

**Steeton Primary School Governing Body
Resources Committee meeting on 06 October 2021
Minutes**

Meeting commenced at 1.16pm

Present: John Cooper (EHT), Emma Wainwright (Chair), Sue West

Associate Member: Kevin Wheeler (HoS)

In Attendance: Helen Osman (Clerk - SGS)

Summary of outstanding actions

Item Res/	Action	Person	Date
76/20(b)	EHT to continue to press BC to arrange the required work to the girls' toilets	J Cooper	30-04-2021
04/21	Chair, Chair/GB, EHT and HoS to meet to develop the school promotional strategy.	E Wainwright S West J Cooper K Wheeler	14-10-2021
05/21	EHT to discuss with BC/Sufficiency the educational need and provision in the wider locality to inform discussion at the next GB meeting.	J Cooper	22-10-2021
06/21	EHT to explore pros and cons of academisation to inform discussion at the next GB meeting.	J Cooper	22-10-2021
08/21(i)	School to establish the formal status of Friends of Steeton and options to revitalise or replace it.	J Cooper	12-11-2021
08/21(ii)	Chair to provide ideas for potential revenue streams	E Wainwright	12-11-2021

Res 01/21 Elect Committee Chair

Item deferred because the withdrawal of the nominated person would leave the meeting inquorate.

The Committee agreed that Emma Wainwright would chair this meeting.

Res 01/21 bis Apologies for absence and their acceptance

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Dave Mullen and Stefan Mills.

The EHT confirmed that the Bursar was aware of the meeting and had not given apologies.

Res 02/21 Notification of urgent other business and requests for order variations

The Committee agreed to discuss the potential to offer Nursery provision as other business.

Res 03/21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Res 04/21 **Minutes of the meeting of 21 April 2021 and matters arising**

➤ ***The minutes were agreed as a true record***

Matters arising

Item Res/	Action	Status
238/19	<p><i>School to establish system to record (a) the proportion of requested contributions to visits etc that is actually paid and (b) the costs to families with more than one child in school.</i></p> <p>The Head of School (HoS) said that this information could now be gathered from ParentPay. The Committee agreed to review payments and attendance on school trips at the next meeting.</p>	Closed
73/20	<p><i>Chair, Chair/GB, EHT and HoS to meet to develop school promotional strategy.</i></p> <p>The Chair reported that this meeting had been held and had agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a promotional flyer drawing together the Pupil Offer and the wide range of innovative curriculum features. • Run Stay & Play sessions as part of the school's Open Days. <p>The Chair said that she, Chair/GB and senior leadership were due to meet Robbie Moore MP on 08 October 2021.</p> <p>The HoS said that Open Days were planned for 21 October 2021 (main school) and 17 November 2021 (Early Years). These events were, of course, subject to developments with Covid, which the school was monitoring closely. <i>The Committee agreed</i> that the Chair, Chair/GB and senior leadership would meet at 1.00pm on 14 October 2021 to discuss contingency plans should Covid prevent either or both Open Days, and to firm up the school promotional strategy.</p> <p>The HoS reported that it had been necessary to wipe the promotional video following a complaint that a child was visible in the video.</p>	<p>Closed</p> <p>New action</p>
76/20(b)	<p><i>EHT to confirm the timing of work to the girls' toilets.</i></p> <p>The EHT reported that, as at the end of the 2020-21 school year, Bradford Council had been unable to identify a contractor to visit the school to view the work required to the girls' toilets and the trench in the playground. The school continued to press.</p>	Ongoing
78/20 (i)	<p><i>School to put in place a lettings agreement with the Scouts, Cubs & Beavers for use of the premises.</i></p> <p>The HoS confirmed that a lettings agreement had been put in place.</p>	Closed
78/20 (i)	<p><i>School to check its public liability insurance policy for any exclusions that might relate to third party lettings.</i></p> <p>The HoS confirmed that this action had been completed.</p> <p>Governors commented that it was a pleasure to see local children using the facility.</p>	Closed

Finance

Res 05/21 **Review Quarter 2 (end-September) Budget Monitor**

Papers - circulated prior to meeting

- Quarter 2 budget monitor – v1: actual
- Quarter 2 budget monitor – v2: alternative
- Quarter 2 budget monitor - notes

The EHT said that, as set out in the notes to the Quarter 2 Budget Monitor, an error had been made in the calculation by the Bursar of the costs of teaching staff in the original budget for 2021-22: for the period September 2021 to April 2022 the monthly costs of the EHT and HoS salaries had been included for two and three months respectively, instead of for seven months. This was the principle cause of the increase in the forecast outturn for teaching staff costs in 2021-22 from £698k in the approved budget to £749k; and the reduction in the forecast carryforward from £100.5k (approved budget) to £35k.

