

FLT Resources Committee – Meeting Minutes

13 May 2021 at 6.30pm via Teams

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| Attending Committee Members (Trustees) Anthony Cook (AC), Chair Duncan Millard (DM) Mark Greenwood (MG) Carrie Insley (CI) | Attending Committee Members (non-Trustees) David Hancox (DH) Alex Bond (AB) Guest Steve Jenkins (SJ), LGB Chair, SHR | Attending Others Anne Lynn (AL) COO Jo Ray (JR) Operations Manager Jane Cole (JC), Finance Manager Sandra Green (SG)/ Tori Ray (TR), Clerks |
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Apologies noted in advance

- Tim Clark (TC)

Absent

- Ian Wright (IW)

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| 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 advised that SJ would join for the Budget 2022 Planning item. SG was thanked for stepping in as Clerk due to last minute IT issues which prevented TR from joining. |
| 2 | Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy TC's apologies were noted. IW's absence was noted. MG joined the meeting shortly after it had begun and apologised for not having had the opportunity to read through the papers. The meeting was quorate: <i>50% of committee members of which 2 attendees are Trustees. Current total committee number is now 8, following David Jenkins' recent resignation.</i> |
| 3 | Matters to be raised under A.O.B as urgent None |
| 4 | Declaration of any personal/business interests relating to this meeting None |
| 5 | Review and agree minutes of previous meeting (11 March 2021) Minutes were agreed as an accurate representation of proceedings and were APPROVED . |

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| 6 | <p>Review and update Carried Over Actions Carried over actions were updated as below or included in the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 Budget Planning: JC advised those present regarding a confidential staff remuneration matter. • Item 8: Asset Management and Strategic Priorities Report re: FCC English Village - JR to talk to surveyors to check appropriate conditions and whether fit for use/JR to also ensure contingency plans in place regarding funding successful/not successful. JR has spoken to the surveyors who advised that it is fit for use, with fire exits and safe evacuation assessed as 'acceptable'. Contingency plans are stalled if CiF bid is unsuccessful. This should be known in the next month or so. If unsuccessful, may then have to go back to OCC. ACTION: JR to catch up with PB re: impact for the September intake if we do not receive funding. JR advised that short-term teaching can continue but the buildings are unlikely to be good for teaching and learning when the weather gets colder. <p>Q: (AB) Will the surveyors put their comments in writing to us? A: (JR) No, they won't, but the condition survey stands as per the CiF bid.</p> <p>Q: (AB) Is there a concern that FLT is contradicting professional advice? A: (JR) They and I have checked that there is a suitable means of escape – yes, there is, but it is not fully in line with current building regulations, e.g. the steps have been repaired a number of times. A fire inspection would say 'remedial action' is required to make it fit-for-purpose. DfE have assessed the building as fit-for-purpose at the end of 2019.</p> <p><i>JR clarified after the meeting:</i> As part of the DfE Condition Data Survey in June 2017, all temporary classrooms on site were classed as "Poor" which translates to "Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended". The priority given for repair ranged between "between 3 and 5 years before remedial actions is required" and "More than 5 years before remedial action is required". This would take us to June 2022.</p> <p>Q: (AC) Are you happy from the visit that there is a safe means of exit? A: (JR) Yes. The Committee confirmed that they accepted this position.</p> <p>JR: If we are unsuccessful with CiF bid, we need to speak with Phil Bevan re: not using the buildings from September, as we will need to pull them down. We probably can't guarantee that they meet the minimum temperature of 16 degrees Fahrenheit. Advised the Trust does not schedule the buildings as usable for the next academic year.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Other activity agreed out of Committee AC advised that he had signed off:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The FLT Disciplinary Policy V1.7.: This had not gone to full committee as the changes were purely cosmetic. b. Invoices for JBL school. c. Insurance renewal: Comparative quotes had been obtained and decision taken to continue with Zurich, as the cost was comparable and they allow for additional WIP works, so will include the FCC Maths Block and JBL roof: this extra insurance is very difficult to obtain elsewhere. The cost is 4% increase since last renewal so will be looking at longer-term procurement for next time to be more cost-effective. AL mentioned that the insurance period had been extended this time to fit with other measures, i.e: to September 2022. d. L&F roof repairs: this item went to all ARC Members - all gave their support. JR advised that asbestos is present so this requires removal when school premises are not being used. A survey is expected in the May half-term and work likely in August 2021. |
| 9 | <p>(SJ joined the meeting at this point so Item 9 was addressed before Item 8): 2022 Budget planning cycle and an update from SJ and DH on deficit budgets. AC welcomed SJ to provide context re: SHR's challenges, mitigation, etc.</p> <p>SJ advised the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top headline is that it is not a good picture at SHR but Jane Collett and Jude, Headteacher, have been pulling the budget together. • Pupil numbers are lower than maximum. Classes have increased (one has 31 pupils). |

