

FLT Resources Committee – Meeting Minutes

12 May 2022 at 6.30pm online

Attending Committee Members (Trustees) Board Trustees: Anthony Cook (AC) Chair Duncan Millard (DM) FLT CEO Ian Wright (IW)	Attending Committee Members (not Trustees) Alex Bond (AB) Tim Clark (TC) Mark Greenwood (MG) David Hancox (DH)	Attending Others Anne Lynn (AL), FLT COO Danielle Bradley (DB), Finance Mngr Joanne Ray (JR), Operations Mngr Tori Ray (TR), Clerk
Apologies noted in advance Carrie Insley		

1	Welcome new members, guests or staff presenting and note any resignations The meeting opened at: 6.35pm. AC gave a warm welcome to all.
2	Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy Apologies noted. Committee members were reminded that anything raised confidentially in the meeting, needs to be flagged as such at the time and that the minutes are available publicly. Due to attendance levels, the meeting was quorate.
3	Matters to be raised as urgent A.O.B None
4	Declaration of any personal/business interests relating to this meeting MG shared a reminder for the Committee that he has a family member employed by the Trust which could be relevant for matters related to pay/pensions.
5	Approve minutes of previous meeting One small correction was made to the minutes of the previous meeting which were then agreed as an accurate representation of proceedings and APPROVED .
6	Review of carried over actions The status of all actions were checked – see Carried over Actions document for details.
7	Other activity agreed ‘Out of Committee’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case for new teacher – thanks to all Committee members for their contributions • Barn licence fee – no further discussion required <p>Management Information System: The Committee discussed the historical aspects and context of the Trust’s data management system with particular focus on contractual arrangements. AL confirmed the Trust is now in a new contract with an alternative supplier which brings more favourable terms. This has saved the Trust a substantial amount of money over a 5-year period. AL confirmed that schools took an active part in the decision making and attended briefings in advance to ensure everyone was well informed. Financial savings made by the Trust are being fed back into school budgets. AC thanked all those involved – the process, criteria and level of school involvement was all very welcome. The Committee asked if the Trust gets the same value from a cheaper contract and it was confirmed the value increased, functionality improved and expenditure decreased. The new contract also gives the Trust scope for further development. Further questions were asked regarding next steps and future use of data.</p>
8	Finance Report Period 6 Income DB updated the Committee on the Finance Report. Clarification of figures relating to FCC pupil premium children.
	Expenditure DB outlined the main areas of change, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirmation there have been increases in staff overtime

- savings have been found in some schools due to changes in staffing
- the use of agency staff has increased but expecting to see that drop again
- some recruitment costs being seen in other supplies and services

Capital

Nothing significant to note.

FCC budget being carefully reviewed to find savings – any funds identified and remaining unspent will be reprioritised elsewhere in the Trust. Clarified not yet seeing costs rising linked to inflation. Some schools are expected to remain in deficit – largely due to staffing pressures but the Committee has recognised it has been a tough year for schools who have worked so hard to keep open.

DM temporarily left the meeting – 7.10pm

Central budget approval for 5-year plan - APPROVED

AL summarised the documentation shared with the Committee in advance.

Staffing changes are needed to increase capacity for SEND/PP/looked after children and there is now to be a new English (reading/writing) post which will focus on tackling issues post Covid. Also, very happy to share the good news that thanks to an amazing donation from The Faringdon United Charities group, the Trust is able to increase Family Link Worker capacity for the next three years.

There will be changes to the Trust structure and extra admin support in the Trust's Central Team. AL outlined a shared vision of the future direction and structure of the Trust. It was noted that there is good support from Heads, recognising the long-term focus on inclusion. All recognise the potential budget implications but also added-value of acting collectively. Coordination and leadership across the Trust on this has been welcomed.

DM rejoined the meeting – 7.20pm

Committee members voted to **APPROVE** the central budget for the 5-year plan. Next step is for this to go to the FLT Board.

DM left the meeting – 7.30pm

9

Strategic spend planning for SCA funding

The Committee heard about the work to shape the principles of funding decisions taken by the Trust and to ensure decisions are transparent. AL and JR have been leading this piece of work however Trustees hold the final decision-making responsibility based on the recommendations put to them. The focus is on aligning principles of estate management strategy with the Trust's condition surveys and overall vision to ensure the Trust has a safe, compliant estate that's fit for business. Condition surveys are being finalised today. Their findings will be used to fill in the details of the estate strategy for the next 5 years.

JR outlined the SCA spending rules and responsibilities, also shared in a paper with the Committee members. Confirmed the priority is to make the best use of the Trust's funds. Updates on priorities for work will be shared out of Committee.

AC shared a very sincere thank you to JR for the immense amount of work that has gone into it. The Trust now has a good working draft to consider.

The Committee discussed how SCA funding fits with other sources of funding to ensure the focus isn't just on maintenance but also growth of the estate. AL confirmed that other funding does become available occasionally but also outlined why the Trust often does not qualify for it. Reserves are also taken into consideration and would be likely to impact on securing other sources of funding. The Committee further discussed the appropriate level of reserves, especially at a time of expansion. AC summarised the points raised and proposed the need to develop a spectrum of reserves or a reserves range.

ACTION: AL to start to map out what an appropriate reserves range may look like for the Trust.

ACTION: AL to ensure work on reserves also goes to FLT Board to ensure they are aware of the direction of thinking.

