agenda. One outstanding action related to the Employee Handbook needs further clarification and was carried forward to the next meeting. ACTION: JR to clarify with AL how the Employee Handbook will be reviewed in relation to the H&S Manual 2021 update and report back at the next meeting
7	Other activity agreed out of committee AC advised that invoices were paid and also confirmed he had sent a communication to those invited to the Finance Governors meeting on 22 April – more on that later in the meeting.
8	Financial Period Outlook including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) P5 Report – including revenue and capital b) Covid Expenditure Review JC shared there has not been a big difference between P4 and P5 to note due to school closures. The committee went on to discuss two areas of note in some detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In one school, the anticipated costs of staffing and support required needed for children are higher than anticipated and this may be an ongoing situation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In more than one school, there are ongoing concerns which need resolving due to the age of premises (as per premises report later on agenda) which will have financial repercussions on school financial reserves. The highest risks stem from structural problems, needing urgent attention. In other locations, repairs don't pose a safety concern but will need addressing. <p>JR confirmed professional advice is being sought as a priority.</p> <p>Q: Is this being factored into budget decisions being taken for next year? A: Yes. The financial and safety risks are both being assessed.</p> <p>Overall, the Trust's position is looking positive, although there are some specific issues that need dealing with. There is some excellent work being done to look at this alongside the specific school premises. Thanks goes to Jane and the team plus the local governing boards for their work.</p> <p>AC emphasised the need for remaining cautious around costs. The need to make savings still needs to be a high priority to ensure the Trust stays focussed and is as financially efficient as possible, especially in the current context.</p> <p>ACTION: AC to talk with AL and invite selected Finance Governors to the next RC meeting, ahead of next year's budgets.</p>
9	<p>Finance internal and external audit outcomes</p> <p>Reports are available and focus on Lettings and Income. A Trust Policy for Lettings will be updated but due to the current situation there are no opportunities for hiring at present.</p>
10	<p>Benchmarking report on FLT Spending</p> <p>The discussion moved onto the benchmarking report and DH was invited to share reflections on John Blandy and Shrivenham schools as an example of what the reports can show about each school.</p> <p>Committee members expressed thanks for sight of the report which provides a useful tool to interrogate what each school has in place and test assumptions around their risk profiles, over and above what is already known. It also provides a powerful link with school outcomes, and shows how different each school, allowing the governing bodies to ask useful questions.</p> <p>Request from all committee members: to continue the discussion and appropriate oversight to the next stage, it would be useful to see all schools in one matrix.</p> <p>Q: Will each school look at the report and create an action plan? What will happen next to ensure discussion moves to action? A: JR confirmed the school reports have not yet been shared with schools.</p> <p>Q: Are there any risks or sensitivities in sharing the reports with schools? A: The Committee identified there will be an ALT meeting with school heads a fortnight which provides an opportunity to discuss the reports and clarify the process to move forward. Propose to talk to heads first to ensure they understand the headlines first and then share with governing bodies but ask them to provide a commentary and action plan back to Resources Committee.</p> <p>ACTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DM & AC brief Heads at the next ALT meeting (24 March) and ask them to share with their LGB boards. Request commentary back to RC meeting in line with budget submissions (7 June) AC share report with Finance Governors ahead of meeting on 22 April as a pre-read. TR to add it to FG meeting agenda AC to ask AL if can present at the FG meeting and then host discussion topic JC to compile report for Heads AC to look at timing of benchmarking report each year – move 3 weeks earlier so it can become part of the annual cycle. TR to check is on the RC ToR annual schedule.
11	<p>2021/22 – 5 year plan budget assumptions and timetable</p> <p>JC gave a verbal update based on AL's detailed written report, which also highlights assumptions. Committee members commented that the principles look good and seems to take a sensible approach. Two areas of note still awaiting clarity on and may see changes on:</p>

