



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Coordination Committee.
Monday 25th April 2022. 10.30am.

Present: Ian Church (Chair); Dave Dymond; Robert Howell; Adedayo Benson; Andrew Burrell.

In Attendance: Alice de Croos - SBM

Apologies: Kate Gordon; Hajar Alami.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	This meeting was held face-to-face in school and social distancing measures were followed.
1.	Apologies. Apologies had been received from Kate and Hajar. All serving RCC members were present at the meeting.
2	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
3	Minutes of the previous meeting – 16th February 2022. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 th February had been circulated in advance of this meeting and the actions were reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Clerk had researched the situation regarding school policies taken from other sources (such as the LA) and the chair summarised our understanding. Policies that come from the LA have been approved by the unions and it is strongly recommended that schools do not make changes to these policies. These policies are circulated to GB's for their information and these policies are ADOPTED. It is considered wise to treat policies created by other advisory bodies (such as Data Protection Officers) in the same way. Policies that are school written and "owned" are APPROVED by GB's. COMPLETED.• The Security policy had been edited to replace a person's name with a job title. COMPLETED.• Questions had been emailed to the HT. COMPLETED.• Policies would be reviewed in the summer term along with the TOR's.• The SFVS has been signed and submitted to the LA. COMPLETED.• 3 Budget scenarios have been prepared for discussion at this meeting.• Two governors had independently spoken to RBC about the Modular building. There are council elections shortly which might have an influence locally. This matter will continue to be raised with RBC. ONGOING

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training resources have been uploaded to GovHub along with some resources on preparing for an Ofsted Inspection. <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 16th February were unanimously approved and will be signed in Governor Hub as soon as possible.</p>
4	<p>Matters Arising.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>
5	<p>4th Quarter Revenue Report and Proposed Budget for 22/23.</p> <p>The final Quarter report for the Year 2021/22 along with accompanying notes had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Also circulated in advance was the proposed budget for 2022/23 – with three possible scenarios based on allowing for a 3% rise in teacher pay; a 4% rise and also a 5% rise. The SBM informed the meeting that she has had been informed by RBC that should the teacher’s be awarded a rise in excess of 3%, it is believed that there will be a grant to schools. The proposed budget also allows for a 2% increase for support staff. The 3% budget scenario balances without the need to use any carry-forward and does predict a £17K balance. The 4% scenario would also balance but leave a smaller carry forward figure of around £7500. Allowing for a 5% teacher increase in the final scenario would see a small deficit.</p> <p>Governor Question: What allowance have you made for the expected increased fuel costs? Following RBC advice, we have allowed in the budget for a 50% increase in gas costs and a 20% increase in electricity costs. RBC are responsible for procuring our energy, and do so via West Mercia Group, who bulk buy energy in advance and have secured sufficient energy for the 22/23 FY. With our new, more efficient boilers and the expected installation of solar panels we hope to have made sufficient provision for these increased costs.</p> <p>The SBM gave a verbal summary of the last financial year to the meeting which was informed that the financial year 2021/2022 had been challenging with staff being decimated by Covid at various points during the academic year. Schools are under pressure to ensure children ‘catch up’ academically, socially and emotionally, and whilst a number of grants have been provided, these do not the cover the entire costs necessary to provide high quality interventions to get children back on track.</p> <p>There has also been a significant change in the characteristics of the pupil population. In January 2019 8% of children were eligible for FSM. In January 2022, this figure was 20.2%. The number of pupils with SEN has also risen, but at present only 4 of these pupils qualify for additional funding. The caseload of the Safeguarding team has also intensified with the Family Support Officer constantly supporting families in need - both emotionally & practically.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, the school are proud to have been able to complete some large projects over the financial year; the Nutritional Learning Suite is used in lesson time and for an extra-curricular cookery club. The new laptop trolley has improved the ICT offer; and the newly opened Reading Hive has instilled a new love of Reading in the</p>

children. The school has also enhanced its curriculum offer with bought in high quality music provision from Berkshire Maestros. A new PPA space for teachers has been created and there is a real focus on CPD, investing in high quality training to support learning and enable career progression.

