

The Governing Body of Steeton Primary School
Resources Committee meeting on 26 March 2023 (via Teams)

MINUTES

The meeting opened at 1.19pm

Attendance

Governors

John Cooper (Executive Headteacher – EHT)
 Claire Redman (Head of School – HoS)
 Emma Wainwright (Chair of Governing Body (Chair/GB))
 Sue West

Others

Sohail Mahmood (Bursar) – to Item Res 96/22
 Helen Osman (Clerk)

Apologies

Stefan Mills (Chair)

Absent

Adam O'Neill

Documents

A. CFR report 2023-24	Items Res 92 & 96/22	<i>Issued with agenda</i>
B. Budget Dashboard 2023-24	Item Res 96/22	<i>Issued with agenda</i>
C. Income and Expenditure report 2023-24	Item Res 96/22	<i>Issued with agenda</i>
D. Staffing structure 2023-24	Item Res 98/22	<i>Tabled at meeting</i>
E. Service Level Agreement: Primary Technology	Item Res 105/22	<i>Uploaded before meeting</i>
F. Accessibility Plan 2023 - 2026	Item Res 110/22	<i>Issued with agenda</i>

Summary of Actions

Action No Res:	Action	Person	Deadline
98/22 (i)	EHT to discuss with PACT HR how to ensure that contractual arrangements for the proposed AH position (advertised internally) guaranteed that the staff member could return to existing terms and conditions, including any TLRs, without detriment if the AHT position could not be sustained.	J Cooper	05-05-2023
98/22 (ii)	HoS to amend the staffing structure to show the proposed AHT position as full time.	C Redman	02-05-2023
105/22 (i)	HoS to send to Clerk for circulation details of the Connect the Classroom programme.	C Redman	26-05-2023
105/22 (ii)	HoS to check whether the Business Administrator requires governor approval of the Primary T SLA prior to the financial audit and, if so, notify the Clerk to arrange approval by e-mail.	C Redman	05-05-2023
107/22	HoS to check with the Bursar that use of the Biscuit and Sweet fund to pay for refitting the library as a corporate space did not raise issues of propriety.	C Redman	31-05-2023
110/22	Accessibility Plan to be amended to indicate that all but 2 rooms are accessible but that there is no detriment to pupils or staff because alternative accessible spaces are available.	C Redman	31-05-2023

In the absence of Stefan Mills, Sue West took the chair.

Res 92/22 Apologies for absence and their acceptance

1. Apologies had been received, and were accepted, from Stefan Mills.
2. John Cooper expected to join the meeting shortly.
3. The absence of Adam O'Neill without apology was noted.

Res 93/22 Notification of other urgent business and requests to vary the agenda order

4. The Committee agreed to discuss the assets list as other business.

Res 94/22 Declarations of interest for items on this agenda

5. There were no declarations of interest.

Res 95/22 Minutes of meeting held on 08 March 2023 and matters arising

- ***The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting.***

Update on actions arising from previous meetings		
Item	Action	Status
77/22	HoS to report to the next meeting on the impact of the Online Free School Meals system on the number of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding. See Item Res 97/22.	Closed
78/22	HoS to circulate the draft SFVS return to Committee members in time for them to comment prior to putting it to the FGB meeting on 22 March 2023. Completed: SFVS approved by FGB and submitted to local authority by the deadline of 31-03-2023.	Closed

John Cooper and Sohail Mahmood joined the meeting at 1.30pm Finance

Finance

Res 96/22 Review Quarter 4 2022-23 (end of March) Budget Monitor – Document A

and (items taken together)

Res 99/22 Recommend opening budget for 2023-24 & 3-year forecast to Governing Body – Documents A - C

