



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 10th November 2021, 5.30pm via video conference call

In the Chair:	Jonathan Dawson (Chair)
Present:	Ann Childs (AC), Maurice East and Linda Earnshaw (Vice Chair) (until item 6)
In attendance:	Stephen Axcell (Interim Head of Finance), Ben Hegedus (Head of HR and Compliance), Richard Stamper (Chair of Governors of Cheney LGB) and Judith Geddes (Clerk)
Apologies:	Liz Tyler-Bell and Mary Clarkson

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 and Mary Clarkson. 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 13th October 2021 The Committee reviewed and approved the non-confidential minutes of the meeting of 13th October 2021.
3.	Update on outstanding non-confidential action points from the previous meeting of 13th October 2021 All outstanding action points were on the agenda to be discussed at today's meeting.
4.	Update on Bayards Hill School's outdoor space The Vice Chair advised that currently the main issue in obtaining the required equipment for the outdoor area is the long lead times which are typically 14 to 18 weeks. She added that the Interim Headteacher is attempting to obtain ex-demo equipment but has had no luck so far. Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that if there was no opportunity to obtain ex-demo equipment shortly that the school should progress in obtaining the necessary equipment despite the long lead times. The Vice Chair will update the Committee at the next meeting scheduled in December 2021. ACTION: VICE CHAIR



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<p>5.</p>	<p>Proposal for Nursery investment at Bayards Hill</p> <p>A proposal was put forward to invest £20,000 from the Trust's central fund into the newly reopened Bayard's Hill Nursery.</p> <p>The Committee agreed with this proposal.</p> <p>The Vice Chair left the meeting at 5.45pm.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Barton Park Budget 2021/2022 and Spending proposals</p> <p>The Interim Head of Finance referred to papers circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Barton Park School</p> <p>The Interim Head of Finance advised that the school is projected to break even this year. He added that RLT business partners, including Susie Morrissey who used to work at Oxfordshire County Council, have scrutinised the budget in place to ensure accuracy around the figures and the position is better than was assumed previously. The Interim Head of Finance further advised that this means that the redundancy that was due to take place at Barton Park School has been reversed and will no longer happen.</p> <p>The Committee asked the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>The staff at Barton Park were very upset following the news of the initial redundancy. How are staff feeling about the reversal of this?</i> The Interim Head of Finance agreed that the whole situation has caused some upheaval at the school but the school is able to balance its budget this year without losing staff.- <i>There are quite significant staff costs going forward which is okay if income grows as projected. How confident are you in the assumptions made around the GAG?</i> The Interim Head of Finance answered that these assumptions are based on Susie Morrissey's understanding from her knowledge of Oxfordshire County Council. However, the school is not yet committed to this level of staffing costs.- <i>So there is a high degree of confidence in the projected income figures but there is room to reduce costs if necessary?</i> The Interim Head of Finance agreed that this is the case. <p>There were no further questions on Barton Park School.</p> <p>Bayards Hill School</p> <p>This is recorded separately under the confidential minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>Cheney School</p> <p>The Interim Head of Finance advised that the biggest change between the previous and current figures are due to a reduction in staffing costs. As a result, reserves are available to spend on specific school improvements.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the need to hold back a contingency fund in case further money is required in relation to the school's heating. It was agreed that the Interim Head of Finance and the Head of HR should identify an appropriate level of contingency fund for the likelihood of the heating failing.</p> <p>ACTON: INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE AND HEAD OF HR</p> <p>The Head of HR advised that the Headteacher at Cheney School has suggested putting together a costed wishlist for FRC approval, subject to any contingency fund for the heating.</p>



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	<p>The Committee agreed that the Head of HR and Interim Head of Finance should follow up with the Headteacher and ask him to share his wishlist, with corresponding costs, with the Committee.</p> <p>ACTION: HEAD OF HR AND INTERIM HEAD OF FINANCE</p> <p>The Committee asked the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Will Cheney School still apply for CIF bids? The Interim Head of Finance stated that the school is in scope to apply for CIF bids this year and may resubmit the bid in relation to the school's windows. Following the merger, RLT has a specific capital funding pot which schools can apply for in relation to their buildings.- The budget projection sheet for 2022/23 and 2023/24 shows a large jump in Gag, what is driving this? The Interim Head of Finance advised that this is due to pupil numbers. The Chair highlighted that a jump in the GAG can lead to a jump in staff costs and the school needs to remain aware of this. The Interim Head of Finance stated that he will make sure that projections continue to be updated so that everyone is clear on the financial position. <p>There were no further questions.</p>
7.	<p>Proposal for IT infrastructure investment at Cheney</p> <p>The Head of HR advised that during the summer, IT upgraded the interactive boards in some of the school's classrooms but not all. The proposal in front of the Committee is to approve the funding to install smartboards in the remaining classrooms.</p> <p>The Chair of Governors of Cheney LGB asked whether the Committee should consider approving a higher level of costs in the event that the estimated costs increase.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to approve the proposal of £90,000 for IT infrastructure investment at Cheney and further agreed to a contingency of £30,000. The Chair emphasised that this money is not coming from the central fund but out of school reserves and it is a strategic spending decision on the school's part.</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>8th December at 5.30pm via Google Meet</p> <p>The meeting ended at 7.23pm.</p>