



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part 1 Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Resources Coordination Committee. Wednesday 2nd November 2022. 7pm

Present: Adedayo Benson (Chair); Dave Dymond; Yota Dimitriadi; Attia Rafiq-Sharif; Andrew Burrell; Robert Howell; Kate Gordon; Hajar Alami.

In attendance: Alice De Croos.

Apologies: None – all Governors were present.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	
1	Apologies. There were no apologies – all Governors were present at the meeting. The meeting was recorded for the purposes of producing the minutes.
2	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations of interest.
3	Minutes of the meeting held 25th April 2022. The minutes of this meeting had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the actions were reviewed. The edits to two policies have been made. The minutes were accepted as a true record and will be signed in GovernorHub.
4	Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.
5	Review of 2nd Quarter Financial Reports. a) Revenue Report to 30/9/2022 with accompanying notes. This report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the SBM talked governors through the main headlines. The SBM explained that as we are now half way through the financial year, the report given to Governors has been very cautiously created – overestimating expenditure and underestimating income, because there remains so much uncertainty regarding pay rises, strike action and energy costs. In other words, this report is a financial “worst case scenario”. <u>Teachers</u> A pay agreement has been reached for Teachers with a 5% increase on pay and allowances across the board, with higher increases to the lower Main Pay Scale points as a step towards achieving a £30K starting salary from September 2023. Payroll have confirmed that this will be back paid in November, as will any increments due pending

the decision of the pay committee who met earlier today. The school had budgeted for a 4% increase. Despite threatened strike action by the unions, a grant to help cover the cost has not been announced.

There are two staff members currently on Maternity Leave, and another two teachers due to start Maternity leave before the end of the academic year. Additionally, we have one member of SLT who is on long term sick leave.

We have appointed a new teacher to cover one Maternity Leave cover, and the other has been filled with an Early Years Practitioner.

We had one resignation over the half term break, and therefore have a vacancy to fill for January.

Support Staff

In July, the National Employers made a final one year offer to the unions, to backdate to 1 April 2022. They offered an increase of £1925 on all NJC points, and w/e 1 April 2023, an increase of one day to all employees' annual leave allowance. This equates to 10.5% for scale point 1 and no less than 4.04% for scale point 43. We had budgeted for 2 %, and the cost of the pay rise, if agreed is approx. 75K more than we budgeted for. This has yet to be fully agreed by the unions but there has been no announcement of a grant to support these pay rises.

Governors will be aware of the difficulty in recruiting staff to certain roles, but we have had a recent successful recruitment campaign resulting in three new LSA's to support the increasing amount of high-level SEN children across the school, and to provide some additional classroom support. 2 EYPs' have also joined us on temporary contracts, as Maternity cover and for Reception class.

We promoted a member of the admin team to Office Manager following the resignation of the former staff member in the summer holiday and have backfilled the newly created Receptionist position internally.

Our Premises Manager is currently on sick leave, as is an HLTA which is impactful across the team. We are working with our HR partners and the OH team to support their safe return to work.

We currently have three vacancies for Lunchtime Controllers and one vacancy for a Lunchtime Supervisor. We are hoping to fill these vacancies before Christmas as at present members of SLT are supporting every day at lunchtime.

Energy

At present we have been fortunate that we haven't been seriously affected by the rising cost of gas and electricity as RBC via West Mercia Energy had procured energy for 22/23 at a price that is currently 82% below market rate which has saved 6.2 million across the RBC estate. For 2023/24 they have already secured rates at 62% below the forecasted market price, but this is still going to be impactful for next year's budget. The current forecast is that we can expect a 50% increase on this year's electricity spend, and 90% for gas. As we discussed in FGB back in September, we have worked with RBC and have reduced our usual heating settings by a few degrees. As we

have benefited from a mild Autumn so far this has not been an issue yet, in fact some staff have asked for the heating to be switched off, but we will keep a close eye as we approach the winter and can adjust the settings if we have a cold spell.

Premises

New flooring was laid across Year 1, Year 2, the SEN block, annex canteen and drama studio over the summer holidays. A new fire alarm panel was also installed, through this was funded by RBC.

ICT Learning Resources

11 new Interactive Whiteboard's were installed over May half term break. This was part funded by capital and part via the ICT budget.