6. The Bursar directed the attention of governors to the column on Document A headed “2022-23”, which showed the expected outturn for that year. He emphasised that the figures would not be finalised until receipt of final reconciliation data from the local authority in May 2023. The expected end-year outturn was a cumulative deficit of £67k.
7. As shown in the following columns of Document A, the school planned to reduce the cumulative deficit to £37k in 2023-24 and bring the budget into surplus by £19k in 2024-25 and £14k in 2025-26. In planning the budget, a number of scenarios had been considered in relation to several major uncertainties, particularly in relation to national staff pay awards and energy costs. Both income and expenditure had been broken down into some detail (Document C) so that the assumptions could be made clear and monitored closely in-year against actual events. The Bursar highlighted the following points:
 - As instructed by the local authority (LA), the budget assumed increases in pay of 3% for teachers and 9% for support staff. In fact, the unions had already rejected pay offers that exceeded these assumptions. The budget therefore included a lump sum of £15k to help to meet the costs of pay awards in excess of the assumptions provided by the LA.
 - The Funds delegated by the LA (budget heading 101) included:
 - exceptional funding of £67k in 2023-24 and 2024-25, reducing to £29k in 2025-26;
 - MSAG funding of £43k in each of the three budget years; and

- Bulge class funding of £51k in 2024-25 and 2025-26.
8. Budget line E12 (Building maintenance and improvement) included provision of £5k per year for buildings projects: this recognised that, even when it was working to clear a deficit, a school had to invest a small amount in its infrastructure.
 9. Provision for energy costs (E16) had been maintained at current levels across the three budget years on the advice of the LA. The LA said that energy prices would halve in 2023-24 but that schools should maintain their current budget and use the savings to fund staff pay awards.
 10. Budget line E19 (non-ECT Learning Resources) included £30k in each budget year to support the curriculum: it would be used in accordance with the School Development Plan (SDP) priorities.
 11. Budget line E26 (Agency Supply staff) included contingency provision of £14k each year. This was substantially less than the 202-23 outturn for this budget heading (£60k), reflecting the school's expectation that there would be less staff absence.
 12. Budget line E28 (Bought-in professional services – non-curriculum) had been broken down in some detail. Depending on the timing of the SLAs and contracts, some prices were not yet known: in these cases, the existing prices had been rolled forward. The budget line included £2k contingency to cover increases in those prices.
 13. The Bursar said that, if the various elements of contingency that had been built into the budget were not required, it might be possible to reduce further the planned 2023-24 deficit. The school had discussed the developing budget with Bradford Council's School Funding Team: they were content with the proposals to reduce the deficit and bring the budget into surplus in 2024-25 and would monitor the budget closely.
 14. **Replying to questions**, the Bursar said that the school expected 45 pupils to join Reception in September 2023, which was more than previously anticipated. This had been taken into account in the budget.
 15. Governors thanked the Bursar for preparing and explaining the budget proposals and welcomed the various contingency sums in the budget: these gave assurance that the school had taken all reasonable steps, given the substantial uncertainties about staffing and energy costs, to ensure that it could meet its commitment to BC/SFT to reduce the deficit in 2023-24 and eliminate it the following year. They were also pleased that the school had been able to set aside £30k for curriculum development.
 16. The Bursar said that the Executive Headteacher (EHT) and Head of School (HoS) had carried out a great deal of work over the last two months to ensure that costs were as low as possible. This had involved some sacrifices in terms of staffing and in other areas, but the hope was that, as the year progressed, it might become clear that some of the contingency funding could be released to reinstate some of those sacrifices or to reduce the deficit further or faster than planned.
 17. Governors congratulated the Head of School on the increase in the number of pupils expected to join Reception in September 2023. The HoS said that she and the Early Years Leader had personally visited every family that had not listed Steeton as its first choice school for their child to talk to them about the school and deliver a letter and Prospectus. Governors admired this effort, which had clearly had the desired impact.
 - **The Committee recommended** that the Governing Body approve the 2023-24 budget and three year forecast as set out in Documents A to C.