- Biggest expenditure is due to having experienced staff.
- SHR have done as much cost-cutting as they can and any further cuts will negatively affect the quality of teaching.
- SHR is therefore looking for ways of raising extra money, e.g.: Breakfast Club (which has local competition and has been affected by the Covid lockdowns).
- Also looking at combining with an After School Club but the latter requires qualified teaching staff and is subject to OfSTED. The Headteacher is looking into it – if feasible, it is anticipated that it will make a small contribution to funds and hopefully more in future years.
- The SHR Parents' Association (FOSS) and teaching staff have run fundraising events.
- Governors and staff are looking at grants, e.g.: small amount of library funding.
- SHR is cutting costs where possible.
- The school has recruited NQTs wherever it has lost employees and one former full-time employee has gone part-time.
- The Headteacher will advise of any other changes if and when they happen.

Q: (AL) Lettings have been hit but are coming back?

A: (SJ) Yes, but the After School Club and our lettings need to be co-ordinated.

Q: (CI) Do you get support from Defence Academy for Military Support grants?

A: (SJ) Yes, one of our governors, Chris Taylor, helps us to get that.

Q: (CI) Have you received the recent MOD documentation regarding these?

A: (AL) Yes, they have been circulated to all FLT headteachers and SHR have had funding for a pastoral staff member this year.

Q: (DH) JBL has been in a similar position - do your Years 2 and 3 have the same outlook?

A: (SJ) Yes, biggest unknown is pupil numbers. Like JBL, there has been a great deal of housebuilding in the area, but SHR has not seen the number of school children increasing. (SG mentioned that a number of families in the area send their children to Pinewood, a private school in nearby Bourton village.)

Other observations included:

AL: Years 4 and 5 numbers are low, so still going to have issues in Years 5 and 6 next year, but we may have improvement from lower years.

SJ: SHR pupil number is 181 now, whereas we can accommodate 210 pupils (one form entry = 7 x 30 pupils = 210 pupils).

AL: The Defence Academy leads to some fluctuation and children often arrive after census time.

DM: Jude is really effective and staff are very loyal, so there is minimal movement. It is a lovely school to teach in.

Reflections from DM on the good quality of Jude's work and longevity of staff service at Shrivenham which brings benefits and also financial costs.

AC checked if anyone had concerns or questions. Further discussion took place regarding staffing and recruitment contexts in schools and the impact on any deficit budgets.

AL talked through the current deficit outlook for Shrivenham, as at the current time. AC summarised and reflected that the school is very well aware of their financial standing and are doing everything they can to address any deficits. It's up to the Resources Committee to also remain aware of how things progress and ensure not taken by surprise or allowing deficits to grow further.

AC invited DH to update the committee on the budget deficit in John Blandy School. DH confirmed the school has seen a 30% increase in size in just a few years and is looking to grow by 40-50% over a 5 year period as part of a move to a 1.5 form entry, which brings a range of different challenges. For the year ahead, JBL has a surplus budget thanks to support with the new build. Challenge will come as make alterations in year 2 with things improving again in year 3. Looking at staffing scenarios across leaderships, teaching and support areas as these are the areas of budget concern. Also looking to ensure making the most of any potential letting income. Still working through scenarios – possible scope to reduce or phase down TA support where appropriate. So although surplus budget in year 1, planning is being looked at over a 3 year cycle to ensure achieve a balance and trying to ensure a surplus, given historic deficit position.

