



ALFRED SUTTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Resources Coordination Committee.
Wednesday 16th February 2022. 7pm.

Present: Ian Church (Chair); Dave Dymond; Robert Howell; Adedayo Benson; Andrew Burrell; Kate Gordon; Adam Jones; Hajar Alami.

In Attendance: Alice de Croos.

Clerk: Deborah Savage

Agenda Item	
1	Apologies. No apologies had been received. The meeting was recorded to assist with the minutes.
2	Declarations of Interest. There were no declarations.
3	Minutes of the meeting held 3rd November 2021. The minutes of this meeting had been circulated in advance and were accepted as a true record. The actions were reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skills audit has been completed by new Governors and the chair is working on a training plan. Help was offered if needed.• Committee TORs have no specific references to Vice Chairs – this can be reviewed.• RCC TOR has been completed and will be reviewed at the next meeting. The Chair reported he is working on a Governor Action plan with targets and would like a meeting with all chairs and VCs for their input.• The review of policies attached to the RCC has been completed – this has been a major task. Statutory polices are on the website and all policies are available to all staff via the portal. It is possible to check they have ben read by individual staff.• The statement of internal control has been signed.• Typos have been corrected.• The first open morning was held as planned with some governors in attendance. The second was sadly forced to go to a virtual event. However, the school application numbers are very strong.• The Nutritional Learning Suite has had a stealth opening and is in use now risk assessments have been completed.
4	Matters Arising. There were no matters arising.

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3rd Quarter Revenue Report.

A report with accompanying notes had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting and the SBM talked Governors through the main points.

The Pandemic has caused continued disruption to school improvement and the last few months have been the most challenging the school has faced during the whole pandemic period. However, much progress has been made in the curriculum improvement plans and the school is on track to finish the financial year with a healthy carry forward to support the budget for the 2022/2023 school year.

Teachers

Three teachers have been on Maternity Leave, another will start this week. Covid advice for pregnancy has been to allow staff to work from home during their last trimester which has caused further resourcing issues. We will be able to claim back some of the cost of Maternity cover in the new FY.

As reported in November, no cost of living pay uplift has been awarded to Teachers this FY. One teacher resigned at Christmas and has not been replaced, however a teacher returning from Maternity Leave has taken over the class.

As part of our school led tutoring programme, we have taken on a retired teacher to provide tutoring support for Year 1. A Year 2 teacher with a 0.6 contract has provided some additional hours to tutor Year 2, and an Unqualified teacher has been allocated to Year 3 and 4. We have also used a tutor through the NTP programme, however we have found this to be a less useful use of resources and won't use this model going forwards.

Support Staff

A decision on a pay award for support staff has still not been finalised and industrial action is a possibility. The LA are advising the school budget for an uplift of 1.75% but it is possible that agreement won't be reached this FY and that a double award may be made in 2022/23 with back pay to April 2021.

2 LSA's, one of which was also Midday Supervisor, resigned after Christmas. Neither wanted to leave, but the roles do not pay enough, and the impact of the pandemic on their household finances meant they had no choice but to look elsewhere. This is particularly concerning for recruitment going forwards. A recruitment campaign to replace one of the positions had 14 applications but we were unable to shortlist a single applicant. We have fed this back to the LA, but until things change on a national level, and recompense is equal to the role, we are concerned that this is going to be impactful going forwards.

Water and Sewerage

The historic issues with water billing seem to have been finally resolved so we expect an underspend in this line which will inform budget setting for 2022/2023.

Energy

While an underspend is anticipated this FY – we have already been advised that we should be budgeting for a 45% increase in the next FY. Our new, efficient boilers should help keep costs down but this is still going to be impactful on next year's budget. We are not now expecting solar panels to be installed.

Education Supplies

The focus has been on broadening our wider curriculum this year with resourcing the Nutritional Learning Suite and improving our library book stock. Post pandemic, one of the biggest gaps identified in our children is in their reading ability, which is a huge OFSTED focus at present. We have made significant investment (20K) and bought over 2700 new reading books for KS2, as well as repurposing an outbreak room in the new block to become a Reading Hive. This has been painted, has new furniture and a book vending machine to promote a love of reading in our children. Book bags have been ordered for Reception and KS1 that underpin the phonics sounds they learn in school and these have been delivered but we have deferred payment until the next FY.

ICT Learning Resources

We purchased a new laptop trolley in the Summer term which is being used widely across KS2 – supported by our ICT lead. We've also switched our Broadband provider (saving 3K) which has been a long-term aim of the school.

Free School Meals

The new caterers, Caterlink, have had a rocky start and have caused lots of issues for both parents and the admin team who are constantly dealing with problems. The School Meals team at Reading are working with Caterlink to resolve some of the issues all schools are experiencing, however we haven't seen any real reduction in children eating school meals.