Sohil Mahmood left the meeting at 1.43pm

Res 98/22 Recommend staffing structure for 2023-24 to Governing Body – Document D

18. The HoS showed the proposed staffing structure for 2023-24 on screen and highlighted key points as follows:
 - As previously agreed, the hours of the EHT would reduce to 0.2 fte¹.

¹ 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

- The school proposed to appoint a 0.8 fte Assistant Headteacher (AHT) to enable it to maintain and expand its provision of support to other schools. The income generated by this support would cover the cost of the post.
 - The school proposed to reduce:
 - educational support staff by one post (0.62 fte);
 - TLRs² by 0.8 fte.
19. The proposed AHT position would be advertised internally: the school was confident that at least one suitable candidate would apply. The HoS reminded governors that the school had taken the Specialist Leader in Education (SLE) out of the classroom for two days per week to enable her to focus on her work with supporting other schools through the English Hub, Bradford Birth to Nineteen, the Early Years SCITT³ and Reading for Pleasure. This work generated significant income for the school but was disruptive to teaching: the SLE could be called to other schools at short notice. By relieving her of her remaining teaching duties, the school would be able to maintain and expand her external work and develop the provision of training and other services to other schools. The income she would generate in 2023-24 was expected to be in excess of £30k, more than covering her salary.
20. The school was conscious that it was proposing an increase in leadership at a time when the budget was in deficit but considered it a valuable investment that would enable it to generate more income. It recognised, however, that this was something of a leap of faith that governors would wish to consider carefully.
21. Governors noted that the income that would cover the cost of the proposed AHT position depended on the health and wellbeing of a single member of staff who was currently heavily loaded. **They asked** what the impact would be if for any reason that member of staff was unable to generate the expected revenue. The HoS said that:
- The estimate of revenue was conservative: the school's calculation of revenue had been £40k, but it had included only £30k in the budget.
 - The removal of the member of staff from classroom duties would help by removing the stress of not being sure when she would be available to teach, support the Early Years Unit and monitor Phonics, and allow her to focus on her external work.
22. **Asked** what the impact would be on the budget if the financial pressures facing other schools caused a reduction in demand for the support provided by this member of staff, the HoS said that this was not a risk at present because the work was purchased through the English Hub or Bradford Birth to Nineteen, though the school hoped to extend its services into direct provision to other schools in due course, initially by hosting training in school. The point was valid, however, and the EHT suggested that the AHT position should be offered on a rolling fixed term basis, in line with all other appointments at present, to minimise the risk of having to restructure if it could not be afforded in future years. He would consult PACT HR on how to put in place contractual arrangements that would guarantee that the staff member could return to their current contract, without detriment, if the AHT position could not be sustained.
- Action: EHT**
23. **Replying to questions**, the HoS said that, if the member of staff applied for the AHT position and was successful, she would cease to be paid her current TLR allowances: again, PACT HR would need to be consulted to ensure that the contractual arrangements guaranteed the reinstatement of those allowances if the AHT position could not be sustained.
24. **Asked** whether, as a leadership position, the creation of an AHT post needed to be discussed with the LA, the EHT said that it did not: the LA had to be consulted on Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions, but not on Assistant Headteachers.

² TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility: an additional allowance paid to teaching staff with leadership responsibility across the school in a specific area (eg a Key Stage, SEN, Numeracy, Literacy), and the first step on the leadership ladder

³ SCITT – School-Centred Initial Teacher Training

25. Governors noted that the proposed AHT position was full time, not 0.8fte as shown on the draft staffing structure. **They asked** that the document be amended before presentation to the Governing Body.

Action: HoS

26. Governors noted that the proposed changes to the staffing structure were cost-neutral. **Replying to questions**, the HoS confirmed that the proposed structure had been taken into account in preparing the budget discussed at Item Res 96/22.
27. **Replying to questions**, the EHT said that the proposed staffing structure did not take account of the proposal to federate with Myrtle Park and Sandy Lane Primary Schools. Assuming that the proposal to federate went ahead as planned on 01 January 2024, this structure would hold for the autumn term only.