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| | <p>Focus is also to ensure that teaching and learning is appropriately structured to aid achieving longer term surplus budget.</p> <p>AL confirmed JBL has a £4k deficit taking overall deficit to £86,000. Capital is approx. £1,000 surplus. AL and DH confirmed trying to reduce this year's £4k deficit to come in at a balance and ensue the current situation isn't made worse.</p> <p>AC checked for further questions (none) and thanked DH for all the hard work and encouraged him and his team to continue to strive towards surplus budget. He also thanked SJ for joining the meeting and Jude and SJ for all their hard work to manage spending.</p> <p><i>(7.22 p.m. SG stopped clerking the meeting as AL began recording it).</i></p> |
| 8 | <p>Financial Outlook including:</p> <p>a) P7 Report – including revenue and capital expenditure Much improved – revenue in £76,000 surplus – the majority of that has come from FCC and the increase in COVID funding. AL talked through some of the different grants and sources of income including the teacher's pay and pension report has come through. Some schools better off than expected which is good news. Schools of concern would be Shrivenham (see above) and Faringdon Junior School which started the year with a \$14k deficit budget improved and then dropped again. Need to remember we have capital project deficits and ongoing needs to be met regarding school facilities/boilers/roofing etc.</p> <p>At end of year, it is anticipated we should hold £1.4million in reserves. Projected reserves at the start of the year were £1.7 million. AC reflected on the importance of reserves and how they've been used to ensure vital improvements that were needed which has been appropriate. AL reflected that the 3,000 pupil number achievement that is hoped for next January will make a lot of difference for the Trust.</p> <p>AL also highlighted that she and JC are also now providing a monthly Trust balance sheet for the Committee – as per DfE requirements – alongside cashflow reporting. Thanks to JC for her work on this.</p> <p>AC asked if anyone had questions for AL on latest numbers. Nothing further to discuss.</p> <p>b. Covid Expenditure Review Contained in the above review</p> <p>c. Central budget approval for 5 year plan AL talked through the central budget spreadsheets that were provided to committee members in advance, including central team cost breakdowns. Highlights include – budget has been discussed with Headteachers at the end of April they requested increased SEN lead to 2 days a week for school support. A marketing and communications post has also been created within the Central Team to improve capacity and standards across the academy. The next spreadsheet shows the various costs and expenditures including legal and IT costs which have been centralised where possible to achieve greater value for money. The third spreadsheet then provides a breakdown of what each school will pay over the 5 years.</p> <p>Q: (AC) What principle is used for establishing the percentage each school pays? A: (AL) We look at pupil numbers and the income levels associated with those. This is different to many academies but it was felt this is the fairest way as it's based on the actual set income a school would receive as opposed to any variable income and top slicing.</p> <p>Q: (AC) What was the feedback from the Headteachers? A: (AL & DM) Broadly supportive, no controversy. Pleased with the increase in SEN support as that's an ongoing concern. They have also had the opportunity to ask questions and influence it in advance and most have been through the process more than once now so we are seeing broad support. AC commented on the value of that engagement.</p> <p>AC asked if any further enquiries. None raised.</p> <p>Trust Central 5 year Budget was approved by the Resources Committee.</p> |
| 9 | (Item dealt with above). |

