

FLT Resources Committee – Meeting Minutes

23 September 2021 at 6.30pm (in person)

Attending Committee Members (Trustees) Anthony Cook (AC), Chair Duncan Millard (DM) FLT CEO Mark Greenwood (MG) Ian Wright (IW)	Attending Committee Members (not Trustees) David Hancox (DH) Tim Clark (TC) Alex Bond (AB)	Attending Others Anne Lynn (AL), FLT COO Joanne Ray (JR), Operations Manager Tori Ray (TR), Clerk
Apologies noted in advance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrie Insley 		

1	Welcome new members, guests or staff presenting and note any resignations The meeting opened at: 6.35pm. AC welcomed everyone and shared a warm 'welcome back' to DM.
2	Apologies for absence, confidentiality and quoracy Apologies noted. AC asked if there is anything raised confidentially in the meeting, 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.</i>
3	Matters to be raised as urgent A.O.B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Code of Conduct – APPROVED Declarations and Confirmations – all Committee members asked to ensure they update their profile on Governor Hub asap. ACTION: ALL to ensure have updated Declarations of Interest and reread and confirmed acceptance of the Keeping Children Safe in Education and revised Code of Conduct documents via Governor Hub. Term dates noted by the Committee.
4	Declaration of any personal/business interests relating to this meeting None
5	Approve minutes of previous meeting The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate representation of proceedings and were APPROVED .
6	Review of Carried Over Actions All actions were either completed or updated – see Carried over Actions document for details.
7	Other activity agreed out of Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobile Phone policy: JR gave many thanks for all the comments and amends. Committee proposed would also need to ensure it covers smartwatches and there may be more types in the future. Proposed to amend it to reference 'smart devices' so ensure it stays current and future proof. ACTION: JR to amend and resend to OOC. FJS Main Entrance: JR gave an update in the Premises Report (see below) CEO absence: many thanks for the inputs
8	Review Resources Committee Membership Membership was reviewed. Committee members were encouraged to talk to AC if there are any individuals they are aware of who could bring particular skills or experience as subject experts. A question was put to the Committee regarding whether we have the right balance of representatives from LGBs. No immediate changes to note but agreed ACTION: AL to send a note to the Chairs of 4xLGBs incase there is any interest and to raise this at the Governance seminar. (NB: the Governance Seminar was later cancelled) Also proposed that there could be a greater 'people' or HR voice/expertise in the Committee membership ACTION: all Committee members encouraged to contact AC with suggestions or ideas of how this could be achieved.
9	Approval of updated RC Terms of Reference 2021-2022 Committee members were asked if any questions or areas needing discussion? MG asked if there is an appropriate balance between the work of this and other Committees. The RC has a heavy workload and good to check appropriate use of RC/Quality of Education and IARC. After discussion it was felt that currently it's about right but recognise the heavy requirements of reading papers and inputs ahead of RC meetings. AL shared reflection that if the Trust expands further, may need to be reviewed.

