



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 28th April 2021, 5.30pm via video conference call

In the Chair:	Jonathan Dawson (Chair)
Present:	Ann Childs (AC) (from item 4), Liz Tyler Bell (Chair of Trustees), Linda Earnshaw (LE)
In attendance:	Maurice East (Chair of Governors, Bayards Hill School), Ben Hegedus (Head of HR and Compliance), Jolie Kirby (Trust Consultant) (item 4 only), Richard Stamper (Chair of Governors, Cheney School), Laura Waller (Head of Finance), Judith Geddes (Clerk)
Apologies:	Mary Clarkson (Chair of Governors, Barton Park School)

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 Mary Clarkson.</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>Non-Confidential minutes of the previous meetings held on 9th December 2020 and 20th April 2021</p> <p>The Committee reviewed and approved the non-confidential minutes of both previous meetings.</p>
3.	<p>Update on outstanding non-confidential action points from the previous meeting of 20th April 2021</p> <p>Only one action point: LE to act on behalf of the Trustees with the leadership and governors at Bayards Hill School to complete the necessary due diligence regarding the request for funding in relation to the school's EYFS outdoor environment.</p> <p>ACTION: LE</p>
4.	<p>Update on Trust Development Plan</p> <p>This is minuted separately under Confidential items.</p>



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5. Financial Update

The Head of Finance updated the Committee on the latest financial statements.

Cheney School

- Spending is significantly below budget.
- Reforecasts have been completed and shared with the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher of Cheney school would like to spend around 50% of the school's forecast surplus (£60,000) within the current academic year on investments in ICT infrastructure and put the other 50% into reserves. The Head of HR said that he believes that this is a good idea as the school's IT infrastructure needs it and teaching is currently suffering as a result.

Bayards Hill School

- Current forecasts do not include any investment in the outdoor play area.
- The school's financial situation is much healthier following extensive reviews of staffing and other budgeted items.

Barton Park School

- The FFE budget has been drafted by the Head of School and Executive Headteacher. This will be reviewed by Finance and incorporated into the forecasts and budgets.

The following questions were raised:

- The Chair of Governors at Cheney School asked why there was a discrepancy in the current management accounts for Cheney School on the full year forecasts of income compared to the management accounts in January 2021?

The Head of Finance replied that March management accounts have been run against actual forecasts whereas January management accounts were a prorated amount of the budget.

- The Chair asked why the management accounts appear to show an overspend on Cheney educational supplies and services?

The Head of Finance replied that there is no overspend but it is the way in which the reports have been formatted. The Head of Finance added that the forecast for Cheney Educational supplies is £257,000 and that £227,000 of this has been spent to date.

- The Chair was concerned that it is important from a governance point of view that any overspend is highlighted correctly.

The Head of Finance responded that she is working with RLT to obtain a copy of their template in order to help Governors to read the financial reports produced by the new financial system more easily.

- The Chair of Governors at Cheney School asked about the Year to Date ICT costs of £127,000 which appears to exceed the Term 2 forecast figure of £107,000?

The Head of Finance stated that the budgeting software is not yet fully consistent with Peoplesoft Financials but she is happy that everything is included in the management accounts although some items may be showing up in different categories. She advised that this is currently being worked on



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	<p>and that everything will be allocated correctly by the end of this week together with a departmental breakdown for Headteachers and LGBs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair asked whether the cash statement and balance sheet needs to show each school separately. <p>The Head of Finance advised that separating out this information will require a large amount of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair asked the Head of HR, as the Accounting Officer, to investigate how to separate out this financial information by each school individually so that local governing bodies are given more detailed information. <p>ACTION: HEAD OF HR</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Head of Finance for her report and asked the Chairs of Governors present at the meeting to review the management accounts and let the Head of Finance know of any additions or changes they would like to be included in the future.</p> <p>ACTION: CHAIRS OF GOVERNORS</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
6.	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>The Head of HR referred to the Risk Register which had been circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and highlighted the following main changes to the register since the previous meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The expected date of the outcome of the CIF bid is now 21st June. - Need to appoint a Health and Safety representative on the LGBs and at Trust level. This has been added to the agendas for the next LGB and Board of Trustees meetings. Operationally Rachel Evans is CSAT's Health and Safety guru carrying out Health and Safety audits and Risk Assessments but a representative is also needed at Trust level. - The Bayards Ofsted report has been released which highlights a lack of effective progress at the school. The school continues to receive external support from both OCC and RLT, with Governors and Trustees triangulating the school's implementation of the required improvement needs by way of a Visit Day, the outcome of which is being fed into the next EPAC meeting. - With regards to Nursery provision, CSAT has agreed to ensure nursery provision for the local community. The preference is to provide this at Barton Park although this is also dependent on Ofsted approval. CSAT is in active talks with two additional nursery providers and subject to their application for Ofsted approval being successful, should be in a position to open the nursery by September 2021. If neither the original bidder nor the two more recent alternatives are able to provide this service to the local community by September, CSAT will need to consider re-opening the nursery at Bayards Hill School. <p>The Chair of Governors at Cheney School asked about the Health and Safety representative and stated that there is statutory requirement for employers to consult with their employees on Health and Safety matters either through a Trade Union representative or employee safety representatives. The Head of HR replied that CSAT has general union representatives but they have not put forward a specific Health and Safety representative.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors at Bayards Hill School asked where the responsibility for Health and Safety lies - is it with the local governing body or at Trust level? The Head of HR answered that the responsibility remains with the Trustees but it is good practice that there is also a Health and Safety representative on the local governing body as well as at Trust level.</p>