Agency Staff

High levels of covid have been impactful across the school and we have had to arrange some supply cover, especially since Christmas.

Bought in Services – Curriculum

All main bought in services are now paid for in full. The overspend here is due to lunchtime club provision and the NTP Tutor scheme though income has been received.

Income

We had some unexpected income of approx. 12K in the form of the Teachers Pay and Teachers Pension Grants. We were informed by the LA that these were now reflected in AWPU, however they hadn't realised that they still applied to Teaching staff working in Nursery.

Lettings income has been steady though we lost Slimming World at the end of January as the representative moved to Somerset and they could not find a replacement.

Alfred Sutton is one of their most popular venues and as soon as they recruit a

	<p>replacement, they intend to take up the let again. We reverted to pre-covid charges for wrap around care post-Christmas.</p> <p>The new lease for Crescent Under Fives is still not completed so the price increase has still not gone through.</p> <p>The cost of Nursery lunch club increased to £3.50 as agreed post-Christmas, and one thing that has really worked in our favour is offering the paid for 30-hour spaces – we currently have three families taking up this offer.</p> <p>Further income was generated by the HT supporting St Mary and All Saints with a total of £1600 being received to date.</p> <p>Additional Grant – last year we received a late additional sum of approx. 8k UIFSM income after an adjustment following the January census. Although this hasn't been considered in the return, it might be that a similar thing happens again this year, though at this stage it hasn't been confirmed.</p> <p>Governor Question: Parents buying additional nursery hours is good income for the school – I can help to publicise this additional offer? Yes – but we do have limited spaces available.</p> <p>Governor Question: It is possible that the cost of energy will rise even higher than the percentages you are allowing for – are we budgeting enough? This is the percentage rise we have been advised to allow for by the LA who buy in power for all their facilities so can broker better deals. The future cost of energy is a real worry for us but it is possible schools will receive grants to help us cover increased energy costs.</p> <p>Governor Comment: The problems recruiting support staff are an issue of concern along with the impact on the wellbeing and jobs of the remaining staff. Yes – this is a national problem with the pay for these roles but we need people with certain skills and experience so we are not prepared to appoint for the sake of having the position filled. Hiring the right people is more important than ever. Reading LA need to do more to help support the recruitment of skilled staff. It is really sad to lose skilled and experienced staff due to low salary but there are strict restrictions on what schools can pay support staff.</p> <p>DECISION: The 3rd Quarter Revenue Report was approved by Governors.</p> <p>The SBM was thanked for the report and for talking Governors through the main points.</p>
6	<p>3rd Quarter Capital Report.</p> <p>The 3rd Quarter Capital Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Governors were informed that 20K had been spent on the Nutritional Learning Suite but that this was the only Capital spend this year. There would be a carry forward of approximately £6K and the school has plans to improve the school environment for which quotes are being sought.</p> <p>DECISION: The 3rd Quarter Capital Report was approved by Governors.</p>
7	<p>Bought In Services for 2022/2023.</p> <p>A document outlining the services bought-in by the school had been circulated in advance of the meeting and Governors were informed that the services had been rag</p>

	<p>rated from the school (end users) point of view. “Red” meant that the service was unacceptable and the school needs to find an alternative supplier. “Amber” indicates services where there are problems but where the positives outweigh the issues experienced. “Green” indicates a good level of service and the school has no wish to find an alternative provider.</p> <p>There are no “Red” services. Bought in HR services is “Amber” but Governors were informed that the LA has taken on additional staff and the service is improving. It is also known that some schools, who bought HR services elsewhere, have had to pay for LA HR in addition to their chosen supplier.</p> <p>Governors were informed that whilst these are mostly operational decisions, should governors feel that savings could be made then the school would seek alternative suppliers and obtain cost comparisons. Governors pointed out that ball-park costs associated with these services would be helpful, although the SBM did explain that costs can vary depending on how many schools buy-in to a particular service. This is an advantage of being part of a LA – the LA broker deals on behalf of a number of schools. The school values a number of these services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building compliance checks (e.g. Legionnaires) • FSM eligibility checking service • Financial support (which is excellent) • Legal services • Education Welfare • Teaching staff maternity insurance • Schools’ performance and data services • Health & Safety (which has just assisted with road crossing hazards) • Payroll services • ICT (including SIMS which has moved to an individual subscription but will result in a saving for our school) • Music provision which is impressive and will continue • Lunch time club provision however will not continue beyond this academic year as behaviour problems have resolved and the cost is £1200 a month. <p>Governor Comment: This is useful – please let us know at future Resources meetings if any services are causing concern.</p>
8	<p>Policies.</p> <p>A number of policies had been circulated to Governors in advance of the meeting, and Governors were informed that some of the policies (Support Staff Pay Policy, Sickness Absence and Bullying) were RBC policies that had had been ratified by the unions. For this reason, it was felt that no changes should be made to these policies.</p> <p>Governor question: I am unsure why we need to approve these policies if we can’t make changes to them – they are not really “our” policies to approve? ACTION: research to be done to establish which policies require Governor approval and which Governors simply need to know the school have in place.</p>