➤ Subject to:

- i. discussion with PACT HR of contractual issues around the rolling fixed term AHT position; and
- ii. Amendment of the document to show the proposed AHT position as full time;

the Committee recommended that the Governing Body approve the proposed staffing structure

Res 104/22 Update on staff issues arising since last meeting

28. The EHT reported on a meeting with Sue Lowndes, Bradford Council's Assistant Director for Schools (BC/ADS) about the decision of the three Governing Bodies to replace the Head of School positions with Headteacher positions. The key points from the meeting were:
- The LA had no issue with the proposal of the GBs that the schools should federate.
 - It strongly preferred a leadership structure consisting of an EHT with three Heads of School (as opposed to Headteachers).
 - There were a number of reasons for this preference, but the main one appeared to relate to the risk that the LA would have to pay redundancy costs of the Executive Headteacher resigned.
 - More generally, the LA had declined to delay the meeting with the EHT until they had seen the documentation around the proposed federation, and it had been clear that they had assumed that the GBs had not had any clear rationale for federation or considered any of the issues. The EHT had done his best in the space of the meeting to convey the depth of thought that governors had already put into the developing proposals.
29. **Asked** how the LA's preferred leadership structure sat with the advice from PACT HR about the need for Headteachers in school for the two days per week when the EHT would not be working following the reduction in his hours from 01 May 2023, the EHT said that the head of PACT HR had since advised that a scheme of delegation could be written that would give Heads of School clear responsibility for safeguarding and other matters. Governors agreed that it would have saved much time, effort and stress if PACT HR had advised of this possibility when they originally raised the issue.
30. The Clerk said that her discussions with Bradford Council's School Governor Service (BC/SGS) indicated that they were concerned that a federation structure consisting of an EHT and three Headteacher risked collapse on the retirement or resignation of the EHT or Heads. They argued that new Headteachers who had not been part of the formation of the federation might seek to promote the interests of their school ahead of those of the federation, and as Headteachers would be more likely to wish to act independently of the EHT. Governors discussed the benefits of the school being led by a Headteacher, as opposed to a Head of School, in terms of their status and independence.
31. The EHT said that, following the agreement of the three governing bodies that the Heads of School should become Headteachers, administrative arrangements had been made to make the Head of School at Myrtle Park, currently on secondment from Steeton, the permanent Headteacher at Myrtle Park. In light of the discussion with BC/ADS, this paperwork had been retracted. Specifically, the termination of his contract of employment with Steeton had been rescinded and he was now back on Steeton's payroll.

32. The LA had indicated that, to fill the HoS/Myrtle Park vacancy on a permanent basis, it would be necessary to conduct an open recruitment, which they had described as light touch. The reason that it had not been necessary to conduct an open recruitment for HoS/Steeton was that she had already been employed by Steeton and carrying out the role.
33. The EHT said that he had asked BC/ADS whether Governing Bodies had the power to replace the HoS positions with Headteachers, should they wish to do so despite the preference of the LA that they remain Heads of School. She had informed him that they could do so, but that governors would be personally liable for any redundancy or other costs from their own pockets, not corporately. Governors were surprised: section 4.5 of the DfE Governance Handbook 2022 stated that:
- “The board bears legal responsibility for the school(s)’ actions. However, individuals are generally protected from personal liability when acting in the course of their duties. Provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith, any liability will fall on the board even if it exceeds its powers, rather than on individuals.”
34. Governors considered that, provided a Governing Body had proper regard for the preference of the LA, it was not bound by that preference. It would be better, however, to reach agreement with the LA if possible.
35. Governors, and particularly the HoS, noted the stress that HoS/Myrtle Park must be experiencing due to this uncertainty about his position and stood ready to offer any support that he needed.

Res 100/22 Update on review of partnership school budgets

36. The EHT said that the ex-Bursar at Sandy Lane expected to complete his review of the budgets of the three partnership schools by the beginning of May 2023. The item was deferred to the next meeting.

