



SHIRLEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PRE-SCHOOL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Resources Committee

Held at 6pm on Tuesday, 7 May 2019

at Shirley Primary School

Governors Present: Mark Lewis (ML) Chair
Mark Broadbent (MB)
John Cattermole (JC)
Ruth Adams (RA)
Iain Smith (IS)

Also in Attendance: Jo Bouttell (JB) School Business Manager
Hannah Kidney (HK) Deputy Headteacher
Andrew Pulham (CK) Clerk

The meeting was quorate throughout.

1. Apologies for Absence

Although Mark Abbas had not offered his apologies for this meeting the committee noted his previous advice that due to his professional commitments he is unlikely to be able to attend meetings of this committee on this day and time of day. Accordingly Dr Abbas' absence was noted as authorised and is likely to remain so unless and until the anticipated review of the school's committee meetings schedule has taken place.

2. Declarations of Interest

None received.

3. Urgent Business not on Current Agenda

It was agreed by the Chair that a discussion on options for better publicising the school in the local community would take place under agenda item 12.

4. Minutes of Resources Committee on 12 March 2019

These were agreed without amendment and signed by the Chair.

5. Matters Arising (Actions)

In respect of the actions summarised at the foot of the previous minutes:

- i) The matter of the new boiler was noted as being on the agenda for the current meeting.
- ii) The matter of benchmarking was noted as being on the agenda for the current meeting.
- iii) JB confirmed she had sent benchmarking information and the requisite link to all Governors.
- iv) JC advised that discussions with other Heads had not taken place with regard to benchmarking as all are focused on balancing their own budgets at the present time.
- v) It was noted that the 2019 SFVS assurance statement had been completed.
- vi) It was noted that the 2019 SFVS assurance statement had been received and approved at FGB on 21 March 2019.
- vii) JC advised that this work had been carried out with ML during a past visit.
- viii) The matter of the carryforward and its use as part of budget planning for 2019/20 was noted as being on the current agenda.
- ix) Options for better publicising the school had been accepted onto the current agenda for discussion under agenda item 12.
- x) JC advised that following Governors' agreement to the creation of the 'Family Inclusion Officer' post, recruitment is now underway, with a hoped for start date of July 2019.
- xi) It was noted that once she can take up her role, Mrs Abecina will assume the role of lead Governor for Health and Safety.
- xii) Governors have been advised that there is no requirement for Governor visits to take place in pairs.
- xiii) It was noted that Ruth Adams had kindly moved from Standards to Resources to help correct the numbers imbalance.
- xiv) The future schedule of Resources Committee meetings will be reviewed as part of a more wide-ranging review of committees which will be undertaken in the near future and which will take effect from the 2019/20 academic year.

6. Finance Monitoring

a. BCR Update

Governors agreed that as very little had changed since the BCR was last reviewed, they would use the time available to review the 2018/19 budget outturn and the proposed budget for 2019/20, which superseded consideration of the year end BCR.

b. 2019/20 Proposed Budget

Revenue

Governors then took a short period of time to individually review the 2019/20 budget proposals.

JB drew Governors' attention to the revenue carryforward at the start of 2018/19 of #157,400. Funding and income for 2019/20 was #2,272,620. Planned expenditure totaled #2,385,730 which constituted an overspend of #113,109 for the year. This allows for the creation of a #44,209 contingency within the 2019/20 budget.

JB further advised that a combination of the decrease in pupil numbers as recorded in the Autumn and Spring census figures as well as a reduced uptake of Universal Infant Free School Meals had contributed to a significant reduction in 2019/20 funding of approximately #70,000.

JB offered further observations in respect of the 2019/20 budget forecast as follows:

- SEN funding is currently shown as being down on the past year but is likely to increase as EHCPs are in progress for a number of children.
- Lettings income will increase as the school is to be used on a regular basis on a Sunday by a church group.
- Pre-school income increase when increased Pupil Premium and Deprivation funding is received. (No additional parental payments are anticipated).
- The after-school club is currently running at capacity; therefore there is no potential for increased revenue generation in this area.
- The uplift in teacher pensions is to be fully funded by central government and will therefore be revenue neutral to the school.