	<p>AC reflected the challenges of managing strategic planning and being forward looking when there's a high level of day-to-day management requirements on the Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: AC and TR to actively create and protect time for the RC to devote time to strategic future planning.</p> <p>The revised RC Terms of Reference document was APPROVED.</p>
10	<p>Period 10 Financial Reports</p> <p>P10 reports shared. Noted P11 report will be coming soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall in a good place at the end of last FY. Expecting this year to be harder – as also expecting a higher staff absence rate which will impact budgets. • Reserves have seen a marked improvement. • Catering in the majority of the primaries made a profit due to the impact of Covid on school opening/closures. • Buckland School bell tower work is included – this will change in P.11. • FJS – not all capital works have been completed in this FY – some have been rolled forward. • P.11 will be more refined as some elements will be better understood by then. <p>Discussion was had around 'debtor days' and whether Trust is paying invoices etc on time. AL confirmed mostly meeting 30 day payment agreements – some have been challenging when invoices received during holidays.</p> <p>AC asked about the Trust's level of Reserves and if it's growing year on year? AL confirmed planning to do analysis of the last 5 years (including ensuring have sight of ring fenced funding in this FY which can't be carried forward) to enable RC to discuss what the right level of reserves might be. The Committee had further discussion regarding the individual schools' deficits and risks and what can be expected once pupil number changes and staff number changes come into play. AL confirmed, currently, a lot of schools are in a steady state but RC will need to be mindful of the risk areas and premises funding plans.</p> <p>ACTION: AL to share a report on the real numbers/risks and opportunities related to the Trust's spending and investment options at the 02 December 2021 RC meeting.</p>
11	<p>Teachers' Pay Award and policy / FLT Appraisal policy / Support Staff Appraisal policy</p> <p>Currently this has gone very quiet – still under negotiation nationally. Regarding Support Staff – Unions rejected a 1.5% offer – there is a general expectation there could be industrial action.</p> <p>In terms of Trust finances, no budget is currently available for teacher pay awards as had previously been advised this would not be required. For support staff, the Trust has budgeted 1%. Risks lie in if there is a U-turn and an award to Teachers but we've not heard anything from official sources as yet. The RC members then discussed what the 1% would mean for the Trust and whether there's any chance of further funding from the Government for Teacher pay awards if they change direction. This was confirmed as not expected.</p> <p>Appraisal policies</p> <p>No changes to the Teachers' Appraisal Policy. Support staff version – very similar to OCC policy. Question from AC on how the Trust plans to monitor the quality of conversations and compliance with the policies. AL confirmed accountability for that is held within LGBs. The Committee APPROVED the Support Staff Appraisal Policy.</p>
12	<p>FLT Finance Manual Approval</p> <p>The Finance Manual has been tweaked related to approving rights on some expenditure to ensure greater efficacy and efficiency. Also some changes on tender processes. Otherwise no changes. AC enquired how the Trust decides what approach to use for deciding between tenders. JR confirmed it depends on the level of spend. High value decisions come to the Committee. AC encouraged the Trust to take a flexible approach to enable us to build Trust and better partnerships. AL agreed there's a need to keep revisiting this as the external market continues to change. Possibly useful to have conversations pre-bid, to improve engagement. After further discussion the Committee concluded it's right for the Trust not to take a too formulaic approach. Need to keep evolving to move out of a constrained, challenged bid market. In the future, want to move the Trust towards having trusted partners rather than going out cold to the market each time.</p> <p>Finance Manual APPROVED.</p>

