



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 13th October 2021, 5.30pm via video conference call

In the Chair:	Jonathan Dawson (Chair)
Present:	Ann Childs (AC) and Linda Earnshaw (Vice Chair)
In attendance:	Stephen Axcell (Interim Head of Finance), Ben Hegedus (Head of HR and Compliance), Judith Geddes (Clerk)
Apologies:	Liz Tyler-Bell, Mary Clarkson and Maurice East

Minutes	
	This meeting was held by video conference call following government advice due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
1.	Apologies for absence Apologies were received and accepted for Liz Tyler-Bell, Mary Clarkson and Maurice East. The meeting was quorate. Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest received for any items on the agenda.
2.	Non-Confidential minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th July 2021 The Committee reviewed and approved the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of 7th July 2021.
3.	Update on outstanding non-confidential action points from the previous meeting of 7th July 2021 Two action points remain open: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To put together proposals regarding Barton Park School's budget position going forward. ACTION: INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE- Continue to undertake due diligence in respect of the work being done on the outdoor area at Bayards Hill School (due December 2021) ACTION: LE
4.	Budget 2021/2022 The Interim Head of Finance advised that work on the budgets is still ongoing. He referred to papers which were circulated to committee members prior to the meeting and highlighted the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Starting points in the budgets are better than those anticipated at the time due to Covid 19 funding and extra local authority funding.



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- Another major change in the figures is as a result of in-year staffing. Some staff who work across a number of sites have been double counted.
- Previous budgets were conservative.
- RLT has a target reserve policy which currently CSAT is exceeding.
- Some work to be done in future years to ensure the schools, particularly the two primary schools, remain within their means.
- Budget position is better than expected which gives scope for considering investing in school improvement or the fabric of the schools.
- There are certain areas of expected funding to spend this year, including Bayards Hill Catch-up, Bayards Hill PE / Sports Premium and Cheney LAC.
- No requirement to spend all of the reserves above target before the merger with RLT.

The Committee members raised the following questions:

- ***In summary, are you saying that our conservative stance plus receiving extra income, meant we started the year in a better position and going forward we have slightly more revenue and slightly less cost?***
The Interim Head of Finance agreed that this is correct.
- ***Bayards Hill is about to appoint an Assistant Headteacher and a second nursery assistant, do the figures take account of this?***
The Interim Head of Finance said he believed that they do.

The Committee agreed that if funding has been received for a specific need and that need still exists then the money should be spent wisely for the intended purposes.

A discussion was held regarding the need to invest in further IT equipment at Cheney School to ensure that classrooms are fit for purpose. This is likely to cost around £30,000.

It was agreed that the Head of HR and Head of IT will put together a proposal for the next FRC meeting in November regarding additional IT equipment for Cheney classrooms.

ACTION: HEAD OF HR AND HEAD OF IT

The Chair re-iterated that if there are reserves in the budgets then there needs to be a clear link between any money spent and an improvement in pupils' experience.

The Head of HR stated that Headteachers are aware that they need to put forward clear proposals and costs to Trustees, justifying the benefits to Teaching and Learning, before any decisions are realised.

A further discussion was held regarding the financial position at Barton Park School and the effect on the school's reputation as a result of reducing staff numbers and mixing classes. The Interim Head of Finance stated that the aim is to produce budget updates for Barton Park School by the end of the month.

It was agreed that the Interim Head of Finance will confirm and finalise numbers for Barton Park for the next FRC meeting in November, in order for the Committee to formally confirm the agreed position for the 2020/2021 year end, and set out proposals for any spend in 2021/2022 to tie in with demonstrable improvement in pupils experience for approval by the FRC.

ACTION: INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE

With regards to the reserves held in the Central Team budget, the Interim Head of Finance asked whether the £60,000 was earmarked for a particular project?

The Chair replied that this was a small works fund for schools to apply to draw on.

The Vice Chair raised the question of an additional £20,000 for the Bayards Hill Nursery. The Head of HR replied that this had been discussed by the FRC but had not been formally approved.



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	<p>It was agreed for the Vice Chair to put forward a formal proposal to the FRC for the sum of £20,000 to be made available to Bayards Hill for equipping the Nursery for discussion and formal approval at the next FRC meeting in November .</p> <p>ACTION: VICE CHAIR</p> <p>There were no further questions or comments.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Interim Head of Finance for his update.</p>
5.	<p>Update on Early Years Outdoor Environment at Bayards Hill</p> <p>The Vice Chair stated that following a meeting with the Interim Headteacher and Early Years Lead at Bayards Hill they have put together a list of desired equipment totalling around £11,000. However, the lead times on the equipment are currently very long and the canopy that the school would like to install will not be available until February 2022. The Vice Chair added that the school is looking to buy mobile equipment so that it can be easily moved around.</p> <p>The Committee members agreed that the work done so far is very positive although the lengthy lead times are frustrating and thanked both the Vice Chair and the Interim Headteacher of Bayards Hill School for their hard work.</p> <p>The Vice Chair also stated that Magdalen College School is providing Bayards Hill with a number of bikes but she needs to sort out the collection of these and she is meeting with someone shortly who may help to donate towards a library at Bayards Hill.</p>
6.	<p>Internal scrutiny provision for CSAT</p> <p>The Interim Head of Finance referred to a document circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Following a discussion over the comprehensive nature of the provisions, the timescales involved and any potential impact on school staff, the Committee approved the internal scrutiny provisions for CSAT up until the merger with RLT.</p>
7.	<p>Confidential items</p> <p>These are minuted separately.</p>
	<p>Any other business</p> <p>There was no further business to discuss</p>
	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>10th November at 5.30pm via Google Meet</p> <p>The meeting ended at 7.03pm.</p>