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	<p>A discussion followed and it was agreed that the Chair of Governors at Cheney School will forward details of the current Health and Safety Legislation regarding Health and Safety representatives to the Head of HR who will then follow up on this matter in more detail to ensure CSAT is meeting its obligations.</p> <p>ACTION: CHAIR OF GOVERNORS AT CHENEY SCHOOL AND HEAD OF HR</p> <p>The Chair of Trustees asked whether the back up plan of reopening the nursery at Bayards Hill is allowed under the funding agreement for Barton Park? The Head of HR said that his understanding is that a nursery has to be made available to the local community so Bayards Hill nursery would fulfill this criteria although a nursery at Barton Park would be preferred.</p> <p>There were no further questions on the risk register.</p>
7.	<p>Budget 2021/2022 timeline</p> <p>The Head of Finance referred to the draft budget timeline circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the timeline for the creation and approval of the 2021/2022 budget.</p>
8.	<p>RLT VAT Clinic request</p> <p>The Head of Finance advised that RLT has offered to carry out a free review of CSAT's financial transactions relating to lettings to ensure VAT is being applied appropriately. In addition, RLT has also offered to review CSAT's budgets in mid to late June.</p> <p>After a discussion, the Committee agreed to take up RLT's offer of a free VAT review on lettings transactions.</p> <p>The Committee further agreed to allow RLT to review CSAT's budgets if this can be done early in the process but any recommendations will be viewed by CSAT as guidance only.</p> <p>The Head of Finance will respond to RLT on both of these issues.</p> <p>ACTION: HEAD OF FINANCE</p>
8.	<p>Confidential items</p> <p>These are minuted separately.</p>
	<p>Any other business</p> <p>Nursery</p> <p>The Chair of Trustees advised that she had met with the Barton Community Association who are becoming increasingly concerned that there will be no nursery provision in place by September 2021. The Chair of Trustees said that she had reassured the Community Association that CSAT's aim was to meet the deadline of September 2021. She added that OCC has also requested a progress report.</p> <p>The Head of HR advised that he has followed up with ABC Nursery, the original bidder, but relationships are becoming frayed. The Head of HR added that two additional nursery providers have expressed an interest in stepping in. One nursery has already looked round the site and the other is visiting next Wednesday. The Head of HR said that the current issue with ABC nursery is the Ofsted approval with no inspection yet having taken place but he will continue to pursue all avenues to get the right provision in place.</p>



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	<p>The Committee agreed to support the Head of HR on this matter and that if relationships with ABC Nursery are not as they should be then he should definitely pursue other options.</p> <p>ACTION: HEAD OF HR</p> <p>Bayards Hill Primary School Visit</p> <p>LE advised that she and others visited Bayards Hill Primary School to look at the EYFS outdoor environment. She advised that the space is not currently a learning environment and the only way it can be managed by one member of staff is for them to stand in one particular area. A more creative space is required and more thought needs to be put in as to what can be done, the sight lines and whether the main structure, currently fixed in place, can be moved elsewhere and made better use of. LE added that as part of the due diligence she has been in correspondence with the Chair of Bayards Hill to look at formulating a plan including consulting OCC to ensure anything that is proposed meets the needs of EY learning. Furthermore, thought has to be given regarding the reduced PAN as any decisions taken now need to be future proofed.</p> <p>It was agreed that this item should be added to the agenda of the next FRC meeting in June 2021. It was further agreed that if there were any proposals to share with the FRC prior to June then an additional meeting can be set up.</p> <p>ACTION: CLERK</p>
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 30th June 2021 at 5.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 7.04pm</p>