Wellbeing has been a huge focus and the Wellbeing Committee continue to meet regularly and arrange staff social events.

The meeting was informed that the school is expecting an Ofsted inspection in the coming academic year which means that the budget focus for 2022/2023 has been aligned to the strategic curriculum aims of the school. The curriculum offer is continuing to broaden and strengthen and teachers have been encouraged to make curriculum bids that support high quality teaching and the bringing of learning to life. The school is continuing to rationalise staffing costs - only replacing staff who leave after a huge amount of discussion and exploration of other options. This is necessary due to a very tight budget and the need to make compensatory cost saving decisions to balance every agreed spend.

The school finished the financial year 2021/22 with an in-year balance of -60K – but hope through the careful planning outlined, to bring the budget back into balance in 2022/2023.

The SBM then summarised the main expenditure lines:

Teachers:

In the financial year just ended, 5 teachers left in August 2021 including an AHT. These posts were replaced by 2 experienced teachers and 3 ECTs. A teacher who left at Christmas 2021 was not replaced. There were also 4 teachers on maternity leave during the last financial year – all were covered internally. There was an underspend on this staffing line.

So far, in this 2022/2023 financial year we have lost one teacher whose post will be not replaced. We are not yet aware of any other teachers planning to leave at present. There are two teachers on Maternity Leave – one is due back in July and the other in February. At this stage we know one of these teachers is planning to reduce to 0.8 FTE, and this is reflected in the budget. All increments where due have been budgeted for. The cost-of-living increase has been widely debated by the unions – there is talk of flattening the inflationary rises for teachers, so instead of a huge increase one year, and then nothing the next, there is likely to be a steady increase year on year going forwards, which will be good for budgeting purposes. As previously mentioned, the school has discussed teacher pay rises at length with the local authority, and a 3% inflationary increase is factored into the teaching budget – although should the actual rise be higher, the LA are confident that there will be an additional grant provided.

Support Staff:

Those due increment rises and the 1.75% cost of living increase were paid for all support staff in the financial year 2021/22. Also in the 2021/22 Financial Year 9 support staff have left, either due to the end of temporary contracts, for career progression or retirement. We have welcomed a new Office Manager and 4 new LTC's during the last financial year.

For the 2022/2023 financial year we have a new EYP joining the Nursery at the start of the summer term, and this budget allows for a new HLTA to support our catch-up provision. The school's Premises Manager is due to undergo a medical procedure which will impact the operation of the school and the Caretaker will work longer hours to accommodate the school schedule. All increments where due are budgeted for, and the anticipated 2% cost of living increase is also included in the proposed budget.

Premises:

In the 2021/2022 financial year, £16K of the maintenance budget line was used towards the installation of the Nutritional Learning Suite. There is a small underspend in this budget line.

For the 2022/2023 budget the school has allocated £23.5k towards new flooring for various parts of the school that are in need.

Utilities:

The school had an underspend in this line in the 2021/2022 financial year but as discussed, we have been advised to budget for a 50% increase for gas, and 20% increase for electricity for the 2022/2023 financial year. The school has been informed that solar panels will be installed in June, which, along with the new more-efficient boilers which were installed last summer, it is hoped will help with the rising energy prices.

Education supplies (non-ICT):

The entire allocation in this budget line was spent last financial year and this year all teacher bids to improve curriculum resources have been fulfilled.

ICT Curriculum resources:

£16.5k was used for the new laptop trolley and there was a small underspend in this line for the last financial year.

For the 2022/2023 financial year £5K has been allocated towards 10 replacement Interactive Whiteboards across the school. The remaining cost for these will come from the Capital ICT budget.

Service Level Agreements:

There was an overspend on this budget line last financial year due to purchasing additional lunchtime play support and NTP tutors. However catch-up funding was received to cover this expense.

For the financial year 2022/2023 SLA's have been purchased as per the last financial year 2021/2022.

INCOME

Funding for the financial year 2022/2023 has been confirmed and ALPU is set at £3328. Early Years funding is indicative only at this stage, and the budget is based on predicted numbers for each of the three terms.

