

**Steeton Primary School Governing Body
Finance and Resources Committee virtual meeting on 26 January 2022
Minutes**

Meeting commenced at 2.10pm

Present: John Cooper (ExecHT), Stefan Mills, Dave Mullen (by 'phone – to Item Res 60/21), Sue West

Associate Member: Kevin Wheeler (HoS)

In Attendance: Sohail Mahmood (peri-Bursar – to Item Res 44/21), Helen Osman (Clerk - SGS)

Summary of outstanding actions

Item Res/	Action	Person	Date
24/21	EHT to advise Committee members when the peri-Bursar would next visit the school, with a view to the peri-Bursar demonstrating the HCSS software.	J Cooper	28-02-2022
29/21	Chair to explore further the potential additional revenue streams identified under this item and circulate documentation prior to the next meeting.	E Wainwright	28-02-2022
30/21	Chair to explore and recommend to the Committee whether Friends of Steeton, with or without charitable status, would be an appropriate vehicle to benefit from online retailers' and other organisations' charitable giving arrangements.	E Wainwright	28-02-2022
44/21	School to investigate why increased use of iPads has not led to a reduction in reprographics costs	K Wheeler	09-03-2022
47/21	HoS to send details Of Chester Zoo trip to S West and S Mills	K Wheeler	04-02-2022
49/21	School to press Primary T for a three-to-five year rolling ICT maintenance and development programme.	J Cooper	11-02-2022
57/21	Chair/GB, S Mills and EHT to review Room 4/external gully and write to Council, cc MP, requesting urgent action.	J Cooper	04-02-2022
58/21	EHT to ring the 3-5 year rolling buildings maintenance and development strategy to the next meeting.	J Cooper	25-02-2022
61/21	S Mills to support D Mullen to gain access to Teams meetings	S Mills	16-02-2022

In the absence of Emma Wainwright, Sue West took the chair.

Res 40/21 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Emma Wainwright (Chair). Due to technical difficulties with Teams, Dave Mullen would participate by telephone to Item Res 60/21.

The Chair said that Lauren Carter, potential new Co-opted governor, had hoped to attend this meeting but had been unable to do so.

Res 41/21 Notification of urgent other business and requests for order variations

Action

The Committee agreed to discuss Item Res 44/21 and then Item Res 60/21 (Additional business - EHT pay) immediately after Item Res 42/21.

Res 42/21 **Declarations of interest**

The Executive Headteacher (EHT) and Head of School (HoS) would withdraw from the meeting for discussion of EHT pay.

If the clerking contract were discussed at Item Res 46/21, the Clerk would withdraw.

There were no other declarations of interest.

Res 44/21 **Review Quarter 3 (end-December) Budget Monitor**

Agenda paper: Q3 budget monitor

The Bursar drew the attention of governors to the columns of the Budget Monitor that showed the Quarter 3 budget forecasts; the variances from the Quarter 2 budget forecasts; and the proportion of the budget that had been spent. He talked through the reasons for the variances as set out in the final column of the Budget Monitor.

Revenue budget

Overall, 76% of the budget had been spent, as would be expected at the end of Quarter 3, all else being equal. Total forecast income had increased by £19k since Quarter 2 and total forecast expenditure by £35k. the forecast in-year deficit had increased to £100k, which would be offset by the actual balance brought forward from 2020-21 of £110k, leaving a forecast carryforward of £10k.

Community focused activities revenue budget

The forecast carryforward stood at £11k.

Capital budget

The annual capital allocation of £7k had been spent on upgrading and installing wifi in school.

In summary, the Bursar said that the school budget was emerging from a period of turbulence due to Covid 19. There were signs of some increase in funding for 2022-23, and there was scope to reduce expenditure compared to 2021-22, which had included a number of one-off items.