10	<p><i>Pupil planning review</i></p> <p>AL shared a summary of pupil numbers within the Trust and the highlighted key areas of risk, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing uncertainty within FIS/FJS as they continue to undergo change. For budgeting purposes, the Trust has set pupil numbers and is managing it closely. • Changes to the number of military families in Watchfield school necessitates careful mapping of confirmed leavers and expected new pupils. • John Blandy – slight reduction in pupil numbers – managing cautiously for budget purposes and have a focus on activity to increase numbers where possible. • Other schools not showing major areas of concern. <p>Noted by AL that 10 form entry has been discounted for FCC in the future due to limitations on the size of the site but discussion for ‘all through’ options for the future continue.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the extent to which the Trust has been able to offer school places to Ukrainian pupils who have moved to the area. It was noted that three schools have been able to help and are waiting for news of additional funding to see if there can be further places.</p>
11	<p><i>Policies needing review</i> – see agenda item 13</p>
12	<p><i>Risk register – key changes</i></p> <p>Nothing to add.</p>
13	<p><i>Premises report</i></p> <p>JR shared a report outlining potential work to be addressed within schools, including the following headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folly View Primary – preparations are on track with outstanding issues to address re: gas utilities. OCC are working closely with the Trust and supporting communications to staff, parents and the community. • Shrevenham – planning outcome expected in June, target date as Autumn/Winter 2023. • FCC – major works forecast with SCA funding to replace temporary classrooms. Gap analysis is being undertaken comparing current facilities with needs. <p>The Committee were also given a summary of outstanding operations policies and procedures that need addressing and next steps.</p> <p>GDPR</p> <p>The Committee noted the amount of work already undertaken in this area with a new GDPR provider including completed audits. No major issues arising. Now considering appropriate reporting mechanisms between LGBs and the Committee.</p> <p>Health & safety policies</p> <p>Policies awaiting review as listed in documents shared with Committee in advance. Up until now the new Operations Officer role has been focused on GDPR but is now focused on reviewing/updating where necessary outstanding policies, starting with the most critical. Intention is to complete this work by the end of the academic year. Not all will need to come to the Committee for approval.</p> <p>Internal audit</p> <p>JR reported the Trust is now able to re-implement term 5/6 cycle and this area is back on track thanks to the increase in staff capacity.</p> <p>Accidents/Incidents</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of reports but this is thought to be due to reporting efficiency gains following improvements in how the reporting system is used, rather than increase in risks. FCC are in the process of checking all staff are familiar with reporting process and mechanisms and a further increase in the number of reports is expected as a result. No particular incidents to review.</p> <p>Audit actions</p> <p>145 outstanding audit actions. Credit to Buckland and FJS who have completed their actions. The Trust is now in the penultimate year of contract so will need to go to tender.</p>

	No further questions from the Committee. AC thanked JR for the very comprehensive report and substantial work in this area.
14	<p><i>FCC temporary classroom reserves request</i></p> <p>AB summarised the current situation and the request to spend from reserves to improve classrooms facilities (classrooms, office and storage space). The intention is to use the facilities as an inclusion space for pupils. Both rental and second-hand purchase are currently under discussion – budget recommendations and timing options still need to be completed.</p> <p>JR added clarifications from the LGB meeting and perspectives on timings and planning requirements. AC thanked all for the updates. AB and Committee encouraged to consider longevity of facilities and what will be done with them at the end of use. JR confirmed currently seeking quotes as part of investigating purchase/ rental options. Expecting to be able to update around October half-term.</p>
15	<p><i>Covid update</i></p> <p>It was agreed this would not continue to be a standing item on the agenda in future meetings.</p>
16	<p><i>ESFA/DFE letters</i></p> <p>One letter received regarding the Government's school whitepaper.</p>
17	<p><i>MAT to MAT collaboration</i></p> <p>No update.</p>
18	<p><i>Strategic forward planning</i></p> <p>No further update.</p>
19	<p><i>Free school meal census data</i></p> <p>DB presented the figures to the Committee. In comparison with last year's data, no schools are seeing a reduction.</p>
20	<p><i>Staffing update</i></p> <p>AL gave an update on the status of certain key recruitments and the current situation. It was agreed this will continue as a standing agenda item in the future.</p>
21	<p><i>Centre for professional excellence</i></p> <p>No update available – carried forward.</p>
22	<p><i>Trust pay principles</i></p> <p>AC reminded the Committee of the background context that has been under discussion between several Committee members since the Autumn. The focus now relates to the ongoing trend of recruitment challenges for TA positions. Discussion was opened up to the whole Committee on whether there is a need to review the attractiveness of the roles, given all schools are facing ongoing challenges in this area.</p> <p>Elements of the discussion include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to invest in existing TAs to ensure they are trained and supported. • There have been changes to the TA role across the sector which needs to be recognised. • Need to look at retention. • Important to focus on the differentiation between teacher and TA and training, support and recognition needed in both areas. • All Committee members had an interest in hearing about the issues first-hand from TAs, Teachers and Headteachers. • Need to link this work with the Continuing Professional Development priorities. • Recognise TAs are not a homogenous group – staff will have different personal goals and ambitions within the role and levels of responsibility. • Also noted there tends to be a very high female workforce and TAs with caring responsibilities. <p>ACTION: AL to talk to HR colleagues to request support for identifying TAs, Teachers and Headteachers to work with on this issue.</p>

23	<p><i>Any other business (as agreed as urgent)</i></p> <p>Budget clarification – Committee members agreed that any school whose budget is in deficit will be asked to provide a 1-page summary and AC/AL will decide who needs to be invited to attend a Resources Committee meeting for a deeper conversation.</p> <p>Three Committee Members left the call at 8.40pm ahead of confidential discussion.</p> <p>Additional Confidential Business – detail noted in additional confidential minutes.</p>
24	<p><i>Future meeting dates and arrangements</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources Committee Meeting: 16 June 2022 <p>Meeting ended at 8.57pm</p>

Clerk: Tori Ray
Date: 15/05/2022