Funding

We are fortunate that we are once again bursting the seams with pupil numbers, through the birth-rate for 2023 starters is very low county wide. We have a series of open mornings planned in early December in the hope of recruiting as many new starters as possible for next September.

The UIFSM grant, which funds a free school meal for all children in Reception to Y2, as well as any child entitled to FSM from other years has come in 31K under budget. This grant is calculated solely by the number of children who eat a school cooked meal on census day, and the impact of Covid over the last few years has seen our funding drop from £102,659 in 2019, to just £46,987 this year. This leaves us with a significant shortfall. The cost of providing lunches is approx. £90k for the year. On census day in September, we held a Friendship lunch in order to boost numbers of children eating. Our families really got behind us and supported the initiative, and 95.1% of eligible children had a school meal that day – an increase of 28.2% on the last census day numbers.

Governor Comment: My children really enjoyed the Friendship Lunch (Census Day) so thank you for organising that. That's lovely feedback – thank you.

Governor Comment: The Chair thanked the SBM for her report and the work that had gone into the budget. He also expressed gratitude for the work done by RBC to secure lower energy costs this year – and hoped that costs might have normalised by the time the pre-negotiated contracts with the supplier end.

Governor Question: I have noticed that your supply costs for cover are very low. We know that having to use supply teachers not only has a financial impact on a school but also an impact on the children they teach – as I know from the number of supply teachers my own children have in their school. How do you manage to cover staff absence without a high expenditure on external supply staff? We are fortunate in that we have a great team who pull together to provide cover internally wherever we can. When we ask an LSA to cover a class teacher, we do pay them at a higher rate, which has a small financial impact. If staff absences rise as the winter comes, we may need to employ supply cover staff. Cover for staff absence does cause stress to the whole team – at the moment the HT is doing lunchtime duty every day to cover

absences in the lunchtime team. Staff including the SBM are locking the school site on a rota every evening. Staff absence is impactful. We are very grateful to our flexible workforce who step up when they can.

Governor Question: Is it too early to see the impact of the solar panels that were installed? It has been estimated that they will save us 5K on our fuel bill (of 50K) so they will help but not as much as you might think. RBC are considering a programme to change every light bulb to an LED one across their property portfolio - but this is a long-term project.

Governor Question: You mentioned a staff resignation – have you noticed any pattern to staff resigning? The teacher that is leaving us has resigned for understandable personal reasons. Our loss of LSAs has in many cases been due to the fact that the pay rate is poor and they can earn more in other jobs – such as working in a supermarket. We are constrained by RBC pay scales when it comes to paying support staff.

Governor Question: Should there be a teacher strike, do you have a plan in place? RBC will issue advice to schools, and we will draw up a plan aiming to minimise the impact wherever possible.

Governor Question: With the rises to the cost of living we are experiencing do you have any initiatives in place to support families (or indeed staff) that may be struggling? We have a team of staff that work with our vulnerable families who already have links to community groups that support those in need – food banks / clothing including uniforms. We have a good relationship with both our families and support organisations, and we do as much as we possibly can. We have an open-door policy for staff who do discuss any issues they face so we will support staff where we can in the same way. We are working on a whole school mental health and well-being support programme.

Governor Question: What is your plan to find the extra funds for the teachers pay rise? If you look at the teacher's line in the budget, you will see that we are looking at a likely underspend in this line. This is because we were expecting some resignations. What will be more impactful is the cost of living pay rises for support staff as these are not funded. We will have to be careful how we fill future vacancies and possibly look at cutting spending on future refurbishment plans.

There followed a discussion that was recorded under Part 2 minutes.

b) Capital budget Report to 30/9/22

This report had also been circulated in advance of the meeting and showed that £15K of the Capital budget allocation was put towards the funding of new interactive Whiteboards. The SBM informed the meeting that there were no plans to spend the