The EHT said that the school was reviewing the cost centres that were not yet fully spent and would close them shortly: thus it would be reasonable to hope for some reduction in the forecast in-year deficit. **Replying to questions**, the EHT confirmed that the school had bought out of the reprographics contract but that the company had reimbursed this cost. The school had hoped to see a reduction in reprographics costs with the greater use of iPads: the senior leadership team (SLT) would investigate why this had not materialised.

Referring to the high level of expenditure on agency supply staff (budget heading E26), the EHT explained that it included some elements of staffing (a Teaching Assistant to provide SEND support and additional staffing for EYFS), as well as cover for Covid-related absences.

The EHT said that the principal areas to look for saving in 2022-23 would be:

- Agency supply costs (E26)

- One-off expenditure in 2021-22 on:
 - Buildings maintenance and improvement (E12)
 - Learning resources (E19 and E20)

He hoped that, taken together, these savings would reduce overall expenditure next year by some £80k.

Governors thanked the Bursar for this reassuring report: while tight management would continue to be required, the budget position was significantly better than they had feared. Noting that school funding was expected to increase by £100 per pupil in 2022-23, **governors asked** whether they could expect to see a small budget surplus in that year. The Bursar said that this was hard to predict in light of uncertainties around additional costs of energy, the efforts of the unions to secure agreement to a starting salary for teachers of £30k, the agreement still to be reached on a pay award for support staff etc. The Minimum Funding Guarantee¹ for 2022-23 had been set at 3%. Inflation was currently 5.5%, compared with the inflation factor of 2.5% to 3.0% usually included in the setting of the budget. The position should become clearer when the initial funding allocations were published on 18 February 2022.

Governors noted that the departure of the significant number of SEND pupil in Year 6 would reduce the need for unfunded one to one support. The HoS said that two children were currently receiving one-to-one support, only one of whom had an EHCP². Two other pupils were thought likely to need one-to-one support as they moved up through school, and it was believed that some of the children due to join school in September 2022 might had EHCPs.

- **The Committee approved** the Quarter 3 Budget Monitor and thanked the Bursar for his report.

Sohail Mahmood left the meeting at 2.30pm

John Cooper and Kevin Wheeler withdrew from the meeting at 2.31pm

Res 60/21 **Any other business**

EHT pay

The Chair, in her capacity as Chair of the Governing Body, said that she and Sandy Lane³ had met to conduct the EHT's performance management review. They had reviewed the EHT's objectives for the past year and agreed his objectives for the coming year, which the external adviser was writing up.

Following the meeting, she had discussed with the Chair and Vice Chair of Sandy Lane the scope to award a pay increase to the EHT: neither school had been in a position to make such an award for a number of years. Sandy Lane's budget was now in a position to accommodate a pay increase: the cost to Steeton would be £1.5k in this financial year. In recognition of the important work that the EHT would be leading at Sandy Lane in relation to the planned new Nursery and Covid recovery for its more deprived pupil population, Sandy Lane was willing to bear the whole of the

¹ The minimum funding guarantee is a protection for schools against significant year-on-year changes in pupil-led funding.

² EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan: Introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

cost of the proposed pay uplift for a period of two years. Steeton would continue to pay 30% of the base (pre-uplift) cost.

The Chair reminded governors that, at present, Steeton paid the EHT salary and invoiced Sandy Lane for 70% of the cost. She had agreed with Sandy Lane that, from the start of the financial year, Sandy Lane would pay the salary and invoice Steeton for its 30% share of the cost, which would essentially represent a charge to Steeton for the EHT service rather than for a fixed number of hours. These figures would be set out in a formal letter of agreement between the schools and reflected in the school's budget. **Replying to questions**, the Chair confirmed that it would not be possible to pin down the precise time spent by the EHT at each school unless the GBs required him to keep time sheets: neither school saw a need to do this.

- **The Committee welcomed** the offer from Sandy Lane to pay the whole of the cost of the uplift for two years and **recommended** that the arrangements described by the Chair be agreed by the Governing Body at its meeting on 17 February 2022.