Governors asked a number of questions in respect of the 2019/20 budget proposals:

Q. Although increases to teacher pensions may be revenue neutral, does the same apply to non-teacher employee pensions? Is there a risk the LEA may seek an increased contribution in this area?

A. JB advised nothing had been heard from the LEA in this area and that a watching brief was being maintained.

Q. There seems to be a planned increase in spending on education support staff of greater than £100,000. In fact, this increased cost plus increased costs for administrative staff basically account for the entire projected revenue shortfall in 2019/20 (before the carryforward is applied). Why is this?

A. JB confirmed this is a function of the school employing more staff in teaching, support and administrative areas and reminded Governors that this increase includes the cost of the 'Family Inclusion Officer' post as agreed by Governors.

Q. Sections 4 & 5 of the financial summary document appear to show a significant jump in the pupil:teacher ratio from 2020/21. Why is this?

A. It was agreed this might be as a result of a number of factors, including duplication of the number of teachers to allow for those on maternity leave (reducing as they return to work) as well as how this figure is calculated.

In terms of the 'bottom line' JC agreed that the £113,109 overspend in 2018/19 was significant, in that it had reduced the school's carryforward to a net £44,291. The current prediction of a £251,233 overspend in 2019/20 was also a cause for concern, being approximately 10% of the school's revenue budget and active steps would need to be taken to address this deficit.

Governors agreed with JC that more informed decisions on options to address this deficit would be possible following the school census day in October as it is likely that at this point there will be a significant increase in the 393 pupils currently on roll.

Capital

JB took Governors through the capital budget position as set out on the final page of the report. The school had enjoyed a greater carryforward than expected, of £25,763 following the end of year additional DfE capital funding allocation to schools, which when augmented by CCC's offer to pay 50% of the cost will enable funding of the new boiler as previously discussed plus additional capital works to be agreed at a future meeting.

Actions:

- **Suzanne Wernham to give a presentation at Resources on 19 June, addressing SEND funding including the impact on teaching support staff numbers and costs associated with EHCP funding and support to children.**
- **Resources Committee to undertake a full review of the 2019/20 revenue position and projection as soon as possible after the October census numbers become available.**

It was proposed by IS, seconded by MB and AGREED by all Governors present that the school's 2019/20 budget proposals be recommended to the FGB on 9 May 2019 for its approval.

Governors asked to be placed on record their thanks to JB for her preparation of the budget papers and for her presentation/discussion of same at the meeting.

7. School Business Manager's Report

a. Premises Management

Governors welcomed the email from John Clayton at CCC with an offer to fund 50% of the cost of a new boiler and agreed to accept this offer.

Action: Progress report on boiler replacement to be brought to Resources Committee on 19 June.

8. Headteacher's Report

a. Resourcing proposals arising from 2019/20 budget

JC presented his proposals for changes/investments in staffing and other areas. A particular focus of these proposals is to reduce significantly the school's current use of costly agency supply cover by making better use of existing and future members of staff on payroll; therefore there is a strong 'invest to save' element to the proposals.

Governors noted that the proposals set out in JC's report represented an increase in expenditure of around £85,000 – or around £50,000 after anticipated savings had been factored in – and asked how JC and the wider SLT had arrived at this particular list of proposed investments.

JC advised the proposals are very much tied in to the school's delivery of its SIP and having been walked through the proposals Governors accepted that this was the case.

In respect of activities such as school trips, Governors asked if businesses in the local community could be prevailed upon to offer sponsorship or gifts in kind. It was noted that this had been successful in the past, including in respect of a trip to the Royal Albert Hall.