13	<p>Other policies and procedures due for review ahead of Dec 2021 RC meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom of Information (Feb 2018) – outstanding. • Local Government Pension Scheme (Jan 2020) – being discussed with Oxfordshire Local Government scheme – will come back to the Committee • Capability of Staff (Sept 2021) – outstanding annual review, not expecting changes • Pay Policy – support staff and teaching staff (Oct 2021) – currently in discussion • Drugs, Illegal Substances and Alcohol (Nov 2021) – outstanding • First Aid in Schools (Nov 2021) – annual review outstanding – suggestion this doesn't need reviewing annually, perhaps just the appendices to be updated. <p>ACTION: JR to check frequency of revision.</p>
14	<p>Building relationships with local businesses</p> <p>Committee discussion, coming back to a conversation from last academic year and the Donate My School work from c.2years ago. Roots of it is in the crowdfunding approach. Some key points shared in the discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to work on the external profile of the Trust – it's possible the newly recruited Marketing and Communications post can support with this as well as funding pages on individual school websites. • Keen to build engagement between schools and local businesses. Critical to decide approach/strategy and what the Trust wants, before jumping straight to marketing. • Opportunities to link closely with Alumni – they could be Trust ambassadors in companies locally and nationally. • To do this well, there will be significant data requirements. This will need resourcing. Also need to complete a brand audit. • May be beneficial to start small – approach Alumni already known to the school as possible Ambassadors. Also approach parents and improve engagement with the Trust, not just at individual school level. • To do this well, also need to do a massive amount internally first. • Perhaps there's an opportunity to find an external mentor to support the Trust in this work – can't pin it all on the new Marketing postholder! Could we bring in businesses to advise and steer the Trust in it's journey – who we should talk to, what external partners may want to engage with, how to present the Trust. <p>ACTION: AC/AL to have follow up discussion and decide next steps.</p>
15	<p>Risk Register – key changes</p> <p>Report going to the Board next week.</p>
16	<p>Health & Safety Report</p> <p>JR shared an update with Committee members. Key points included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance checks underway. Recruiting new caretakers at FJS and FCC. Compliance is being covered predominantly by the Head at FJS at this time and the caretaker at FCC is prioritising compliance above any reactive maintenance. • The H&S Policy Statement shared with the RC overarches the others • Systems for accidents and near misses being used well. RC discussed any significant issues that had arisen since the last meeting. Governing bodies were made aware and actions taken. • Audits and inspections – spreadsheets shared showing outstanding actions, including fire risk assessment from last year. As discussed in previous RC meeting, a lot of the outstanding actions are due to the portal not being user friendly/delayed updates to the system. • The June/July school audits all completed – follow up actions now in progress. All actions low/medium risk. • Currently focusing on risk assessments in advance of the next audit round – working with Headteachers and a new risk assessment template to ensure a more robust process. Next audits due May 2022. • Lockdown procedures need to be reviewed, tested and updated prior to these audits. <p>Questions were invited from Committee members. Further discussion focussed on recruitment difficulties for Caretaker positions and the stresses that places on compliance. Plus the outstanding recruitment for the Operations Officer role. The Trust is doing everything it can and using agencies to try to fill roles well but urgently.</p>

	<p>H&S Policy Statement APPROVED.</p> <p>Premises Report</p> <p>JR updated the Committee with the shared report. Key points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition Surveys – work on Buckland windows successful but challenge finding contractors – work to be completed in Easter, no real concerns. • Appeal regarding English Village – expecting to hear this month. • CIF funding, next projects – expecting a new round in December. • Primary new-build started in August (expected to be a 12 month build). September 2022 opening but will be tight – progress being carefully monitored. Move in may be mid academic year which isn't ideal but can be managed. • Shrivenham – having fortnightly meetings on design and feasibility – contractor making it fit for purpose. • FCC all weather pitch has been confirmed and can go ahead – hope to progress quickly but this is a project being run by Vale of White Horse and will involve OCC as Landlord. • FJS – boiler room drainage repairs completed. Possible new issues found affecting water ingress underneath the dining hall floor. More investigation underway – will come back to Committee. • FJS – defects/slope project now resolved. Successful outcome and came in under budget. • Other work completions include: Longcot & Fernham roof (completed on budget). Windows will be installed soon; and Watchfield chimney work (completed on budget) <p>AC shared a very sincere thank you to JR for managing all these projects but especially getting to this outcome in the FJS slope project work. It looks good, is safe and has been done to a high quality. Makes a big difference to pupils and staff – thank you on behalf of the Trust.</p> <p>The Committee noted, FJS is on a problematic site. The water table is rising and it is expected there will be more issues in the future. Building repairs are an ongoing risk and challenge for the Trust reserves. Need to judge new and ongoing risks, find solutions and agree priorities.</p> <p>Catering and Cleaning</p> <p>Expecting a difficult year. All schools are back in their dining rooms following Covid changes which saw pupils using classrooms for lunch. Caterlink are happy but also struggling with staff recruitment.</p> <p>AC again thanked all those involved in the work to protect and repair the premises the Trust holds – it's an immense amount of work.</p>
17	<p>Covid Update</p> <p>At the time of meeting, the number of positive cases within the Trust are relatively low. FCC anticipating immunisations on site the following week – not being run by the school, FCC acting as a venue. Also happening the same week as Flu jabs. Take up is a pupil/parent choice. Have been advised to expect greater numbers of other infections such as chicken pox/flu etc in the coming months which could affect staff and pupils.</p> <p>Pupils are still being advised to do LFT twice a week but this can't be enforced. Positive cases managed via Test and Trace – staff are told of any direct cases but parents advised if there are cases in the year group.</p> <p>Have asked Headteachers but not seeing marked increase in parents keeping children out of school – usually due to stomach problems/coughs/colds rather than Covid.</p> <p>Has the Trust seen an increase in home-schooling? Nationally yes, locally we don't know but presume any increase likely to be temporary and will return to usual levels.</p> <p>Q: (AC) What's the biggest risk for the RC and Trust related to Covid? A: (AL) Staff absence in general. Could be due to their own children being ill or personal illness (not just Covid). Anticipate will need more support staff and this will cause budget issues</p> <p>Q: (AC) Are we providing flu jabs for staff? A: (AL) No but will pay for them – this will be publicised to staff via Headteachers. In reality we don't know what % of staff are vaccinated (Covid/Flu) – we know some staff are not Covid vaccinated but it's not something that the Trust can influence.</p>