Res 97/22 Pupil Premium funding: eligibility and applications

37. The HoS said that, as previously discussed, the school had now purchased software that collected the National Insurance numbers of parents and automatically identified those whose children were eligible for Pupil Premium funding. The programme had been set up ready to be used after the half term break: she would report on impact to the next meeting. At a cost of £700, the software would pay for itself if only one additional eligible child were identified.

Staffing

Res 101/22 Update on appointment of support staff

38. The HoS said that no support staff had been appointed since the previous meeting. One member of support staff was applying for teacher training with Ilkley All Saints and so might leave at the end of the year. The post was costed into the budget, so the school would hope to replace the staff member.
39. Governors were pleased that this member of staff was developing her career and shared the hope of the HoS that she would be able to undertake one of her placements at Steeton.

Res 102/22 Termly report on progress of, and support for, Early Career Teachers (ECTs)

40. The HoS confirmed that the school continued not to employ any ECTs at present. However, an ECT would take up post in Silver Birch class in September 2023: Sue West had been on the interview panel. In the meantime, she would work as an unqualified teacher for the summer 2 half term, replacing a supply teacher. The school was putting in place the necessary support: managing ECTs required a heavy commitment of support and mentoring. **Replying to questions**, the HoS confirmed that the ECT would receive the additional PPA⁴ time to which she was entitled.

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. For Early Career Teachers (ECTs), this increases to 20%.

Res 103/22 Report on staff performance management mid-year reviews

41. The HoS reported that all staff performance management mid-year reviews had been completed. **Asked** whether she had concerns about any members of staff, or whether any were over-delivering, she said that the school was fortunate to have very strong middle leaders. She highlighted the work of Miss Akram, who had embraced Phonics and the Drawing Club with great enthusiasm, led the celebration assemblies and went above and beyond for both children and other staff. The Chair said that, during the recent LA review of teaching and learning, she had cited Miss Akram as an example of how the HoS made best use of slender staffing resources by identifying and leveraging the drive and passion of staff.
42. The HoS also highlighted the work of the Business Administrator, who had carried out much work that was unseen by many but streamlined operations significantly, and the Office Administrator, who worked so efficiently that she often asked whether there was anything more that she could do.
43. **Asked** whether there were any concerns about workload, the HoS said that there were not: staff were busy, but the school provided leadership time and additional time for specific tasks. As governors were aware, the use of LBQ⁵ had substantially reduce the time that staff set on marking, while also making marking more effective.
44. Governors found the high quality of staff reassuring and noted that highly effective workforce came about through great leadership. The school felt very different now from two years ago, before the introduction of LBQ. Teachers would always be busy, but it was reassuring that they were no longer loaded beyond capacity.

Premises

Res 105/22 Review Primary T Service Level Agreement (SLA)

45. The HoS said that the school had been asking Primary T for some time to provide a Service Level Agreement and a five-year ICT plan. It had now become clear that they did not have a five-year plan but that the school qualified for the DfE Connect the Classroom programme to upgrade its IT infrastructure: Primary T regarded this as equivalent to a five-year plan. She would forward details of the programme to the Clerk for circulation.

Action: HoS

46. The Clerk said that the Business Administrator had indicated concern that the auditors might say that the Primary T Service Level Agreement should have been brought to governors. **Replying to questions**, the HoS said that the cost of the Primary T service was well within her delegated financial authority and their work on development of the website was covered by a separate contract: governors were therefore unclear why the auditors should expect the DLA to have been approved by governors. Nevertheless, they agreed to review the SLA at the next meeting. If the Business Administrator considered that approval was required before then for purposes of the audit, the school would notify the Clerk who would invite governors to approve it by e-mail.