Actions:

- **All Governors to be asked to explore options for sponsorship from among their business contacts.**
- **ML to liaise with JC over the possibility of his place of work hosting the next meeting of the 'CB4 Heads Cluster'.**

b. Staffing Update

JC confirmed that the school was currently up to establishment in terms of staff and Governors agreed that the school's active and enthusiastic approach to recruitment was clearly paying dividends in this regard.

c. Safeguarding

There were no updates on what was reported and discussed at the meeting on 12 March.

9. Benchmarking

Governors made the following observations in respect of their recent benchmarking activities:

- The school seems to be paying a lot for its utilities.
- The school's reserves seem to be healthy – at least at the moment.
- The school appears to enjoy a good pupil/teacher ratio due mainly to the fact that Shirley needs a higher number of staff due to the complex learning, emotional and behavioural needs of a higher proportion of children.
- The school appears to be in a good position vis a vis grant funding per pupil.

A discussion of the possible cause(s) of some of these findings ensued and Governors reaffirmed the risks involved in using benchmarking as anything more than a *pointer* towards further investigation and the importance of understanding the full context surrounding each area being benchmarked.

Actions:

- **Utilities arrangements to be reviewed to ensure continued best value.**
- **Effect of new boiler on relevant utility costs to be monitored.**
- **Utilities costs to be placed on agenda for review at Resources in late Spring 2019.**

10. Health and Safety

JC and JB confirmed that the flowerbeds and planters had been taken out and replaced over the Easter break. Whilst there was a small amount of work still to be done, from a H&S perspective the position is now much improved.

Governors welcomed the news that once Mrs Abecina is able to take up her role as a Governor she will take on lead responsibility for Health and Safety – particularly as she will be able to visit the school during operational hours.

Actions:

- **Health and safety concerns to be listed along with an assessment of risk on future agendas.**

11. Policies for Review

JC advised Governors that work had been completed to list all statutory and non-statutory policies and the last date on which each had last been reviewed. He is now working with the SLT to develop a new policy review cycle, which will be in place in time to start with the 'B' cycle of committees.

12. Matters Accepted Under Agenda Item 3

Governors returned to consideration of how the school could be better 'marketed' in the community – primarily to the parents/guardians of prospective pupils.

JC confirmed that people who are able to come in and receive a tour of the school invariably go away with a very positive impression and the school is perceived as providing particularly well for EAL pupils.

RA suggested she had detected a significant change for the good in the narrative around Shirley School in the seven years she had been based in Chesterton and suggested that were MA able to be present he would say the same thing.

It was agreed that raising the profile of an organisation such as a school can be something of a 'slow burn'; however Governors and staff expressed their desire to take steps in this direction with immediate effect.

Options for improving the school's profile in the community were discussed and areas Governors and JC agreed to explore were:

- A regular article in the quarterly 'Chesterton News' magazine – i.e. 'News from Shirley School'. **(RA to send JC contact details).**
- Participation in the Chesterton Festival (from June 2020).
- A piece on local radio **(RA to send JC contact details).**
- Enhanced contact with the science and business parks.
- An improved/overhauled school brochure.
- An improved/overhauled school website with more dynamic content, including video clips.

13. Date and Time of Next Committee

Wednesday, 19 June at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 7.45pm

I confirm that at a meeting of the Resources Committee held on 20 June 2019, these minutes were approved and agreed as being a true and fair record.

Signed _____

Position _____

Date _____

Summary of Actions (Not Part of Minute)

Agenda Item	Action Agreed	Lead	Due By
Item 6	Presentation on SEND funding to 20 June Resources	SW	20/06/19
Item 6	Resources to review revenue position post October census	JB/SLT	Nov. 2019
Item 7	Update on boiler replacement proposals to 20 June Resources	JB	20/06/19
Item 9	Review of utilities costs	JB	20/06/19
Item 10	Health and Safety to be an agenda item for all future Resources Committees.	CK/JC (when appointed)	N/A
Item 12	Exploration of potential to engage with local radio and in the 'Chesterton News' magazine.	JC/RA	N/A