	<p>remaining capital budget so that there was a predicted carry-over of £2140 into the next financial year.</p>
6	<p>Pay Committee verbal update.</p> <p>The Chair of the Pay Committee gave a verbal update to the meeting informing the GB that the pay committee had met that afternoon and unanimously voted to approve the HT recommendations made regarding teacher's pay following the latest annual Performance Management reviews.</p>
7	<p>Modular building – proposed removal.</p> <p>The HT informed the meeting that the history of the modular building on the ASPS site goes back a number of years – it was in place before the current HT took up his post. It was needed when the school originally expanded the number of classes and had not been used for some years. However, over the last 3 years, pupil numbers had risen again, and additional space was needed. The Year 6 children moved in, allowing some other spaces to be redesigned to accommodate, amongst other things, a Nutritional Learning Suite. Where Year 6 had been housed before their move was not ideal – it suffered from disruption from users of the adjacent hall and irregular shaped classrooms meaning some classes were constrained. Moving Year 6 to the modular had been very successful – it enabled more dynamic teaching and motivated the children to be more engaged in their learning.</p> <p>For several years now the school and members of the GB had been chasing RBC for a decision on a formal lease of the building or a timescale on how long it would be on site. The school has an extensive email trail going back years with a number of RBC staff and former staff. The high staff turnover at RBC has had an impact on decision making in this area. In May 2020 a Heads of Terms was agreed for the lease but not actioned.</p> <p>Over this last half term an email was received out of the blue stating that the Modular would be removed – with no timescale given. The council have stated that the building is required elsewhere but no further details are known. There is a meeting planned next week when the school hopes to be given more information.</p> <p>The modular was last assessed about 18 months ago, but it does decline every year – as temporary buildings do. Craning it out is a concern and would not be possible in the winter months due to the surrounding soft ground unable to support the weight of a heavy crane. The school has been carrying out reactive maintenance on the Modular building.</p> <p>The school expressed the disappointment they feel about the lack of support from RBC for their largest and most successful school. The tone of some of the emails received from RBC has not been helpful.</p>

	<p>Governor Question: Will the removal of the Modular impact on curriculum provision? Yes – we will have to look again at our teaching groups and our more creative curriculum offer – such as drama – would be negatively impacted.</p> <p>The meeting was informed that RBC is very “departmentalised” and that Education and Property services do not “talk” to each other.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is it worth fighting for the Modular? Yes – we have proven that having additional space improves the teaching environment for our children including having a breakout space for our more vulnerable students.</p> <p>There is a meeting due with RBC to discuss this in the coming few days and governors were asked if they would be willing to attend if required. ACTION: Governors to be informed of the date/time of the meeting as soon as it is known as their support of the school in this issue would have impact.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is there anything else we can do to support you with this? A Governor offered to ACTION: continue to lobby the Lead Councillor for Education and the Director of Education. It was noted that two of our Governors have sat on panels to assist RBC so they have a relationship established. However, due to the departmentalism of RBC, this may not help. It is unlikely a petition would help either.</p> <p>It was noted that the school does not need this significant distraction in what is expected to be an Ofsted year. If the Modular is to go, then it would have to be at the end of the academic year – as moving it mid-way would have too much of an impact on teaching. It was also noted that RBC would provide no compensation but that there would be playground improvements made. There would need to be a plan drawn up to re-home Year 6.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is the worry over the modular having an impact on staff? Yes – especially the Year 6 team who are concerned as there are some many “unknowns”. We also need to ensure we protect the well-being of our children, especially the Year 6’s as they prepare to take their SATs.</p> <p>Governor Question: Would the support of someone from the Education Department at RBC during this meeting help us? Could they speak up for us regarding the work we do in educating an increasingly large number of high-need and vulnerable children from the Borough? Maybe this would help – we will discuss with Alice Boon who is due to visit us at the end of this week.</p> <p>Governor Comment: ACTION: I will also speak to Sarah Shortt at Governor Services to see if she has any advice – it will help to push back from all directions.</p>
8	Asset Management Plan.