	<p>Governor Question: When discussing Premises security and locking up the school, a person is named – should this be a job title instead of a named person? ACTION: Yes – we will change this.</p> <p>Governor Comment: Some of the polices should also specify where they link into other policies – ACTION: Governor to email questions and comments on policies into the Head.</p> <p>It was noted that the Governing Board needs to know that statutory policies are in place and are up to date. All polices are now up to date, but we still need to understand review periods and which polices require the approval of the Governors. It would be helpful to know what procedures the LA follow when drawing up or updating policies so we have an idea of their decision-making process. It would also be helpful to see these in draft form so we can input into them.</p> <p>Governor Question: The Lettings policy states that if the GB does not approve of what the school premises are used for outside school hours, the GB can refuse the let. How do we know what the premises are used for? This is a school operational decision and we have a vetting process we have to follow since updated KCSIE guidance is that the onus is on schools to ensure that lettings have safeguards in place and that any staff are qualified for the classes they lead. ACTION: volunteers are sought for a working group to look at polices in more detail during the summer term.</p>
9	<p>Benchmarking.</p> <p>Governors were reminded that it is now a requirement of the SFVS that Governors consider the Benchmarking information published on the Government website for each individual school and a link to the website had been circulated in advance of the meeting so Governors could look at this information. The SBM also shared her screen with this information on it so a discussion could be held.</p> <p>The Benchmarking data provided compares a school’s budget and performance to similar schools and gives an indication if a school is broadly in line with other similar schools or where any bigger differences appear.</p> <p>Governor Question: Is this something Ofsted will look at? No – it is not part of Ofsted’s remit.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the progress measure was a good addition to this data and shows us that ASPS ranks highly amongst other Reading schools in terms of average progress made by pupils.</p> <p>It was noted that the school had used their revenue reserve to improve curriculum resources and that, over time, the revenue reserve will fall. However, ASPS are in a good financial position compared to other Reading schools – especially those with lower pupil numbers. The Government advise that 5% of revenue is kept in reserve and ASPS had a reserve of 5.8% so met this target. It is very important however that pupil</p>

	<p>numbers remain high and that the school fills its Roll and also reduces the SLT. The Leadership Team has reduced this year by 1.6FTE so this will help reduce staffing costs. Governors are aware of the historical need for a wider SLT to improve teaching and learning and the school's progress data from 2017 onwards demonstrates the success of this model. The school is aware that this model now needs review and it is possible some of our AHT's would seek promotion to posts in other schools. However, our AHTs are getting development opportunities and challenges here so seem happy to stay.</p> <p>Governors acknowledged that it was important to review this data on an annual basis and that it was possible, via the Government website, to explore areas of the data in more depth.</p> <p>Governors noted and discussed the Benchmarking data.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>SFVS.</p> <p>Feedback from last year's SFVS return was that the school had done well and it was proposed that those who would sign this year's SFVS meet with the SBM the week beginning 21/3 in order to meet the submission deadline of 31st March. IC/DD/AB volunteered to meet. ACTION: suitable dates/times would be emailed by the SBM.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Interactive White Boards.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the IT audit recommended replacing a number of IWB and that problems had been experienced with some of the "Smart" make of IWB. Five Smart boards have failed and been replaced as they were within warranty but their removal and replacement takes time and this has a significant impact on learning. Turn It On, the school's IT support company, have provided a quotation for 10 new boards at a cost of £22.5K. A second quotation is expected soon from another supplier who loaned an IWB of a different make to the school to try out. This make seems to have the same functionality but perhaps offers more flexibility in its use.</p> <p>The second quote is expected shortly and the meeting gave permission to those Governors meeting with the SBM to discuss and sign to SFVS to discuss and approve a decision on the IWBs.</p> <p>Governor Question: Do we need a third quote for a purchase of this size? Ideally yes – but one local company is no longer in business after Covid and we can't find another supplier prepared to quote.</p> <p>Governor Question: Perhaps we need to have some future planning in place for IT replacement? We do have an ICT biannual report which we work from when planning IT upgrades and changes. For example, we plan to change our Wi-Fi in the next financial year.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Pay Rates and Inflation.</p> <p>Governors were informed that the latest guidance from the LA on teacher's pay increases is to include a minimum increase of 3% in our budgets but it is possible that</p>