SEN funding has been calculated based on all known EHCP children currently on roll. We already know our PP funding allocations for 2022/2023, and this year we will receive an uplift of £37780. This is largely due to families losing jobs during the pandemic, and parental awareness of PP after the introduction of the FSM voucher scheme.

We are due the final instalment of the Recovery grant – after which this grant will cease. The School Led Tutoring grant will continue until at least 2023/2024, though each academic year the proportion that the school needs to fund increases.

We are limited on letting out buildings for evening use while we await the Premises Manager's operation and recovery, so the budgeted income from lettings has been limited to wrap around care only. The lease for Crescent Under Fives has still not been finalised, and when it eventually does go through the rent will be backdated to September 2020. We continue to generate income from Nursery Lunch clubs, and now have 4 families taking up the offer for a self-funded all-day space.

The UIFSM and Sports Grant have been budgeted for in line with 2021/2022 actuals.

The SBM also informed governors that the School Fund Accounts have just been received back from the Auditors and will be presented at a future meeting. The accounts were found to be exemplary.

There was a brief discussion about the timing of this meeting which was affected by where Easter fell this year and the school holidays. Governors appreciated that the SBM had worked hard to pull all this information together, which included working during the holiday – for which she was thanked. The SBM informed the Governors that, from her point of view, it was helpful to have a separate RCC meeting rather than combine the RCC budget planning meeting with an FGB meeting (as has happened in previous years due to Covid.)

The RCC chair proposed that the FGB meeting be informed that the RCC had looked at the budget report and proposed budget for the financial year 2022/23 but that the full governors meeting should have the main points summarised for them, especially in the wider context of expected challenging years ahead. Whilst ASPs is in a stronger position than many other schools, with a full roll and a waiting list for September 2022, there remain many challenges and budget setting for the next 3 years is hard to predict. Whilst not replacing staff who leave may be an answer to ease budgetary pressures, this has to be balanced against staff workload concerns. Risk management is a key consideration and all governors need to be aware of the budgetary constraints the school is operating under. It is also important to consider the change in the school

demographic with greater numbers of children attending with higher needs and some with very complex needs which might mean changes to the staffing profile.

Governor Question: Will school funding levels be adjusted upwards to reflect a higher-level need amongst the pupils? When you compare us to some other schools, we have a lower SEND population but ASPS does absorb a lot before we regard a child as having a SEND need as we teach to accommodate need. However, we are seeing an increase in the number of children with a higher level of need. Staff are having to re-adjust to teaching across year groups again after being used to teaching in bubbles. All schools have to find the first £6K of funding for a SEND child and as we have no control over our admissions, if we have spaces, we may have higher need children arrive – often we can't plan for this. We struggle to recruit the right calibre of LSAs and RBC is very risk-averse in its HR management which does not help us. Staff wellbeing remains a concern and the staff Wellbeing committee is active. We also point staff to the Employee Assistance Programme.

Governor Question: Are you confident that the increases you have allowed for in energy prices will be sufficient? Yes – because RBC has bought its energy in advance for this year already and we expect the solar panels will help us. We could do more with the children to conserve energy. We also expect to have to increase the energy allowance in subsequent years budgetary planning.

Governor Question: The £116K carry forward predicted – will RBC question this and tell you to spend e.g. on resources? We don't believe so, no. It is recommended that schools aim to carry forward 4-5% of their budget and this carry forward is lower than that, so is within the limits. We want to avoid having to use the carry forward to make the budget balance. Some schools are in the unfortunate position of relying on wraparound care funds received to pay their bills which has meant they are now in financial difficulties. The finance team at RBC are good at giving schools a "heads-up" if they foresee a problem and we would hope to have a buffer in case we too suffer from falling pupil numbers in the future. Our lettings income was always used to pay for the "nice to haves" rather than the essentials, so whilst we have lost income from lettings due to covid, this is not a critical loss.

There followed a brief discussion about which budget scenario the RCC wanted to take to the FGB for approval. SLT stated that they were in favour of using the 4% allocated rise for teacher pay leaving an in-year balance of approx. £7K and a safety net if the increase in pay was not as high as 4%.