	<p>This had been updated in the Autumn term and circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting. Governors were informed that much depended on the future of the modular building. Items in green had been completed; amber items were either in progress or awaiting quotes or funding. It is hard to make informed decisions about some items until more is known about the modular’s future.</p> <p>Governor Question: Can I ask for some clarification about what is meant by the term “high quality facilities” under Key Area 3 – Curriculum Enrichment? It refers to all resources including buildings that enable our children to maximise their learning potential. It would include high quality furniture too, for example.</p> <p>Governor Question: How would you define high quality? For example – the provision of our Nutritional Learning Suite – we had always done some cooking in school but in the past, it was done in classrooms on a portable burner stove – now we have a specialist space properly resourced that is fit for purpose. ACTION: edit asset management plan to clarify the term “high quality”.</p> <p>Governor Question: Equally, can you define “state of the art” when used in relation to IT please? Is this achieved by a comparison with other school’s provision? ACTION: we will discuss this with our new IT Coordinator for a possible clearer definition but we want to enable our children to achieve their potential by supplying them with up-to-date software and hardware. This document does not need detail as everything comes back to budget but will look at the wording.</p>
9	<p>Risk Register.</p> <p>This had been updated and circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Governor Question: Item 21 – loss of power due to the energy crisis – do you have a plan in place for this? We have the RBC Rainbow plan for ensuring business continuity. RBC will be issuing advice to schools should there be rolling power cuts planned and we will follow that advice.</p>
10	<p>Policies for approval.</p> <p>There were a number of policies circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting and the chair stated that he had read them all and hoped that other governors had had a chance to read them too.</p> <p>The policies were discussed individually:</p> <p>a) Pay Policy for Teaching staff 2022</p> <p>This is a Policy from RBC which has been personalised to add the school’s name etc. No significant changes have been made as this policy has had union approval.</p> <p>Governor Question: This policy, like some others, makes reference to other policies – which I would like to assume are all current and up-to-date or are on a renewal plan?</p> <p>The meeting was informed that much work has been done on Policies over recent months by the SBM and Clerk to the GB to update policies. This has involved changing terminology, policy titles, removing obsolete policies or those that are now included in other documents. Some work has been done on the TORs too to reflect the policy</p>

changes. Many policies have had their recommended renewal cycles changed by the government – from 3 years down to annually. This means that there will always be polices we need to look at in virtually every meeting as schools have a significant number of policies these days.

DECISION: Pay Policy for Teaching staff 2022 Adopted.

b) Teachers' Appraisal Policy 2022

DECISION: Approved.

c) Support Staff Appraisal Policy 2022

DECISION: Approved

d) Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy

DECISION: Approved

e) CCTV Policy

This is a Policy from Judicium. **Governor Question:** We have a maintenance contract with them – when was the last time the equipment was serviced? It is overdue for a check **ACTION:** SBM to chase a date for this to be serviced.

Governor Question: How long do we keep footage for? The school responded that they thought footage was kept for a month unless it was needed for an incident.

ACTION: SBM to check this with the company.

DECISION: Adopted.

f) Charging and Remissions Policy 2022

Governor Question: What does it mean when it says that polices are available from the school office? All our polices are available to staff via the document sharing app but the office can also supply a copy of any policy on request.

DECISION: Approved

g) Data Protection Policy

This is also a policy from Judicium. Using the document sharing app the school can distribute policies such as this one to staff to read and can see the figures of those who have read them, enabling staff to be chased if necessary. The meeting was informed that the school are pleased with the services that Judicium provide including a suite of policies, GDPR compliance and the services of a DPO. The details of our named DPO are up to date in the policy. We last had a Data Protection audit 18months ago.

DECISION: Adopted

h) Freedom of Information Policy

This is another Judicium Policy.

DECISION: Adopted

i) Grievance Policy for Schools

This is a policy from RBC.