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| 10 | <p>Risk Register review</p> <p>JR advised nothing new to flag or update on. AL commented that we will know more on specific areas or schools of concern once we have the finalised budgets. AC mentioned there have been good discussions on site visits already. MG agreed nothing to add. AL reflected on impact of Covid as schools start to return to 'normal' – has been a large risk area for some time, but is now starting to ease.</p> |
| 11 | <p>Health and safety report including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust Wifi report and recommendation • Driving for Work Policy <p>JR reflected that the H&S annual summary report will be going to the Board for discussion. Worth noting the Accident and Incident policy and reporting has been implemented and continues to improve. Expect to see ongoing trend of improvements in the months to come.</p> <p>Two reportable incidents involving employees in the last year (April 2020 in Longcot and Fernham & Nov 2020 in Watchfield). JR ran through the details and is satisfied the relevant Headteachers have followed up with appropriate actions and it's been addressed centrally as a Trust. No further comments. No reportable incidents involving pupils.</p> <p>Audit and inspection cycle is expected in June/July. Teachers have been preparing and looking at outstanding actions. Feel confident ahead of the next general audit.</p> <p>Premises report</p> <p>The biggest risk from estates perspective is the ongoing capital work at Faringdon Junior School. The new school building for relocation of Faringdon Infant School will start in July. Currently working with contractors on proposals for Shrivenham which will be a 1.5 form entry school but with facilities for a 2 form entry school aside from classrooms.</p> <p>Q: MG enquired regarding 'near misses' related to the trees. How large were the trees? What learning is in place?</p> <p>A: (JR) Some were very large trees, especially in Shrivenham, including some in the centre of school facilities. Problems were caused by extreme weather, thankfully in school holidays. Tree surveys take place every 3 years and all recommended remedial actions have been taken place across the Trust. It hasn't been felt necessary to do more / more regularly. All evidence from tree experts was that they were stable and had been pollarded over the years. Several sites have tree preservation orders.</p> <p>JR went on to highlight that latest CIF bids have been submitted – expecting outcomes in June. Bids are decided based on condition reports and CIF guidance in order to maximise Trust opportunities and update facilities. Also in the early stage of roofing work at Watchfield developing an estimation of costs (aim to complete in Summer holidays) and a significant piece of work at FJS with the long-awaited slope and tarmac defects work done, again during the summer.</p> <p>Q: (AC) Funding from OCC – is there a risk of impact on our budgets and reserves?</p> <p>A: (JR) We give OCC a list of what we've paid, they agree it's appropriate and then we receive funding back.</p> <p>Q: (AB) What's the current status of the 'all weather' pitch?</p> <p>A: (JR) Not up to date due to Covid. Expecting 9-12 month build but nothing to update just now.</p> <p>Trust Wifi report and recommendation</p> <p>JR updated the Committee on the current situation. The Trust needs to upgrade its Wifi to ensure smooth operations, allow movement of ICT to the cloud across the Trust as well as adequate levels of support. Investigated a number of providers and found cost effective solution. Recommending Cambian which is less well known in UK but is better known in the US – have worked with Riverbank as ICT advisors and reliability reports. Happy with it as a cost effective solution to move to for the 5 year proposal and half the price of current supplier.</p> <p>Q: (AC) Have we had any references from others who have worked with them?</p> <p>A: (JR) Chris has and is happy with what has been told but not had anything in writing.</p> <p>ACTION: JR to ask for references in writing as part of due diligence.</p> |

Q: When is the decision being made?

A: Biggest driver is that John Blandy has no wifi – using a temporary solution and other ports need to be upgraded. Keen to progress in school holidays. Some urgency to get it started prior to summer.

DH supports getting references. Asked if technical advisors happy with recommendation? This was confirmed by JR. DH shared reflections and thinks it offers significant cost saving. CI shared that the provider, a subsidiary of Motorola, have strong background in terms of their own history.

Q: (AC) What does it mean for our budgets?

A: (JR) 5 year contract – they are looking for upfront payment. Could be staggered for when schools come on board but preference is to start contract in summer and for budgets. AL confirmed would split the costs involved over 5 years and money has been allocated in central budget for it.

AC expressed thanks to Chris who produced the report. Proposed Committee is happy to proceed assuming references are in line with expectations.

ACTION: JR to progress out of committee.