18	<i>DSFE letters received since last meeting</i> One on estate management – JR responding.
19	<i>Staffing update and changes</i> AL updated the Committee. Recruitment and staffing changes remain a problem. Not seeing particular trends – it's usual to see changes in September but it's a massive volume of change. NB: some due to new posts, not all due to turnover. More analysis is in progress and will come back to the Committee. The FLT Central Team is under significant pressure managing while having several vacant posts and recruitments underway, including in Finance and Operations areas. Looking to also appoint a Payroll and Pensions officer to bring more support/capacity. Possibly also an apprenticeship post for the Central Team. Externally the recruitment market is very tough and the Trust can't offer high wages. However, the flexibility offered can be very attractive to some so hope this will work in our favour. The Committee discussed possible ways to support the Central Team while they have low capacity and high workload and how to improve recruitment. In particular looking to make better use of social media to ensure more people seeing the posts advertised and to highlight the benefits of joining the Trust. AC concluded discussions with summarising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust seems to have systemic issues being out of capacity, it's a recurring problem that keeps resurfacing. The Trust needs to make changes. • May need to explore greater creativity in recruitment and retention – in the medium term this may even mean taking a budget hit if it allows us to be more aggressive in recruiting the right people to the right roles, and keeping them. • Possibility to explore more apprenticeships within office staff/TAs/finance etc – can we grow our own staff? It brings challenges and there are some limits but we need to test this more. ACTION: AL to bring recruitment and retention analysis back to the Committee in December.
20	<i>Any other Business (as agreed as urgent)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Code of Conduct – small changes made to ensure it's aligned with the Keeping Children Safe in Education document – no questions from Committee members. APPROVED. • Staff survey – was sent out in June. Participation rates were approx. 50%. Results have been shared with Heads. ACTION: AL to circulate results to Committee and TR to add to agenda for discussion in December meeting. Please treat these as confidential – not for wider dissemination or discussion at this stage. • Term dates noted by Committee. • Inset Day – thank you to all staff for all their hard work. • JR shared an additional premises report re: Shrivenham which has been made safe/no risk. However it has raised longer term concerns regarding heating/hot water provision in part of the premises. No quick fix but further investigation and discussions are in progress to find a pragmatic and sustainable solution. This will come back to the Committee.
21	<i>Future meeting dates and arrangements</i> Date of next meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources Committee Meetings: 2 Dec 2021 (agreed will aim to meet in person but will review nearer the time), 20 Jan 2022, 10 March 2022, 12 May 2022, 16 June 2022 • FYI: Independent Audit and Risk Committee meetings: 22 February 2022, 21 June 2022 Meeting closed at: 8.30pm.

Clerk: Tori Ray
 Date: 14/10/2021

Signed _____ Dated _____