



Registered address: Cheney School, Cheney Lane, Oxford, OX3 7

Community Schools Alliance Trust – Meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee

Non-confidential minutes of the meeting on Wednesday 11th November 2020, 5.30pm via video conference call

In the Chair:	Jonathan Dawson (Chair)
Present:	Liz Tyler Bell (Chair of Trustees), Linda Earnshaw (LE)
In attendance:	Maurice East (Chair of Bayards Hill LGB), Ben Hegedus (Head of HR and Compliance), Jolie Kirby (Trust Consultant), Richard Stamper (Chair of Cheney LGB), Laura Waller (Head of Finance), Judith Geddes (Clerk)
Apologies:	Ann Childs

Minutes	
	This meeting was held by video conference call following government advice due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
1.	<p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted for Ann Childs.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Declarations of interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received for any items on the agenda.</p>
2.	<p>Election of Chair and Vice Chair</p> <p>LTB proposed JD for Chair and LE as Vice Chair. This was unanimously agreed.</p>
3.	<p>Confidential minutes of the last meeting held on 3rd November 2020 (Executive Pay)</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and approved the confidential minutes of the previous meeting.</p>
4.	<p>Matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda</p> <p>None.</p>
5.	<p>Finance report</p> <p>Balancing the budget</p> <p>The Head of Finance stated that discussions are currently taking place to go through the details and to come up with a formal plan to balance the budget. The Chair of Cheney LGB asked what saving was required for Cheney School?</p>



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	<p>The Head of Finance replied that it was around £450,000 and that the plan is to get staffing ratios down to 80% by looking at the efficiency of each department separately.</p> <p>The Chair of Cheney LGB asked what the current staff ratio is? The Head of Finance stated that staffing ratios are currently at low to mid 90% but they had been at 108%.</p> <p>The Chair added that having a balanced budget in place for 2020/2021 is key and that staffing ratios should be similar to CSAT's peers.</p> <p>The Chair of Cheney LGB commented that staffing ratios in line with peers made sense if the schools' sources of income are similar. However, there is a risk associated with having staffing costs higher than the most reliable source of a school's income.</p> <p>The Chair said that if staffing ratios are not to be in line with CSAT's peers then it should be made clear to the Committee why this is not the case.</p> <p>Figures on Performance Management</p> <p>This was discussed in more detail under item 10.</p> <p>Internal Scrutiny Requirements</p> <p>The Head of Finance referred to a document outlining a proposal for external scrutiny to cover the 2019/20 Financial year and the 2020/21 Financial Year and beyond, which was circulated to Committee Members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee unanimously agreed with the proposal.</p>
6.	<p>Facilitation of Budget Management through the Corero system</p> <p>The Head of Finance stated that Corero cannot be used in any additional way to help facilitate budget management. She continued that she has spoken to RLT about their systems and would like to align with them.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding prompting budget holders and concerns that they may not fully understand their roles. It was suggested that successfully fulfilling the role of budget holder should form part of an individual's performance management goals, where relevant.</p>
7.	<p>Financial Viability of Cheney's Sixth Form</p> <p>A discussion took place around Cheney's Sixth Form including current numbers of students, the shape of the curriculum and how Cheney can differentiate its offering in Years 12 and 13.</p> <p>It was agreed to look again at the numbers relating to Cheney's Sixth Form to understand how secure it is financially and to give the Committee a sense of priority. The Head of Finance agreed to circulate high level numbers to the Committee members and follow up the issues of the Sixth Form curriculum and staffing structure with the Headteacher of Cheney School.</p> <p>ACTION: HEAD OF FINANCE</p>
8.	<p>Confidential items</p> <p>These are minuted separately.</p>



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13.	To note: Timetable for the auditors The Head of Finance stated that carrying out an external audit remotely has been quite challenging but the process is on track. The Chair asked if there were any major issues to report. The Head of Finance replied that nothing major had arisen but there was an amortisation issue which had not been picked up last year but which will be rectified in this year's accounts, although this will not affect the level of unrestricted reserves. There were no further questions.
	Any other business Date of next meeting It was agreed to meet in December. The Clerk will circulate possible dates. ACTON: CLERK It was further agreed to invite Chairs of LGBs to future FRC meetings. The meeting ended at 7.11pm.