

## FLT Resources Committee – Meeting Minutes

### 10 March 2022 at 6.30pm online

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

1	<b>Welcome new members, guests or staff presenting and note any resignations</b> The meeting opened at: 6.35pm. AC welcomed everyone, especially DB who joined for the first time.
2	<b>Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy</b> 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	<b>Matters to be raised as urgent A.O.B</b> None
4	<b>Declaration of any personal/business interests relating to this meeting</b> MG shared a reminder for the Committee that he has a family member employed by the Trust which could be an issue for matters related to pay/pensions.
5	<b>Approve minutes of previous meeting</b> The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate representation of proceedings and were <b>APPROVED</b> .
6	<b>Review of Carried Over Actions</b> The status of all actions were checked – see Carried over Actions document for details. No areas of concern.
7	<b>Other activity agreed 'Out of Committee'</b> Nothing to note.
8	<b>Finance Report (AL)</b> AL talked through headlines highlighting the main risk areas. A summary of each school's financial position was shared. Two schools expecting a surplus. All others projecting an end of year deficit, largely related to a mix of capital work risks, need for additional staff to support behavioural issues, wrap around care ending, and staffing turnover/challenges. AL outlined the steps being taken in conjunction with Finance Governors and Heads to find solutions and acknowledged it is a difficult year as the Trust strives to keep schools open, despite staff absences.  The impact of Covid is still being felt. Costs are rising. The Trust is looking to see what appropriate use there may be for reserves and how to balance budgets in the coming few years. The Committee asked questions regarding appropriate levels of reserves for the Trust and ensuring the Trust stays within Charity Commission rules. AL confirmed there is no guidance on this from the Dept for Education and the Trust needs to consider ensuring appropriate levels of funding are spent on pupils year on year.  AL confirmed that the Trust is also possibly looking to combine budgets for FIS and FJS due to the school changes and is carefully monitoring the financial impacts of staff absences to avoid long-term impact on budgets.  <b>Energy Risks</b> AL outlined the current risks to the Trust related to energy expenditure and price rises due to the conflict in Ukraine. AL also talked though the situation for other schools in the UK. The Committee asked multiple questions related to the scale of financial risk and possible mitigations available to the Trust – both short and longer term. Information was shared about gas and electricity supplier actions and what the Trust is expecting to happen. Significant time has been put into mitigating the risks the Trust faces – including looking at energy saving transformations in new and old school buildings including solar panels and heat source pumps. IW offered additional support and expertise. This will be an ongoing area of concern for the