Dave Mullin left the meeting at 2.44pm

John Cooper and Kevin Wheeler re-joined the meeting at 2.46pm

Res 43/21 Minutes of the meeting of 08 December 2021 and matters arising

- **The minutes were agreed as a true record**, signed by the Chair and passed to the Business Manager.

Matters arising

Item Res/	Action	Status	
24/21	<i>EHT to advise Committee members when the peri-Bursar would next visit the school, with a view to the peri-Bursar demonstrating the HCSS software.</i> The EHT said that the Bursar had advised that the HCSS software was not yet available.	Ongoing	
28/21	<i>EHT to prepare, clear with the Committee and run a consultation on provision of before and after-school care.</i> Completed – for discussion at this meeting.	Closed	
29/21	<i>Chair to explore further the potential additional revenue streams identified under this item and circulate documentation prior to the next meeting.</i> Roll forward in the absence of E Wainwright.	Ongoing	
30/21	<i>Chair to explore and recommend to the Committee whether Friends of Steeton, with or without charitable status, would be an appropriate vehicle to benefit from online retailers' and other organisations' charitable giving arrangements.</i> Roll forward in the absence of E Wainwright.	Ongoing	14-01-2022
31/21	<i>HoS to circulate the report of the latest H&S visit by the unions prior to the next meeting.</i>	Closed	

	Circulated 25 January 2021.		
36/21	<p><i>Chair to write to the peri-Bursar as set out in the body of the minutes.</i></p> <p>The Chair said that she did not know whether Chair/Res had completed this action. However, the Bursar had written to the school minutes before this meeting had started. The letter had been reassuring: the Bursar had been worried about the error he had made, realised that the GB and this Committee had been disappointed, recognised that he had let them and the senior leadership down and would do his very best in future, including by training up the business manager. The EHT considered that the Bursar's letter was sincere and said that the Bursar had advised that, with the expected uplift in funding of £100 per pupil and the savings anticipated next year, the school's financial position should recover from the budgeting error.</p>	Closed	

Finance

Res 45/21 Pupil Premium funding: eligibility and applications

The HoS reported that the school currently had forty-one pupils who were eligible for Pupil Premium funding. When the school signposted families who were in need of food, it ensured that they were claiming Free School Meals for their children and that the children were thus eligible for Pupil Premium funding.

Res 46/21 Annual review of contracts and Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

The EHT said that Steeton and Sandy Lane planned to undertake a joint project to review the contracts and SLAs for both schools with a view to identifying the scope to maximise value for money by:

- manage without the goods or services;
- rationalise the large numbers of very small contracts that both schools held with Bradford Council;
- outsource services; and
- amalgamate and/or purchase goods and services jointly.

Sandy Lane's peri-Bursar had undertaken to provide information to support this review. The schools would carry out as much as possible of this work before the bulk of contracts became due for renewal at the end of March 2022; the remainder would be reviewed over the next financial year.

The Committee welcomed this review, which would enable the schools to realise one of the key benefits envisaged for the partnership, and agreed to take an update on the review as a standing item for the time being.

Res 47/21 Review school trips: attendance and payments

The HoS said that, due to Covid, only two trips had taken place so far this year and there was thus nothing yet to report.

Sue West and Stefan Mills both offered to attend the planned whole-school trip to Chester Zoo as additional adults: the HoS would send them details of the timings of the trip.

Action

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Res 48/21 Review financial benchmarking data

The EHT said that the peri-Bursar had undertaken to prepare benchmarking data for governors. The Committee asked that he present the data at the next meeting.

Res 49/21 Review 3-5 year rolling ICT plan

The EHT said that Primary T, the school's provider of IT support services, were changing their reporting and three-to-five year planning systems and that the three-to-five year rolling ICT plan was not yet available. The Committee agreed to defer this item again. **It asked** that that the school impress upon Primary T that it had been asking for this information since October 2021 and now needed it urgently so that the school could include ICT expenditure in its budget planning.