Driving for Work Policy

JR introduced the complexity and historical background to FLT's approach to the Driving at Work policy which has been in need of improving and further enforcement. A lot of thought has gone into it, including appropriate external guidance. Not currently confident all schools have list of approved drivers for schools or complete annual checks regarding licenses and MOTs where people drive for work. Need to formalise expectations of compliance on legal obligations and fulfilling duty of care to staff and their responsibilities when driving for work, across the range of different roles and working inbetween sites etc. Affects multiple staff.

Q: (AC) How does insurance work? What happens when giving lifts to children or other staff members from within the Trust?

A: (JR) Occasional Business Use Policy under Trust insurance covers emergency use only – i.e.: transporting ill child to hospital or home. If planned or foreseen ie: training course, would need to have business insurance on their own vehicle and it is the responsibility of the individual.

Q: (AC) How do we track and monitor and who is responsible/accountable?

A: (JR) It is a school office admin task (as is a collation of info) but will be audited by the central team as part of the operations audit visits to ensure checks are being done and paperwork is in place. Ultimately the Board are accountable but the Headteachers are responsible for the safety of their staff and pupils at their schools.

Q: (MG) How integrated is this with HR and people's job specs – we're not a large site across the Trust. Would HMRC allow travel between schools as allowable? If job spec says people are mobile, do we specify what their commute is?

A: (AL) The Trust site is actually larger than you think ie: Shrivenham to JB is 25-30 miles. (JR) Our insurance is very clear on your place of work, even if you travel out to schools. We are one Trust but as a place of work, for insurance it is your usual place of work that counts for your normal journey. Can claim for mileage for visits to other schools.

MG urged clarity for schools as it's a complex issue across insurance and expense allowances.

Q: (CI) – Where is it specifically noted that Business Insurance is required for staff. Does it specifically mention MOT and Tax?

A: (JR) It is noted in one of the documents – full recommendation of checks if travelling for business is included, including MOTs and licences.

Q: (AB) – Manufacturers Guidance comment – implies you have to go to the original car manufacturer for maintenance which is clearly an unreasonable request.

A: (JR) Agreed – will amend text to show it's not a requirement

Q: (DM) – Is it more about the frequency of checks rather than location of checks?

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| | <p>A: (JR) – Yes. There are full details stated in the policies which layout employment, legal and H&S point of view. Anticipate rolling it out via a conversation with headteachers as they will have a good understanding of who drives for business and will be able to communicate it clearly to their staff.</p> <p>Q: (MG) – Have we considered what happens if someone isn't willing to use their own vehicle after reading the policy? Will we need to provide hire cars? Is there a risk to staff goodwill or increasing costs?</p> <p>A: (JR) All our schools are accessible on bus route. If accessing a training course, that's a conversation that can be had with managers when booking. May need to look at supporting caretakers using their own vehicles who need to factor in business insurance. Don't see it as a big issue.</p> <p>Q: (AC) – Is there an online routine system that can capture this info in an official manner? Can we automate this?</p> <p>A: (JR) – Possibly, we have investigated this and feel the most robust system is an 'approved driver form'. Online, quick, minimal information required and the same as used by OCC.</p> <p>Q: (AC) - When do we want to roll this out by and capture the relevant information?</p> <p>A: (JR) Ideally the sooner the better. Some schools are already discussing it. September is an ideal time to collate information and ensure staff under induction are aware of their requirements. So aim to implement and roll out prior to Sept.</p> <p>AC asked if all happy to approve. APPROVED by the Committee. ACTION: JR invited to update the committee on compliance and monitoring on this in September. AC also thanked JR for all her work on this important area.</p> |
| 12 | <p>Covid Update</p> <p>DM doing a Heads reflection exercise on impact of pandemic – will be seen by board. Only 7th week back since schools reopened nationally – still not normal school. Risk assessments for safety still in place. Looking closely on the impact of the pandemic on learning, pupils and staff. Asking people what supported them through the pandemic, their leadership, remote learning, organisational changes being implemented – what will they retain as effective practice and their initial reflections on current curriculum. Will all go to the Board and will share more widely.</p> <p>Pupils – Quality of Education group is looking at this in particular. SEND and vulnerable pupils who have suffered the most. The gaps in their learning and ability to cope have widened, seeing several pupils not regulating their behaviours well on their return. Signs children are struggling. Govt have announced additional funding for mental health and staff training – watching for more details.</p> <p>Staff – Only 1 member of staff who hasn't fully returned to work, due to stress. Absolute need to return to normal school so staff have emotional support of colleagues and prevent isolation in bubbles/separate staff rooms/no assemblies/no trips etc. Heads are doing a huge amount to support staff. Chair of Gov at FJS has done online sessions for staff on energy and balance. Still in recovery stage – looking towards how we move out of this phase. Two academic years of disruption nationally. Looking forward to greater normality from September and involve Heads in that, following DfE guidance.</p> <p>DM clarified expected dates or next steps not yet known. JR raised need to consult with insurers regarding any school trips to ensure we are covered.</p> <p>Q: (AC) Are there any gaps or opportunities we should be taking regarding wellbeing?</p> <p>A: (DM) Heads are discussing this – each are doing things suitable for own staff. Need to connect with Heads to see what gaps are and what Trust can provide centrally.</p> <p>ACTION: DM asked to provide summary from that conversation with Heads with suggested actions so we can provide ongoing care for staff. Trust needs to support Heads with local efforts and maybe able to scale some things centrally.</p> <p>DM reminded also have the Employers Assist scheme. DH and Committee discussed if we see any trends or anonymised information from that – thought not.</p> <p>Any other questions? Nothing raised.</p> |