	<p>DECISION: Adopted</p> <p>j) Health & Safety Policy There was a discussion about a clause in this policy that stated that H&S should be on every meeting agenda. It was noted that this was an historical carry over and that H&S is now engrained in everything a school does – with the HT being responsible for day-to-day H&S matters informing the Governing Board of any exceptional circumstances. The link Governor for H&S stated that he had never had a problem raising H&S issues at meetings or site tours etc.</p> <p>DECISION: Approved</p> <p>k) ICT Acceptable Use Policy This is also a Judicium Policy. There was some discussion over the use of the term “ICT” when this should refer to the curriculum subject rather than infrastructure which is “IT”. ACTION: SBM to rename this policy IT Acceptable Use Policy to avoid misunderstandings.</p> <p>Governor Question: On Page 2 there is a reference to a ban on personal equipment being connected to school IT. Yes, this refers to memory sticks or external drives etc. What about personal mobile phones? No – staff do not connect these to our WIFI network.</p> <p>Governor Comment: Following the problems some government Ministers have had with forwarding sensitive documents/emails to their personal phones which have then been subject to security breaches, should we be using our school email addresses only for school business and not our personal emails addressees? This is best practise for security reasons. We can edit the individual records of all Governors in GovHub to be school email addresses but we feel we can’t make this compulsory for Governors.</p> <p>DECISION: IT Acceptable Use Policy adopted.</p>
11	<p>Site Tours / Health & Safety Verbal update. The Lead Governor for Health and Safety gave a verbal update to governors. He informed them that there is a duty for governing boards to manage health and safety in schools, with the Head teacher responsible for its day-to-day management. The role of Governors is defined in the H&S policy and monitored directly by a lead H&S Governor.</p> <p>Over the school year every part of the school is subject to a H&S inspection. There are six a year. These inspections look at the school learning environment, classrooms, furniture, electrics, fire safety, first aid, asbestos, housekeeping, play equipment, welfare and building works. Any defects are noted and later actioned. The management of H&S also includes statutory testing of fire equipment, electrics and for legionnaires disease. Eating areas and security access are also monitored.</p>

	<p>The next school site tour will take place on the 11th November at 8am and any Governor who wishes to attend would be most welcome.</p>
12	<p>Well-being & Equality updates.</p> <p>Some parts of this discussion were recorded under Part 2 minutes.</p> <p>The HT gave the meeting an update on staff well-being and noted that the vacant lunchtime posts were having an impact over the school as were other staff absences. Staff do experience issues in their home life that impact on their work and the school has appointed a member of SLT to lead on mental health within the school and this will feed into the SDP which is due to be published very soon.</p> <p>Five members of staff are doing a St John’s mental health at work course shortly which will lead to staff putting a plan in place and also being able to better support those staff who need it. The school informed Governors that they would welcome governor support and help with this project.</p> <p>Governor Comment: It would be good to hear from the Mental Health Lead in a future meeting. Yes – we can maybe have her present an overview of the plan at the January FGB meeting. Perhaps we could cover the Mindful Curriculum in the same meeting.</p> <p>Governor Question: How can the GB as a whole support you with this? By getting behind the SLT and the team leading the Mental Health initiative and being a part of positive conversations with staff. Understand our approach to mental health and be an advocate for it.</p> <p>Governors had a discussion on mental health matters when it was noted that it can be cathartic to talk and that just by actively listening to someone, you <i>can</i> make a difference. It was noted that holding governors’ meetings online also helped governor attendance. It was also noted that had we enough governors on the board, we would hope to appoint a link governor for wellbeing. The hope was expressed that SLT are supported whilst they are supporting other staff.</p> <p>Governor Question: Might you send more staff on this course? We will judge how successful it is. It is quite an expensive course.</p>
13	<p>Issues for parents/FGB/Confidentiality.</p> <p>There were no issues to inform parents about nor any updates for the FGB as all governors were present at this meeting.</p> <p>There were some elements of the discussions that were recorded under Part 2 Confidential minutes.</p>
14	<p>Any Other Business.</p> <p>There were no AOB items raised.</p>
15	<p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 8th February 2023</p>

Meeting closed: 9pm

New Actions:

Action:	Owner:
Governors to be informed of the date/time of the modular meeting.	RH
Continue to lobby the Lead Councillor for Education and the Director of Education re the modular.	DD
Seek advice from Sarah Short re the Modular	AB
Look at the terminology in the Asset Management Plan (High quality/state of the art)	AdC
Get the CCTV system serviced as per contract	AdC
Check how long CCTV footage is kept	AdC
Rename ICT acceptable Use policy	AdC

Governor Attendance at RCC Meetings 2022/23 (one meeting to date)

Robert Howell	1 of 1 meeting
Dave Dymond	1 of 1 meeting
Adedayo Benson	1 of 1 meeting
Yota Dimitriadi	1 of 1 meeting
Attia Rafiq-Sharif	1 of 1 meeting
Andrew Burrell	1 of 1 meeting
Kate Gordon	1 of 1 meeting
Hajar Alami	1 of 1 meeting
Alice de Croos	1 of 1 meeting