	<p>Trust. AC brought the Committee back to the conversation on reserves and encouraged greater efforts on budget planning and forecasting to ensure the Trust is working as accurately as it can.</p> <p><b>ACTION: AL asked to provide approx. figures for the financial risks, even if mitigated</b></p> <p><b>Planning Timetable and Assumptions</b>          AL confirmed the assumptions document is still being finalised and shared an overview of the some of the headlines at the time of the meeting. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• levels of Government 'Supplementary Funding' the Trust may be eligible for</li> <li>• anticipated salary changes for support staff which will prove challenging next year</li> </ul> <p>AL also outlined the Government's teacher pay-scale discussions. There is a chance we may see a larger increase than the funding supplied. That combined with expected Union negotiations means the Trust is needing to carefully analyse budget planning. Committee members were invited to ask questions and seek clarifications.</p> <p><b>Finance Governor Reports</b>          These were warmly welcomed as a useful tool, especially due to the levels of consistency. The Committee appreciate the amount of work that goes into compiling them. AC recognised that the reports have been a useful process for LGBs too, providing greater opportunity to distil the opportunities within their budgets. Valuable to have both the budgets and the accompanying narratives and comments.</p> <p>AC confirmed the forms will be used to inform strategic thinking, gaining insights on how to drive income and LGBs can also use them to provide more explicit wishlists for areas of future spend.</p> <p>There were discussions related to the frequency of reports, with the conclusion that quarterly reports may be the most helpful but perhaps also linked to when it is most useful to get fresh data. AC confirmed this would be discussed with the Finance Governors.</p> <p><b>Reserve Spend Request – FCC</b>          AB shared headlines from the paper shared in advance related to a request from FCC to be able to spend from reserves. There were extensive discussions on different scenarios, the logistics, options for maximising use of office space/buildings, pros and cons of hiring versus buying facilities, and timescales.</p> <p>The discussions concluded with a request for costings (hire vs purchase costs).</p> <p><b>ACTION: AB to investigate and share recommendations/analysis for a decision out of Committee</b></p>
9	<p><b>Pupil Planning Review</b>          AL shared census data and OCC forecast data. Confirmed that the Trust is growing. Reception figures will be circulated as soon as we have sight of them – they are critical for budget setting. The big unknown for the Trust relates to the FIS/FJS conversion to primary. We are regularly in touch with OCC and parents to try and resolve any issues. No further questions from Committee members.</p>
10	<p><b>Policies and procedures due for review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Smoke Free Policy</b> – No questions or concerns. APPROVED.</li> <li>• Others are in progress thanks to our new Operations Officer and will come to Committee as needed.</li> </ul>
11	<p><b>Risk Register – key changes</b>          Nothing to add</p>
12	<p><b>Premises Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Condition Surveys completed – expect to see reports at the end of the month. They will be used to inform SCA funding spends.</li> <li>• JR shared an outline of capital works in progress across all Trust sites</li> <li>• Insurance claims are all progressing well</li> <li>• SCA funding expected in April – waiting for confirmation of what we will be receiving and then we can start planning.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety Report</b></p> <p><b>Audits Actions</b></p> <p>JR shared an update on the number of outstanding actions under general risk or fire risk assessments. Recommendations on how to close outstanding actions in advance of the next audit were made (expected April – July). Many have been resolved but just not logged as completed on the system.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed that if an action is flagged as 'intolerable' on the system, this must be urgently dealt with, even if the Trust feels the categorisation is incorrect.</p> <p>JR flagged serious frustrations that simple admin processes are not happening when they should be. The Committee discussed how to focus on speed of processing and made a commitment to finding improvements to ensure issues are promptly signed off on the system. It was agreed that this is an urgent and important issue which needs to be raised. There are serious repercussions on individual staff members if the Trust is found to be in breach of compliance. The Trust cannot assume work has been done until it is marked off on the system and this needs checking, both at personal and organisational levels.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heads must get their next report during term time and it MUST be clean;</li> <li>• Substantial progress is required to ensure all clear ahead of next audit;</li> <li>• FCC is currently the worst performing in terms of number of outstanding actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS: DM to proactively raise this at ALT. AC to send note from Resources Committee – copying in the Chair of Governors and H&amp;S Governors – asking them to engage directly and take on personal responsibility to get this resolved asap.</b></p> <p>No further questions raised.</p> <p><b>Driving for Work compliance update</b></p> <p>Some parts of the Trust have successfully demonstrated compliance with this updated policy but JR outlined frustrations that despite the request being shared with Heads and LGBs, there is still a lack of implementation in some quarters. The Committee reconfirmed the Trust has a duty of care as an employer and need to embed the policy and compliance. All recognise the significant pressures Heads and their teams are facing, especially where there is also under-staffing.</p> <p><b>ACTION: JR to collaborate with LGB Clerks to ensure compliance.</b></p>
13	<p><b>Asset management priorities / demand for places</b></p> <p>Waiting for pupil numbers. JR shared an overview of the current situation in each school. Next step is to collate 'wish lists' from schools – prioritised and costed – so can start to strategically plan investments. This will be discussed at a future meeting.</p>
14	<p><b>Free school meal census data</b></p> <p>Agenda item to be carried over.</p> <p><b>ACTION: DB to bring to next Committee meeting</b></p>
15	<p><b>FLT School Condition Surveys</b></p> <p>Expected at the end of the month. Seeking alignment to consider the priorities for SCA funding. IT refurbishment needs also to be considered as SCA funding not available for that but the Trust may be able to explore other funding.</p> <p><b>ACTION: TR to add SCA strategic spend discussion to next meeting agenda</b></p>
16	<p><b>Covid Update</b></p> <p>The Committee heard that schools are seeing improvements and cases appear to be diminishing amongst both staff and pupils. There are ongoing difficulties in getting supply teachers when cover is needed. Recruitment is still a challenge, particularly for lower paid roles, such as TA or pastoral roles, which historically have been attractive. Heads of schools are very motivated to both move forward but are also facing the ongoing impact of covid on staff capacity and support. The Committee discussed if there are Covid-related costs still being seen within the Trust but were reassured that was not the case. FCC has had extra grants but these have come to an end. Government is winding down LFT testing.</p>

17	<b>ESFA/DFE letters</b> Two but nothing significant to report.
18	<b>MAT to MAT collaboration</b> DM reported continued good relationship with another MAT – meet regularly on joint educational projects ie: science lab. On the operational side – no joint working as yet but meeting again in April.  Have met with two other Trusts to find areas of common ground and will meet with them in May. In particular, exploring roles they have in the central team and the impact that has for their Trusts' central services during expansion.
19	<b>Strategic Forward Planning</b> To be carried forward to the next meeting.
20	<b>Staffing and Staff Survey Update</b> The period between now and the May half-term is seen as being a key recruitment window. DM outlined some recent, very positive appointments. Currently have 21 vacancies which is a significant decrease.
21	<b>Centre for Professional Excellence</b> DM shared reflections that a new approach to resourcing capacity in this area is need, rather than it being added on top of a substantive post. This is an area that needs further investment to ensure appropriate value for staff development. This is one area we're looking to other Trusts to see how they support it.
22	<b>Gender Pay Gap</b> AL reported there have been no major changes but there have been marginal improvements even though it is accepted the Trust has limited scope to create change in this area. One error in the report was clarified for correction and the report was <b>APPROVED</b> for publishing.
23	<b>Any Other Business (as agreed as urgent)</b> <b>Finance Governor's meeting</b> – flagged as an opportunity to start the budget cycle, balancing risks and gathering appropriate inputs. This year there will be a focus on fostering strategic funding discussions and asking Finance Governors for their input.  <b>Job Levels</b> – it was confirmed that a Trust-wide principle to basing role levels on the scale and complexity of roles and their work has been identified. Two roles have been confirmed as requiring re-evaluation. One is in progress and will come to Committee with recommendations. If recruitment problems for TA/pastoral roles continue, there may be an opportunity to evaluate those in the future.
24	<b>Future meeting dates and arrangements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources Committee Meetings: 12 May 2022, 16 June 2022</li> <li>Finance Governors' Meeting: 31 March 2022</li> </ul> Meeting closed with AC thanking everyone and making special mention that all our thoughts are with people around the world facing conflict. Particular thanks to all those who have been involved in fostering community spirit and organising collections to help others.

Clerk: Tori Ray

Date: 1/05/2022