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| 13 | EFSA/DfE letters received since last meeting No letters reported |
| 14 | MAT to MAT collaboration Working with Vale Academy Trust. Agreed series of 6-7 joint educational projects to share strengths, some linked to SEND, leadership etc. Also recently met regarding contracts and tenders. Ongoing conversations looking for opportunities. |
| 15 | HR Dashboard No new dashboard to share. Gender Pay Gap Report – because of size of Trust we need to deliver a Gender Pay Gap report. 3% difference in pay between men and women's pay. Difference due to longevity of staff in post. Majority of workforce are women in lower paid roles. Attracted due to flexibility of roles which fit around childcare. DH actions we can focus on to continue encouraging flexible working but not seeing large areas of concern. AC reflected it's positive and important to take confidence from the report. ACTION: AL to publish for Trust and via Gov website. Questions will come through to the Central Office. AC thanked Jean for compiling the report Disciplinary Policy dealt with under item 7. |
| 16 | Support Staff Pay Award Approval No update or information to share. Has gone quiet due to local elections which stopped negotiations. Waiting for further information but not expecting Unions will have their requests met. Updates will come when hear more. |
| 17 | Employee Handbook review in relation to the H&S Manual 2021 No further comments – see above. |
| 18 | Staff survey update On agenda for ALT meeting next week with view to completion next term. Gone to the Board for check on wording before circulated. AC asked the Committee if any questions. Nothing raised. |
| 19 | Any other business (agreed as urgent) AC updated Committee following the Finance meeting. As we emerge from Covid, how we bring resources into the Trust and build partnerships with businesses. ACTION: TR to add to future agenda for discussion including Donate My School for alumni and businesses. DM suggested could be useful discussion point at the Governor's Seminar in Summer Term with a theme of recovery. AC agreed – flagged important for the committee to lead. DM raised it could also link well with the new marketing post. |
| 20 | Future meeting dates and arrangements AC thanked all for attending, especially to Jane, Jo and Anne for all their work and inputs. Many thanks to SJ for also joining to give the update and to SG Date of next meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources Committee Meetings – 17 June 2021 (critical meeting with budget focus) Independent Audit and Risk Committee meeting - 22 June 2021 Meeting closed at: 9pm |

Clerk: Sandra Green/Tori Ray
 Date: 28/05/2021
 Approved: 17 June 2021

Signed _____ Dated _____