	<p>1) Nursery funding 2) 6th form funding</p> <p>Q: No large unknowns going into the budget cycle? A: Correct JC also made the committee aware that teachers own pension contributions will be increasing in April and it's not clear if there's high awareness of this. It will impact teacher's own take home pay, if not change what the Trust pays. AC ran through the expected timetable – agreed it feels comfortable. No further comments or concerns. JC finally confirmed funding confirmations are in place – helpful. Details of current staffing levels have been shared with schools to check for changes ahead of September, so have a good starting point.</p>
12	<p>Governor's Allowance policy & procedures review AC reflected that it was appropriate timing to review this. No comments or amends proposed. APPROVED by all members without changes.</p>
13	<p>Breakout room owners for Finance Governor's meeting (22 April 2021) AC outlined the purpose of the Finance Governor's meeting and the intention to protect time for discussion and meaningful debate on three pre-agreed topics. AC then proposed a change to the original topics - dropping a discussion on 'income generation' and instead allocating time for a discussion on the Benchmarking Report. APPROVED by all.</p> <p>ACTIONS: TR to update agenda and reissue to participants <i>IW and DJ joined the meeting at 7.10pm</i></p>
14	<p>Risk Register review (Resources Committee items) MG confirmed nothing major to update on. This was covered in depth in the last Resources Committee meeting. The IT Security Report came through today – MG considered it appropriate to double check the risk gradings on the register to see if they need amending but no changes proposed at this stage. Just need to keep watch and log any incidents. Will reassess if it becomes more frequent, or staff in the Central Team are impacted due to greater recovery work requirements. TC suggested further investigation may be needed</p> <p>ACTION: AC to ask AL if the Independent Audit and Risk Committee (IARC) have fully investigated and made recommendations. AC to bring it back to Resources Committee to assess the risks and the costs of repair versus protection.</p> <p>Q: Do we know what costs would be involved? (for example: comparison between time / money required for repairing / recovering data following an ICT data breach and anything we can do to further protect our data proactively/in advance?) ACTION: JR to explore costs associated with protecting our IT infrastructure and data from future external attacks and share with the Resources Committee</p>
15 (see item 18 too)	<p>Asset Management and Strategic Priorities report to meet demand for places JR shared the commentary from AL's written report outlining existing H&S risks across individual schools, if funding is unsuccessful. She also shared the mitigation plans being put in place to minimise risks. The Committee discussed these and clarified that there is a 2 year funding lag before further CIF funding rounds. Should reach the 3,000 pupil target mark by October 2021 – this was remarked on as being very good news.</p> <p>A particular area of discussion focused on Shrivenham and the scale of facilities improvements needed in the immediate and longer-term. The previous approach taken of making short-term fixes did keep the facilities in use but may have made it more difficult to get the funding for the longer-term changes needed. JR confirmed a CIF report is due in April but after Easter is more likely. More funding is hoped for but not guaranteed.</p> <p>Q: Are we confident appropriate risk assessments have been completed to ensure safe? Is there a backup plan in place if funding isn't forthcoming? A: If funding isn't successful, we will need to revisit the risk assessment and request an urgent independent survey. In that scenario, it's possible the Trust would need to find alternative logistical arrangements on that site. Further discussions between the committee on appropriate solution and mitigation measures in the short, medium and longer term placing absolute priority on safety.</p> <p>ACTION: JR to talk to surveyors to check appropriate conditions and in fit condition for use. JR to also ensure contingency plans in place if funding successful/not successful.</p>