	<p>the increase could be as high as 5%. It is suggested that we allow for a support staff increase of 3.75% (1.75% for this FY and 2% for next FY). General inflation is predicted at 3%. The SBM asked what Governors felt would be an appropriate inflationary level to allow for in planning next year's budget. A decision on teachers pay usually comes in September, but a decision on support staff can take much longer to be agreed. Governors felt that allowing for a 4% increase seemed reasonable but they asked for a model of how this would impact on the budget.</p> <p>ACTION: the SBM would model 3 scenarios for Governors allowing for a 3% increase, a 4% increase and 5% increase so that Governors could see how these different rates of increase impacted on the wider school budget. It was agreed that Governors could then make an informed decision in the budget setting meeting (next RCC meeting in April).</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>School Fund Audit.</p> <p>The school fund accounts have been with the Auditors for some time now and they have been chased but no response has been received. It is a small company who may have been impacted by covid related absences. The accounts need to be independently audited.</p> <p>Governor Question: Are other schools in the same position? Not all schools have a school fund account.</p> <p>Governor Question: What are the implications for the delay? We do need the accounts to be independently audited – once received back we can share them via email with Governors if necessary.</p> <p>The SBM was thanked for this update on the School Fund accounts and was asked to give a verbal update at the next meeting.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Issues for Parents/FGB/Confidentiality.</p> <p>There were no issues for parents or issues of confidentiality. The next FGB meeting would be informed that the 3rd Quarter Accounts had been reviewed and approved by the RCC and that the SFVS had been signed. It was also decided to share the Benchmarking link so all Governors could understand the wider context of strategic decisions. Other Governors not attending this meeting would also be approached to see if they wanted to join a working party to look at Policies.</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>AOB.</p> <p><u>School Admissions.</u></p> <p>The latest data on school application figures had been shared with Governors shortly before the meeting and it was pleasing to see that the application figures for a place at ASPS are high despite Covid disruption to Open Mornings etc. Information on why families had chosen ASPS was also shared and 90 families (of 140 applicants) had made ASPS their first choice of school. This is particularly positive given the local and national picture of falling rolls and birth rates. The data indicated that expanding the Nursery</p>

	<p>was a good decision. Historically, filling the school with children who had not made ASPS their first choice meant that some children left for other schools meaning an unstable school roll. If you fill your classes with first choice children, you have less fluidity. However, the school is frustrated that no decision has yet been made about the modular building as the school can't invest in infrastructure despite having a full roll. The Governing Board was informed that the CoG has written to the Lead Councillor for Education who replied that he was looking into it. ACTION: Councillor to be chased up.</p> <p><u>Training Update:</u> A Governor fed back on recent Safeguarding training he had attended that revealed that 59 schools had failed Ofsted inspections recently due to Safeguarding concerns and amongst the top reason for failing was inadequate record keeping. Training had also been attended on Risk Management which was a useful prompt to reflect on our practise to seek improvements. ACTION: Information on recent training to be shared via GovernorHub.</p> <p>The Head informed the meeting that Safeguarding is always a part of an Ofsted Inspection but that he is confident that ASPS Safeguarding is strong (if not Outstanding) due mainly to the dedicated staff at school and strong record keeping.</p>
16	<p>Date of Next meeting.</p> <p>The meeting schedule had a RCC meeting for budget setting on Wed 27th April with an FGB on 4th May. In previous years, due to Covid, these meetings had been combined but it was felt that having two separate meetings was preferable due to the size of the two agendas.</p> <p>Final budget figures would not be received from the LA until 31/3 and should the RCC meet on 27th April this is only two days before the final budget needs to be submitted to the LA on 29/4. Due to the timing of the Easter holidays this year (later than other years) the SBM will have to work during the Easter break to get figures out to Governors in time for review prior to the meetings. The plan is to have papers distributed by 14/3.</p> <p>Decision: RCC meeting date change to MONDAY 25th APRIL and FGB meeting date change to WEDNESDAY 27th APRIL to ratify budget decisions.</p> <p>It was agreed that having two meetings on one week, whilst unfortunate, was the best approach given the timing of the Easter holidays, the size of both agendas and the deadlines involved.</p>

Meeting closed: 9.10pm.

New Actions:

Action:	Owner:
Research to establish which policies require Governor approval and which Governors simply need to know the school have in place.	Clerk
Edit policy to remove named person and insert job title	SBM
Governor to email policy questions/comments to HT	DD
Working group to look at policies in summer term.	DD to lead
Governors and SBM to arrange date to sign SFVS	SBM/IC/DD/AB
3 inflationary budget setting scenarios to be prepared for next meeting	SBM
RBC Councillor to be chased up re Modular building	DD
Information from recent training to be shared on GovHub	DD

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

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