DECISION: The RCC unanimously agreed to take the 4% budget scenario for planning for the financial year 2022/23 to the FGB for approval.

	<p>A 4th Quarter Capital report along with accompanying notes had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Also circulated was a proposed Capital budget plan for 2022/23. The SBM outlined the main points to the meeting.</p> <p>£20k of capital money was used in 2021/22 to fund the Nutritional Learning Suite, leaving a carry forward of £6142.</p> <p>The SBM informed the meeting that for this financial year of 2022/2023 the same level of grant funding is anticipated, from which £15k will be allocated towards the 10 new Interactive Whiteboards needed across the school. This would leave a predicted carry forward figure of approximately £2140 into 2023/24.</p> <p>Governor Question: Are any of the whiteboards due to be replaced salvageable in any way? No – many are barely functioning.</p> <p>DECISION: the meeting unanimously approved the Capital report and proposed budget.</p> <p>The RCC Chair thanked the SBM for preparing the reports and for working during the holiday to have the reports circulated to Governors on time.</p>
7	<p>Roles & Responsibilities Statement.</p> <p>This annual statement had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the SBM informed the meeting that there had been no changes since last year. DECISION: The Roles and Responsibilities Statement was unanimously approved and signed at the meeting by the Chair of the RCC and CofG.</p>
8	<p>Statement of Internal Control.</p> <p>This document had also been circulated in advance of the meeting and the SBM reported that it was possible that this document might be replaced by the updated SFVS procedures. DECISION: The Statement of Internal Control was unanimously approved and signed at the meeting by the HT, Chair of the RCC and the CofG.</p>
9	<p>Benchmarking data using budget information.</p> <p>A document produced from the Government Benchmarking site had been circulated before the meeting. Data from the proposed 2022/23 budget (3% teacher increase scenario) had been entered into the site and this was compared against the data from comparable schools. Governors were informed that this is a “loose” comparison but can be useful for review.</p> <p>It was noted that ASPS spent a lower proportion of their budget on teaching staff than some schools but that this was due to the anomaly with year 6. Compared to some schools, ASPS premises costs are high – but ASPS’s school buildings are very old and need higher levels of maintenance. Also higher than some schools was the percentage of budget ASPS spends on clerical and admin staff – but the meeting was informed that the school expects to be able to rationalise this over the coming couple of years. This is also a tiny budget line when compared to the teacher costs line.</p>

	<p>Governor Question: The recent White Paper proposed changes to teaching hours – how are you expecting to fund this? We are awaiting more information and the results of consultations.</p> <p>It was noted that the benchmarking data indicated that ASPS was in the “average” category for most comparators but that the Senior Leaders percentage was higher than many schools. The school are aware of this and are reducing the SLT where they can.</p> <p>Governor Question: Are predictions possible on this site? Could you test out various scenarios, for example? This site gives a very broad picture and does not allow for much detail. For example, having ECT’s on staff requires lots of staff cover for their training needs and also for the staff that support and mentor them. The Dashboard comparison exercise is now part of the SFVS so we need to do carry out this exercise but it gives us only a broad picture.</p> <p>The meeting agreed that the FGB should be informed of the process that is gone through to complete the SFVS and that it includes a benchmarking exercise.</p> <p>Governor Question: It states that we are in a low-risk category for both In-Year balance and Revenue Reserve – do we know what the threshold is before we move into a higher risk category? For example, are we a £40K spend away from being high risk? When you are on the government website you can click into the categories and find out more information – which can be helpful in terms of context.</p> <p>The RCC chair thanked the SBM for this report which helps to put the school’s position into a bigger context of comparative schools.</p>
10	<p>Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>An updated AMP was circulated on paper at the meeting and the SBM briefly drew attention to those items that had been updated or added since the last review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boiler replacement had been completed • Solar panels are now due to be installed (June 2022?) and this was an addition. • Widespread replacement flooring has been added – due summer 2022 • Year 6 window repairs completed • Asbestos removal completed from boiler house (following a recent newspaper article implying general unsafe school management of asbestos, the Lead Governor for H&S has sent a possible response in case any parents raise concerns.) • Nutritional Learning Suite completed. • New laptop trolley completed. • Plans to install a Daily Mile track delayed due to covid <p>Governor Question: The extra laptops supplied during Covid – where are these now? Some are still on loan to families; others we plan to use to equip another trolley of laptops.</p>

