

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCE COMMITTEE OF ST MATTHEW'S GOVERNING BODY,  
HELD AT SCHOOL ON Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019 AT 5.30 P.M.**

**Present:** Kevin Blencowe (Chair), Lucy Walker, Zoe Thorn, Debora Lucarelli, Ricardo Herbane, Julie Murphy, Christina Bates, Tony Davies (Head teacher)

**Clerk:** Lis Silver

**1. Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies as all members of the committee were present at the meeting. It was noted that the vacancy on the Committee for a Staff governor has been filled by Julie Murphy (a member of the school office staff team) and she was welcomed to the meeting.

**2. Declarations of direct or indirect pecuniary interests relevant to any of the Agenda items**

There were no declarations of interest related to agenda items

**3. Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Resources Committee were agreed as an accurate record.

**4. Matters arising and agreed actions update**

The meeting was advised that the Terms of Reference have been updated as agreed in Item 4.

Item 6: From March 2018 meeting: **Working party on pollution** to be set up – This action is still outstanding  
RH has drafted some questions for a survey for parents/local residents and it was agreed that Rosa Mottershead (who has also expressed an interest) should be asked to review these questions. It was noted that another local school has already started to take action on cars driving right up to the school gates and now asks parents to park a reasonable distance away.

**Action: Conversation to be initiated with governor/staff at Milton Primary school to find out details of what has been done and what has been successful**

**Action: RH/ZT to get survey finalised and circulated to parents/local residents to understand scale of problem and level of interest**

**Action: Meeting to be held with all interested parents as first step towards establishing a Working party**

Item 7: LW has appointment to meet School Business Manager AS to carry out financial checks audit. TD has not been able to identify any guidance but may be information on Knowledge Hub and LW can adopt methodology used in previous year by RM. Audit is to trace payments through the system from contract to Invoice to payment and ensure paper trail in place.

Item 10: **Exit Interviews** – RH has spoken to his work HR Manager and provided the 7 questions that are used for Exit interviews. These were discussed and it was agreed that they could be modified to provide something suitable for use at St Matthews. It was noted that participating in the Exit interview should be voluntary and that it would probably be a governor that met with the member of staff that was leaving normally during their last couple of days in post. Any future Exit interview questions will be run past EPM to ensure that they are suitable. In addition, the Unions have a lot of information on their website and we should ensure the format is acceptable to the Unions prior to introduction. It was noted that the school already has a checklist that is used to ensure handover is completed when a staff member leaves and the Exit interview can be added to this document.

**5. Review latest Orovia Budget Report**

It was noted that the school is almost exactly on track against the budget with a carry-over of £10k (forecast was for £13k). The following points were made:

- carry over may be slightly lower as a result of a current ongoing high level of sickness requiring additional spending on cover staff.
- both income and expenditure are higher than the forecast figures due to the inclusion of parental contributions which net out overall.

- There is increased income as a result of staff sickness because of the absence of the Headteacher. No cover teacher was employed and some of his work was picked up internally by other staff. If the school had known that he was going to be away for such a lengthy period, then cover would have been brought in, but this was only established as the situation developed. There are 2 other teachers on long term sickness absence with associated costs.
- Underspend on Learning resources – this money is destined to be spent on the Foundation stage curriculum for ICT. However initial review has identified that the Foundation stage curriculum needs a full review before the money is spent to ensure that all planned elements are being completed. This will delay expenditure and it is likely to be done in summer ready for new academic year.
- The difference between supply teaching and agency cover was explained to the meeting. The expenditure in these areas are linked since cover for a particular role can be from either source (dependent on who is available at the time). It was noted that a fee needs to be paid to the agency if cover staff are employed.
- Governors asked questions about the high variance for curriculum support costs (E27) and it was agreed that this figure should be looked at. The likely explanation is that some staffing costs (agency costs) are included. The fact that there is no significant change in the overall outcome supports the fact that this is incorrectly assigned expenditure rather than overspend.
- TD advised the governors that this is a summary and that there is a full 17page report where detailed examination can be made of assignment of costs. There are strict definitions for what should be included in each line which are outside the school’s control and this sometimes can lead to unexpected postings.
- TD clarified the following codes:  
E4 Premises staff – caretaker and cleaners  
E5 Admin staff – Manager and office staff

**Commented [t1]:** This is true. It is not an error to include as this is what the Local Authority asks of us, but it is confusing as staffing costs end up inn curriculum support costs.

**Action: LW to look at lines such as E5 and E27 as part of Financial Checking visit later this term**

#### 6. Funding for 2018/2019 Update

TD advised the governors that the first cut of the budget based on the previous year’s level of funding is looking acceptable with a very small carry over predicted. Final funding figures however have not yet been received by the school although the expectation was that this data would be available by the end of January. One definite piece of information is that funding per child has been reduced by £18.30. This largely results from reallocation required because of reduced growth funding money (needed for new schools and additional classes) and a transfer of £1.7M from the School budget to the High- level needs budget. The latter transfer was voted on by the Primary Heads and there was 55% in favour of providing this money to fund children with statements since the local budget in this area is £10m overspent in the current year. It was noted that this is a one-off transfer and that long term this position would not be sustainable. As a result of the change in funding the school will lose £11k. The positive news is that the grant awarded last year for Teachers pay will be continued this year and this is also distributed based on pupil numbers. TD did advise that he anticipated that there is likely to be small improvements in future budgets beyond 2020 as the government prepare for the next elections. He noted that information is being released in a piecemeal way which can lead to confusion e.g. recent announcement about funding of increased pension contributions was portrayed as an increase in overall funding without reference to the fact it was needed for increased costs. Also as announced in the last budget money will be received as devolved formula capital budget but this money can only be spent on capital items such as the playground or ICT and there is no indication if this is a one-off payment or will be repeated making long term planning very difficult.