The Committee was disappointed that the Bursar was not present at this meeting, and had not written to the Chair to apologise for this significant error. Governors had been impressed by the service he offered, and recognised that errors were a fact of life, but confessed that this error had shaken their confidence and left them feeling exposed. The priority now was to consider how to adjust to the new budget position.

The EHT talked through the main features of the two versions of the Quarter 2 Budget Monitor that supported this agenda item:

Q2 Budget Monitor version 1: Actual

Forecast *income* had increased by £22k, principally due to additional Pupil Premium funding (£10.8k) and income from Phonics consultancy undertaken by the Specialist Leader for Education (SLE). Parent contributions to the cost of visits had also increased now that Covid restrictions were easing, but would be balanced by increased expenditure on visits.

As discussed, the forecast *expenditure* on teaching staff had increased significantly, principally due to the budgeting error but also reflecting a pay increase and the increased work of the SLE.

As set out in the agenda paper, the budget for staffing costs included the SEND role that had been approved by governors. The child supported by this role would leave the school at the end of the summer term.

Other changes in staffing costs were accounted for by the departure of a member of support staff and increased overtime for premises staff for the work they had undertaken to smarten up the school site.

The EHT explained that part of the expenditure on ICT Learning Resources had been capitalised. As previously agreed, the school was investing in preparations to become a leading ICT school. This included replacement of:

- computer units
- smartboards in classrooms, which typically cost around £1.7k each and had a lifespan of three years; and
- staff laptops and office computers, which were over ten years old and barely usable.

The EHT added that Primary Tech¹ had advised that issues with a small number of staff laptops were due to incompatibility with the wiring that Primary Tech had installed (at a cost of £10k). The EHT was pursuing this this rigorously with Primary Tech.

¹ Primary Tech – the school's ICT support provider

Replying to questions, the Clerk confirmed that a review of the 3-5 year rolling ICT plan would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

The EHT advised that some of the forecast expenditure on *non-ICT Learning Resources* might be reallocated to more appropriate budget headings (eg the costs of the Pirate Ship to Sports Grant). Staff were fully seized of the need to manage costs carefully to make the best use of the money available. Feedback from staff was that the investment in iPads had had a significant positive impact in learning: the HoS gave an example of the use that a class had made of iPads on the day of this meeting to enable deeper learning than would otherwise have been possible, and governors commented on the benefits of being able to look up answers to questions immediately, facilitating impromptu and child-led learning.

The EHT said that the increase in forecast expenditure on administrative supplies reflected the purchase of furniture for the refurbished classrooms.

Forecast expenditure on agency supply staff was significantly higher than originally budgeted, reflecting:

- the costs of cover for staff training and Covid-related absences; and
- the costs of the SEND support Teaching Assistant until December 2021. The school had tried twice, unsuccessfully, to recruit to this post. The school planned to employ the supply member of staff directly from the new year, but could not do so before then without paying a substantial fee to the supply agency.

Changes to other budget lines reflected patterns of actual expenditure to date.

Overall, version 1 of the Budget Monitor showed an in-year deficit of £76k and a carryforward of £34k, or 2.68% of budget.

Q2 Budget Monitor version 2: Alternative

The EHT reminded governors that the school had a long-standing gap in its teaching structure that it had never been able to afford to bridge. Version 2 of the Budget Monitor showed the staffing that the school needed, subject to other discussions about the possible need to change the structure of the school.

In Early Years, the external consultancy work undertaken by the SLE brought in useful income for the school, but took her out of class. Staff, while preferring to cover her classes themselves rather than bring in supply staff, struggled to cope in her absence and felt they were letting each other down.

Governors commented that this needed to be addressed, both to reduce stress on staff and to reflect the school's strategic goal of increasing its intake. Consistency of staffing was important to all parents, but particularly to those of Early Years children, who needed the opportunity to develop strong relationships with staff as they made the transition from home to school.

Version 2 of the Q2 Budget Monitor included the costs of filling this gap with a 0.4fte² teacher and 0.6fte Teaching Assistant (in practice, these would be the same person). Staffing would still be tight, but it would be manageable: the SLT would make clear to staff that the school could not afford to increase staffing further. **Replying to questions**, the EHT clarified that this would not be a change to the staffing structure: the post of teacher existed, but was currently being covered by a supply teacher. The

² fte – full time equivalent. A full-time staff member counts as 1.0 fte; someone working 3 days per week counts as 0.6 fte etc

intention would be to employ that supply teacher directly, working 0.4fte as a teacher and 0.6fte as a Teaching Assistant.