	<p>Governor Question: The ICT Lead has now left the school – but you are not replacing this role? Not in the same way, no. We have created an ALR role for another member of staff and teachers will be taking more responsibility for teaching Computing classes and using computing in their lessons. We do not expect to see a big impact on teaching.</p> <p>Governor question: You have a premises defect list and a caretaker’s log book – do these influence what maintenance work you plan, or do you know what needs doing? We are aware from our regular site tours what needs addressing and also annual inspections e.g. of boilers, can highlight work that is necessary.</p> <p>Governor Question: Does the premises management software you use give you a proactive report? It might have this capability but we have found no need of this.</p> <p>It was noted that the AMP will be looked at again in the Autumn term (unless there are any significant changes before this). The RCC formally noted the Asset Management Report.</p>
11	<p>Policies for Approval or Adopting:</p> <p>Support Staff Pay Policy – From the LA – unanimously adopted</p> <p>Lettings Policy – this is ASPS specific and the Fire Authority has recently confirmed capacity limits on rooms for hire. The meeting was informed that prices last rose 3 or 4 years ago and they are in line with other local schools. Unanimously approved.</p> <p>Data Retention Policy (supplied by DPO) the DPO do an annual audit and the meeting was informed that there have been no recorded Data Protection breaches. The school takes data protection seriously and staff receive training. The policy is referred to often so that data can be deleted as soon as it no longer necessary to store it. ACTION: There are some editing comments that need to be removed before the policy is published. Unanimously approved once comments are removed.</p> <p>Social Media Policy (supplied by DPO) Unanimously adopted.</p> <p>Managing Sickness Absence Policy (RBC). Unanimously adopted.</p> <p>Bullying and Harassment Policy for Schools (RBC) It was confirmed that this policy refers to current versions of the school’s Grievance and Disciplinary Policies which were last reviewed in November 2021 so are current. ACTION: the highlighting would be removed from this policy. Unanimously adopted.</p> <p>Security Policy -this is an ASPS policy. It was confirmed that there are no changes to the Policy except that the name of the person responsible for unlocking/locking the site has been changed to be a job title. Unanimously approved.</p>

12	<p>Issues for Parents/FGB/Confidentiality.</p> <p>The proposed budget for 2022/23 would be taken to the next FGB meeting for discussion and approval. The SBM would explain the 4% teacher's rise scenario and wider context of school funding.</p> <p>Policies would go onto the school website.</p> <p>There were no issues of confidentiality or for parents – if access to the site will be affected by installation work for the solar panels, parents would be informed once the school had met with the installers.</p>
13	<p>Any other Business.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors noted that this was the last RCC meeting for the current chair of the RCC, Ian Church. Ian would be leaving the GB in May as his 4-year term of office is ending. Ian has been a real asset to the Governing Board and to the school, who very much appreciate his support and hard work over the last 4 years. Ian was thanked for his dedication to the school.</p>
14	Date of Next meeting – TBC confirmed in the autumn term.

Meeting closed: 12 noon.

New Actions:

Action:	Owner:
Remove editing comments from Data Retention Policy	SBM
Remove highlighting from the Bullying & Harassment Policy	SBM

Governor Attendance at RCC Meetings 2021/22 (three meetings to date)

Ian Church	3 of 3 meetings
Robert Howell	3 of 3 meetings
Dave Dymond	3 of 3 meetings
Adedayo Benson	3 of 3 meetings
Andrew Burrell	3 of 3 meetings
Kate Gordon	2 of 3 meetings
Adam Jones	2 of 2 possible meetings
Hajar Alami	2 of 3 meetings
Alice de Croos	3 of 3 meetings
Faruq Bilbe	0 of 1 possible meeting