	JR advised, if funding is successful, there will be significant logistical challenges to navigate given the tight turnaround expected and the need to use temporary structures.
16	<p>Premises Strategy Report</p> <p>JR shared a verbal update of key headlines across several sites and premises, all broadly showing good progress. Highlighted individual premises issues and how challenges were being dealt with including working with Oxfordshire County Council and other client engagement meetings as required.</p> <p>Additional updates were shared regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering/cleaning contract with Caterlink partner – pushing for budget forecast. Heads not raised any major issues. Insurance claims for school trips – hoping to have successful outcome on a number of claims to reimburse costs. <p>Q: When do we expect reimbursements? A: Hoping before Easter</p> <p>Q: Are we expecting to need carry overs into next year's budget? A: No</p> <p>Q: Have Zurich taken steps to make it harder to claim in the future? A: No – planning to renew at the end of March (to be approved outside of Committee due to timing). The difference between RPA and Zurich relatively similar to last year. Checking terms and conditions. May look to take out short term renewal to Sept 2021 and then tie into financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for clarification regarding the render costs at Faringdon Junior School. JR outlined the context of the original quote and steps being taken to cover costs. Agreed priority is to keep costs low.
17	<p>Health and Safety Report (incl H&S Audit Report)</p> <p>JR provided a verbal update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some successful audits in term 1 & 2. Premises and condition surveys underway – in process of meeting with Heads. Updated reports to follow ahead of budgeting No accidents to report Reviewing fire risks and general H&S in week commencing 21 June 2021 Training has been completed across all sites Compliance report results by school and by premises are looking healthy and encouraging <p>Q: Happy it's looking good broadly but are there any areas of concern and what are they?</p> <p>A: Water hygiene – checking information is all up to date on our systems and talking to heads and schools to ensure appropriate compliance levels.</p> <p>Q: Noticed what looks like high levels of acts of violence/physical assault. Is this between children? Can we get a better understanding of the nature of what is happening and therefore better understanding of the risks?</p> <p>A: Difficult to separate the data out but more expansive report has been request by the Board, in particular with more data regarding acts of violence towards staff. In brief, we believe the trend is focused on primary rather than secondary and is influenced by particular individuals with behavioural challenges. In general, pupil on pupil incidents are only recorded if particularly aggressive. It was also observed it may be the case that some schools have started to report incidents on the systems more effectively.</p> <p>ACTION: JR to share Board report with the Resources Committee when it is ready</p>
18	<p>Numbers for next academic year & pupil planning review</p> <p>See discussion notes in agenda item 15.</p>
19	<p>Covid-19 update</p> <p>DM shared an update with the committee. Headlines include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to school has gone well and initial anxieties amongst staff, children and parents seem to be easing. Focus is on a recovery curriculum of wellbeing activities, getting back into routines and discussion based tasks. Teachers are taking their steer from the children. Looking to support children with what they may have missed. Encouraging greater social distancing among parents at drop off and pick up is an ongoing concern.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary school testing has been a large logistical challenge but is going well and with high attendance. <p>DM concluded with thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to get to this point</p> <p>Q: Are staff feeling concerned?</p> <p>A: Some – especially those who have worked at home until now. Heads are reporting a greater sense of community. DM offered to share a fuller report on attendance levels</p> <p>AC agreed would like to see it and reflected on the immense work that has gone into getting phenomenal attendance figures and asked DM to pass on the Committee's thanks for everyone's hard work.</p> <p>ACTION: DM to share report with Resources Committee when it's available</p>
20	<p>EFSA/DfE letters received since last meeting</p> <p>JC reported one letter received but nothing to report.</p>
21	<p>HR Dashboard</p> <p>DM noted AL may be best to update at a later date on this as hard to cover in her absence but recognised she has shared a comprehensive report. Suggestion by several members they would prefer to see a report including headlines and context for future meetings so the data can be used to form actions required. MG particularly interested in a review of absences to see if they are related to conditions of work or the impact of Covid. For instance: whether staff are not reporting in sick as much due to working from home? Are there more muscular skeletal problems due to working from home?</p> <p>Q: Are we DSE robust when in school?</p> <p>A: We have a robust approach – there are some areas to improve. DSE should be reviewed annually – may not be happening so could need further support.</p> <p>ACTION: Recognising it could be time consuming to adjust, DM to talk with AL to agree how to produce a more focused report going forward - action led with suggested next steps for discussion</p> <p>ACTION: JR to ensure reinformed focus on annual DSE reviews, in the new school year.</p>
22	<p>Draft staff survey</p> <p>DM gave an update on plans for the rollout of the staff survey delayed from last summer and invited inputs based on experience from outside of the Trust. DH offered to share questions and wording from his work related survey with a focus on returning to work, leadership and finding hybrid ways of working. Discussion followed.</p> <p>Q: What will happen with the results? How will you ensure FLT responds to what we hear?</p> <p>A: Will analyse results by school and share them along with overall trends and a follow up action plan</p> <p>Q: Will there still be some questions in common asked across staff and other stakeholder groups for ease of comparison?</p> <p>A: Yes. Also some very valuable learning from the parent survey we can compare with such as levels of support and the return to school.</p> <p>Q: Why no free text spaces? These provide opportunity to gather nuance and space for audiences to know they are talking direct to the board. Also important to gather what schools have already heard through parent surveys before asking them to complete additional surveys.</p> <p>A: We will focus on staff first.</p> <p>Q: Will children also be surveyed to ensure maximum openness and can feed all stakeholder views (incl governors and Trustees) into Trust strategy?</p> <p>A: Yes – will also look at common questions. Staff one first</p> <p>There was then a discussion around anonymity of respondents and what level of data mining it will be possible to do.</p> <p>ACTION: All share staff survey experience/content with DM as appropriate</p> <p>ACTION: DM to revisit Staff Survey plans with Siobhan to check overall thinking and timings and share back with the Committee asap after Easter so still time to influence</p>
23	<p>Any other Business (as agreed as urgent)</p> <p>None</p>
23	<p>Future meeting dates and arrangements</p>

AC thanked all for attending with particular thanks to DM, JR and JC for sharing updates from AL and covering in her absence. AC then concluded with a sincere thank you to DJ, on behalf of the Trust, the Resources Committee and as personally as Chair for all his very valuable involvement and contributions. He expressed everyone's hope that DJ will stay in touch and perhaps could be welcomed back in the future.

Date of next meetings:

- Finance Governor's Meeting – 22 April 2021
- Resources Committee Meetings – 13 May / 17 June 2021

FYI – next Independent Audit and Risk Committee meeting is on 22 June 2021 – all welcome

Meeting closed at: 9 pm.

Clerk: Tori Ray
Date: 15/03/2021