Action: HoS

Res 106/22 Update on planned building works

- a) Painting of yellow lines on the steps to Annexe 1
47. The HoS said that this work would be carried out by the Site Manager during the summer break.
- b) Plumbing work in the toilets

⁵ LBQ – Learning by Questions: a classroom app with curriculum-aligned question sets, immediate feedback, automatic marking and instant insight to enable targeting of interventions

48. The HoS reported that this work had been completed to a satisfactory standard.

c) Room 4

49. The HoS said that Bradford Council planned to undertake this work during the summer break: they would re-dig the ditch to a deeper level and line it properly. The work would be paid for by Bradford Council.

d) Refresh of dining room and annexe

50. The HoS reported that the dining room had been re-painted as planned, at the expense of the catering contractor (with the exception of the shutters, for which the school needed to purchase paint suitable for metal work). The area now looked smart and cheerful. Unfortunately, the promised new furniture, crockery, trays etc and new branding had not yet been provided by the caterer: the school had been assured that it would be provided, but the timing was unclear. Governors were disappointed by the delay and looked forward to hearing at the next meeting that the new kit had arrived.

Res 107/22 Update on other premises issues arising since last meeting

51. The HoS said that, as part of the strategy of developing and expanding the provision of support to other schools, leadership proposed to convert the library, which was no longer needed for that purpose in light of the development of classroom libraries, into a corporate space that could host training and other activities on behalf of all three schools in the partnership. The small playground at the back of the school would be opened up to provide parking. The school had estimated the costs of:

- stripping out the library,
- re-painting and re-carpeting
- installing a small kitchen area for refreshments and teaching of the cooking element of the Design Technology curriculum
- purchase of conference tables and seating for thirty people
- new sink and countertops
- photographs for the walls

at £9.5k, to be funded from the Biscuit and Sweet fund, which the school had been saving for some years and whose balance stood at £11k.

[Clerk's note: the school's estimate of costs is attached as Annex A]

52. In addition to hosting training and other activities for other schools and on behalf of the whole partnership, the school foresaw scope to let the facility to local community groups in line with its "Your Inspirational Community" vision: the local vicar had a number of ideas for community activities that would need this kind of space.

53. Governors considered that, as the money was not to be used for curriculum delivery, the use of the Biscuit and Sweet fund for this purpose did not raise issues of propriety. Nevertheless, the Committee asked that the school consult the Bursar on this point.

Action: HoS

54. Governors strongly supported the proposed development of a corporate space for the delivery of training and other support to school and for the use of the community. Subject to confirmation that the use of the Biscuit and Sweet fund for this purpose did not raise issues of propriety, **it authorised** the expenditure of up to £11k for this purpose.

Cross-cutting matters

Res 108/22 Notification of any material safeguarding incidents since the previous meeting

55. None reported.

Res 109/22 Approval of Finance policy handbook

56. Item deferred to the next meeting.

Res 110/22 Approval of Accessibility Plan – Document F

57. Governors noted that the policy stated that all rooms in school were accessible. In fact, the blue room and the room above the library were not. They asked that the policy be amended to say that all but two rooms were accessible but that there was no detriment to pupils or staff because alternative accessible spaces were available.

Action: HoS

- Subject to the agreed amendment, **the Resources Committee approved** the Accessibility Plan.

Closing items

Res 111/22 Urgent other business referred from Item Res 93/22 above

58. The HoS said that it was several years since the school had last had an onsite asset check. She recommended that the school commission such a check at a cost of £599. The list would be useful when Steeton and its partners federated, and for purposes of insurance, audit and disaster recovery. **Replying to questions**, she said that the check would be undertaken by B2 Systems⁶. Governors supported the proposal but noted that the cost was within the delegated authority of the HoS and did not therefore require the approval of the Committee.

Res 112/22 Date of next meeting

59. The next meeting would be held at 1.15pm on **Wednesday 05 July 2023** (via Teams).

Res 113/22 Closure of meeting

60. **The meeting closed at 2.41pm**

Helen Osman Governance Services
Supporting excellent governance in Bradford

⁶ [Home Page \(b2inventory.co.uk\)](http://b2inventory.co.uk)