One of the governors asked if there was a PTA campaign proposed to ask parents if they can make up the £18 shortfall per pupil. It was noted that the PTA would be able to claim Gift Aid but that this money may need to be spent in specific areas. Money raised by the PTA is not normally for general running costs such as school supplies but for a specific purpose such as refurbishment of the playground. TD advised that the PTA has asked for funding proposals for small projects from staff. TD advised that he look into the proposal and assess whether any requested donation should go directly to the school or via the PTA. St Matthews has an enormous diversity in parental income, and he would not want parents that were unable to make this contribution to feel uncomfortable but there were parents who would be keen to make such a contribution. It was proposed that one of the “Meet the Head” sessions should be devoted to explaining about what is happening with school funding and the possibility of a voluntary contribution could be mentioned in this context.

TD advised that he was aware that governors had received an email from the governance service about a protest taking place in Parliament Square, London on the 28<sup>th</sup> February. It was agreed that LW should attend to represent St Matthews.

*ZT left the meeting at 6.30pm*

#### **7. Financial Benchmarking Report Card & Report from the Financial Benchmarking Service website**

Governors reviewed the report card and the website report. They noted that the local school that St Matthews is directly compared to is actually very different – it is a 187 pupil Academy. It was also noted that some of the highlighted differences may be due to differences in coding rather than significant real differences e.g. division of cover costs between Agency and Supply. TD noted that although there had been high levels of sickness during the previous year it had not resulted in significant overspend highlighting that the model for staffing within the school is robust and sustainable.

Governors agreed that the information is interesting but of limited use because of unknown differences between schools but that no major issues were highlighted.

#### **8. Potential Project – Redevelopment of Pitch and Fencing**

TD advised that there are currently 100 adults from the local community who use the school football pitches and flood lights outside school hours. The FA are keen to promote participation for adults in football. As a result of this they are willing to be involved in funding a project to resurface the pitch and reconfigure the fencing so that the pitch and toilets can be accessed separately to the rest of the school via number code pad entrance in Board street so that the pitch can be used independently. It was noted that the French school who come in at weekends already have independent access. The cost of the work will be £80k and the school will need to find initial costs to hire a consultant to review the proposed project at the start. Discussion with the FA has been initiated but are at the very early stages. The FA normally fund 50% of the costs but the school would not be able to fund the remainder and the FA would be willing to fund 75% because of the central location and lack of local facilities. The pitches have an expected 5 years life left before repair will be needed so the school needs to determine if this is the best route to obtain improved facilities. The pitches were last repaired 5-6 years ago and there is certainly scope for greater usage if access was improved.

CB, a staff governor, advised that the pupils would be keen for there to be a rolling partition so that 2 separate games (different year groups) can take place on separate half size pitches. The pupils struggle with the limited time that they are able to use the cage because of all the school groups wanting access and Premier Sports using it at lunch time. It was agreed that the PTA could be asked to help with funding for this project. They currently have £10k for playground development and there is also a sum of £34k in the budget next year (devolved formula capital fund) for use on ICT, maintenance including boilers and the playground. The estimated costs for each of these areas needs to be looked at to see if there would be money to put towards this project.

It was noted that the children had recently been asked for their ideas on playground development. There had been few comments on the page. The main feedback had included

- Covered area – a good canopy will cost £10-15K
- Fencing to provide a forest school area
- Demarcated area for outdoor learning

All these ideas are still to be costed as part of the playground development project.

It was noted that previously there had been some City Council money available for the pitches since it is considered to be a useful community facility. KB agreed that he could look into future availability of funding, but the funding model has changed. The school is situated in a dense urban area with limited play areas. It was also noted that ARU use the pitches and might be able to be involved in funding the project.

The FA has also suggested that the school could look for Section 106 money which needs to be spent on community projects.

It was agreed that the key questions that the governors need to answer are

- Does the school benefit if the FA part fund the work?
- Will the project save the school money in the long term?

**Action: It was agreed that further work should be done to look at the feasibility of this project**

#### **9. Draft Schools' Financial Value Standard**

The governors reviewed the draft document which needs to be submitted annually. It was noted that the school is compliant but that there are concerns about the long-term budget structure and this will be reviewed in 2019 following the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending review.

Question A1 references the Governor Financial Skills matrices and TD provide all members of the Resources Committee with an audit sheet and asked them to complete it to identify that we have adequate competencies in all areas of financial management. It was noted that a general skills audit had also been done as part of the reconstitution process 3-4 years ago. This needs to be updated and the Head teacher agreed to look into this.

**Action: All governors on the Resources Committee asked to complete a Skills Audit and return the sheet to TD**

Question A5 references Pecuniary Interests and it was noted that governors are asked to declare these at the start of every year. This information is available on the school website, together with data on attendance.

D22 is about whistleblowing – information on this policy is publicly available.

D25 is about Disaster recovery planning and the plan has just been updated; it is based on the local authority model document. This policy covers events such as closing of the school for snow and managing incidents such as a death on the premises. The scrutiny for this document is done by the Headteacher and Chair of governors signs to approve on behalf of the Board and Senior Managers keep a copy of the policy at home. It was agreed that a redacted version (with staff personal information removed) should be circulated to the rest of the Committee for information. Governors asked the Headteacher about whether there is testing of the proposed strategies. The head teacher said that there was.

**Action: Disaster Recovery plan (with redactions) to be circulated to Resources Committee by Headteacher**

#### **10. Any other Business**

There was no other business

#### **11. Dates of future meetings and agreed agenda items**

FGB Meeting – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May at 18.15

Resources Committee – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April – time tbc