The Committee noted that staff in the EY team were experienced and of high calibre, and that their professional view of the need for this additional staffing was endorsed by the SLT. On this basis, **the Committee:**

- **approved** Version 1 of the Q2 Budget Monitor, representing the current position, for submission to the LA; and
- **recommended** that the Governing Body agree to revise the budget as set out in Version 2 of the Q2 Budget Monitor.

Discussion of scope to change the Pupil Admission Number (PAN)

Asked for an update on the school's thinking about changing its PAN, the EHT said that there were two main options:

- Discuss with Bradford Council's School Funding and Sufficiency Teams whether Steeton remained sustainable as a 1.5 Form Entry school. The school operated at 37 to 38 pupils per year group, compared with a PAN of 45: this was not financially sustainable and the School Funding Team could be expected to require the school to restructure: it would be necessary to end all fixed term roles in 2022-23 to make the budget balance, but the school could not function effectively without those staff.

The HoS said that, if the school were to move to a PAN of 30 from September 2022, it would take six years for the effect to feed through to all Year Groups. It would be necessary to start thinking now about staffing for Years 1 and 2, and the scope to reduce staffing through natural wastage.

Governors considered it likely that, if the PAN were reduced to 30, Steeton would essentially become a school for Steeton children only, rather than drawing children from the wider locality. This would be to the detriment of pupils, who would find themselves less well placed for the transition to secondary school.

- Explore the scope to offer Nursery provision. The EHT said that Sandy Lane³ was working with the BC Sufficiency Team to consult on lowering the school's age range to enable it to offer Nursery provision. Initial projections of costs and income suggested that this would be financially viable on the basis of 26 children attending the morning and afternoon sessions.

Governors noted that Steeton had previously decided not to offer Nursery provision in light of existing provision in the area. However, existing provision had deteriorated, was expensive and was not well attended, particularly during school holidays. Offering Nursery provision would align well with the objective of the school to be at the heart of the local community, and would ensure a healthy year-on-year feeder of children into Reception who were well prepared to learn. **Asked** where a Nursery could be accommodated, the EHT said that a Foundation Stage facility could be created in the library area: funding would be required to refit the area appropriately. Pending refitting of the library area, a Nursery could be housed in a Portacabin: BC/Sufficiency had indicated that this would be an acceptable option at Sandy Lane.

The HoS said that, if Steeton offered Nursery provision, it was likely that existing local pre-school provision would not survive. In that case, parents would need the

³ Sandy Lane Primary school – Steeton Primary School's partner school

school to offer a holiday club: essentially, the school would need to offer wrap-around provision. The EHT thought that this would be viable, subject to more detailed exploration and the use of flexible contracts to enable the school to manage the uncertainties around future funding.

Subject to more detailed exploration, Governors considered that the objectives of the school would be better served by seeking to offer Nursery provision and possibly full wrap-around provision. They agreed that “you can’t shrink to greatness”. Expanding to offer Nursery provision would support the objectives of being at the heart of the community and providing a thriving environment for education. They regretted the probably impact on existing local Nursery provision, but considered that it was no longer able to offer the quality of provision that children and their parents needed.

The Committee agreed that the school should discuss with BC/Sufficiency the wider picture on educational need and provision in the Keighley and Steeton area to inform a discussion at the next Governing Body meeting.

EHT

Res 06/21 Update on 2022/23 Formula Funding Arrangements & National Funding Formula

Agenda paper: Finding arrangements for 2022-23

The EHT drew the attention of the Committee to paragraph 3 of the agenda paper:

“We are in an extended period of funding system change, one of the most significant changes being the movement towards a ‘hard’ National Funding Formula (NFF) for the calculation of mainstream primary and secondary core formula funding allocations. Under these reforms, formula funding will be fully managed by central government rather than by local authorities”

The move of the management of Formula Funding to central government suggested that local authorities would no longer retain responsibility – or capacity – for financial control of maintained school. This in turn led to speculation that Government might return to the drive of a few years ago for all maintained schools to become academies. Informal contacts with local Councillors supported this speculation.

Asked who would control the estates of maintained schools, the EHT said that the local authority planning and building management teams owned and controlled the premises of maintained schools. If a maintained school became an academy, its land and premises transferred to the Academy Trust. On becoming an academy, a school’s funding was paid direct to it by the ESFA⁴, meaning that it did not pay a topslice from its budget to the local authority for provision of statutory and other services. It would, however, have to purchase services either directly or through the Academy Trust, and an Academy Trust would typically require constituent schools to pay a topslice.