The HoS said that, when asked by Primary T about the school's satisfaction with its IT, he had indicated that the internet service did not fully meet the school's needs.

Res 50/21 Outcome of consultation on demand for before and after school provision

The HoS said that, following the launch of the school's consultation on before and after school provision, Bridge House Nursery had announced a substantial reduction in its charges to below the level of Steeton's proposed charges. Based on this, the fact that Bridge House provided holiday care, and the numbers of parents who had expressed interest in the consultation, it was the view of the leadership team that the school could not run before and after school provision sustainably.

The Committee agreed that there was little to be gained by pursuing the idea further. Governors were pleased that the fact of the consultation itself had led to a reduction in the costs of care at Bridge House for families: thus, the school's work on developing the proposal had not been nugatory.

The Committee was content for the EHT to inform the manager of Bridge House of its decision not to proceed with the proposal, as requested.

Res 51/21 Consider potential revenue streams

- a) *Consideration of future of Friends of Steeton, including whether it should apply for charitable status*

Item deferred in the absence of the Chair.

Staffing**Res 52/21 Update on appointment of support staff**

The HoS said that there were no changes to report.

Res 53/21 Annual report on staff pay statements

The EHT confirmed that pay statements had been sent to all teaching staff setting out details for their full entitlements.

Res 54/21 Termly report on progress of, and support for, Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs)

The HoS said that the NQT was progressing well and continued to receive the appropriate support, including mentoring and additional PPA⁴ time.

Premises

Res 55/21 Monitor progress against Health and Safety action plan arising from union site visit

Agenda paper: Bradford Council Health and Safety Inspection report, 21 October 2021

Governors were disappointed that the Council Health and Safety inspection had not touched upon the gully, Room 4 and Reception: the Council was well aware of the ongoing concerns in these areas. The HoS said that the school might be obliged to close Room 4 again due to health issues experienced by a member of staff as a consequence of the recurrence of the dampness issue. This would be discussed further at Item Res 57/21.

Res 56/21 Update on improvement of external learning environment

The acting Chair said that the recent meeting of the Link Governors for Leadership and Management had noted that the cost of the wraparound displays that the school had hoped to install had proved prohibitive at this time. Instead, the HOS was working with children to prepare artwork to be produced on vinyl to cover the unsightly areas of the external walls.

Res 57/21 Update on CBMDC works to external gully

The HoS said that, as discussed at Item Res 55/21, water was again affecting Room 4 due to the inadequate work to the external gully and mould had reappeared on the walls. Bradford Council had visited the site at the weekend without informing the school and had left the site in a disgraceful condition, with cement bags and cigarette butts littering the area.

[Kevin Wheeler left the meeting at 3.09pm]

The Committee considered it extremely disappointing that, despite the school's representations to the Council, the work to Room 4 had been rendered nugatory by the failure of the Council's contractor to effect prompt and adequate work to the external gully. IT agreed that Chair/GB, Stefan Mills and the EHT would review the area at 2.00pm on 27 January 2022 and write to the Council, copied to the school's MP and attaching photographic evidence of the shoddy work, requesting that the work be redone to an acceptable standard as a matter of urgency.

Res 58/21 Annual review of 3-5 year buildings maintenance and development strategy

The EHT would bring the 3-5 year buildings maintenance and development strategy to the next meeting.

Cross-cutting

Res 59/21 Review policies and other key documents

⁴ PPA time - Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (teachers must spend 10% of their working week out of contact with their class in order to plan, prepare and assess class work)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

None identified for this meeting.

Closing items

Res 61/21 Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place at **1.15pm** on **Wednesday 09 March 2022** using Teams.

Stefan Mills undertook to liaise with Dave Mullen to enable him to access Teams meetings in time for the FGB meeting on 17 February 2022.

Res 62/21 Confirmation of Clerking time

The Committee confirmed that the meeting had been scheduled to start at 2.00pm and was about to close at 3.23pm.

The meeting closed at 3.23pm