Governors noted that past discussions about the possibility of becoming an academy had concluded that this was not the right way forward for the school. However, in light of the passage of time it would be prudent to review whether this remained the case. The following points emerged from discussion:

- Senior leaders had seen some good models of schools working together within Academy Trusts.
- If Steeton were to become an academy, it would be better to do so as part of a small Trust comprising schools with a similar ethos and innovative approach to the

⁴ ESFA – Education and Skills Funding Agency. An Executive Agency, sponsored by the Department for Education, that is accountable for funding education and skills for children, young people and adults

curriculum, where Steeton could contribute to the formation of its founding principles, rather than to be required by DfE to join a large Academy chain.

- Sandy Lane would be an obvious partner if Steeton were to take steps to become an academy. The Clerk understood from work with other GBs that had considered academisation that the Regional Schools Commissioner would expect schools that proposed to convert to academy status to demonstrate that they had sufficient member schools to be financially viable, to have capacity to support each other in improving, and to have a business plan that allowed scope to expand. If so, this would suggest that additional partners might need to be considered.

The Committee considered that further exploration of the case for moving to academy status would be timely. It **agreed** as follows:

- The EHT should open discussions with DfE to explore the expectations, benefits, disadvantages and process of academisation, as far as possible without making a formal Expression of Interest (EOI). An EOI did not commit the Governing Body to proceed with academisation, but it was a public declaration and required a decision by the Governing Body.
- Drawing on this information, the school should make a presentation to the Governing Body meeting on 04 November 2021 of the case for and against academisation, inviting the GB to make a decision on whether to submit a formal Expression of Interest. It would be helpful to understand the current staff view of academies.

EHT

Res 07/21 Pupil Premium funding: eligibility and applications

The EHT said that income from Pupil Premium had increased because the school now had more eligible pupils. Nine of these pupils were in Year 6 and would therefore leave at the end of the school year.

Res 08/21 Consider the use of donations by the Friends of Steeton

The EHT said that the balance in the School Fund account stood at £9k. He reminded Governors of the decision to refurbish the staff room: this would cost some £3k, which could be paid for from this balance.

The Committee noted that the Friends of Steeton (FoS) appeared to be inactive and currently had no members. It asked that the school seek to establish its status and what, if any, action could be taken by the GB to revitalise, replace or formally end it.

The Chair undertook to provide for discussion at the next meeting some ideas for potential revenue streams for the school.

EHT

Chair

Staffing

Res 09/21 Update on appointment of support staff

The HoS reported that, as discussed earlier in the meeting, the school had appointed a SEND Teaching Assistant (TA). IT had also replaced a Key Stage 1 TA, and was buying in supply support for Early Years until the supply member of staff could be employed directly from January 2022.

Res 10/21 Termly report on progress of, and support for, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

The HoS reported that both NQTs were making good progress and continued to receive the mentoring support and additional non-directed time to which they were entitled.

Res 11/21 Report on setting of staff Performance Management objectives for 2021-22

The EHT confirmed that Performance Management objectives would be agreed with all staff by the end of October, and that the objectives would align directly with the School Development Plan.

Premises**Res 12/21 Monitor progress against Health and Safety action plan arising from union site visit**

The HoS said that the unions had not conducted a Health and Safety visit since the previous meeting.

Res 13/21 Update on current building works

a) External groundwork and girls' toilets – As discussed under Matters Arising above, Item Res 76/20(b).

Res 14/21 Progress against Estates Working Group Action Plan

Sue West said that she had undertaken a site walk with the EHT. Most actions in the Action Plan had been completed – the exceptions were:

- Decorative external panel – costings were awaited.
- Painting of fencing – to be carried out as a community event once Covid restrictions permit.

She noted that the new Pirate Ship was proving highly popular with pupils.

The Committee agreed that this standing item could now be replaced with a standing item on Improvement of the External Learning Environment.

Cross-cutting**Res 15/21 Review timing of meetings**

Item referred to the Governing Body.

Closing items**Res 16/21 Other business referred from Item Res 03/21 above**

The item of other business had been discussed at Item Res 05/21.

Res 17/21 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at **1.15pm on Wednesday 24 November 2021** and will take place in person, subject to Covid.

Res 18/21 Confirmation of Clerking time

The Committee confirmed that the meeting had been scheduled to start at 1.15pm and was about to close at 3.10pm.

The meeting closed at 3.10pm