



Whitchurch Primary School and Nursery
Finance & Resources Committee Meeting, 12th May 2023

Meeting Attendees:

Name	Role
Matt Bradley (MB)	Headteacher
Martin Thompson Lawrie (MTL)	Contributor
Paul Smith (PS) – apologies	Governor
Rupen Shah (RS)	Governor and Chair
Seema Supeda (SS)	SBM
Peter Tenconi (PT)	Governor
Rickesh Samani (RSa)	Governor
Bobby Dixit (BD)	Governor

Clerked by Deepti Bal, Clerk to Governors

Meeting Record:

Governor Scrutiny/Governor Question (GQ)

Meeting Action

Decision

	Item	Action
1.	Welcome and Introductions RS welcomed Governors.	
2.	Apologies Apologies for PS were accepted.	
3.	Declarations of Interest None	
4.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RS confirmed that he had spoken with Harrow regarding interest. They confirmed that interest does get distributed in one year in lag, but it was not clear how they distribute (ie in proportion or equally). • Comparison of the planned budgets vs actual income based on previous years – covered in the meeting agenda. • CFR to be presented – not yet available from the LA • VMFI to be reviewed at the next meeting – covered in the meeting agenda. 	
5.	Finance updates SS confirmed that there is no CFR close from the LA at yet. Harrow LA is being audited currently and this may be causing a delay.	

	<p>RS noted the budget in relation to strategic priorities. MB reiterated that in terms of the way the budget is set, the school should look at the data (results) in order to plan strategically during the first Governing Body meeting of the year. Most of the School Development Priorities are not large ticket expenditure.</p> <p>MB recommended that the new Headteacher will want to understand the school better and develop the Plan with the team going forward. This may require additional reviews of the budget. Most Headteachers will review the priorities and commonly ask for monies to be vired. MTL noted that the current plan was a two year plan. The budget set now should meet what is required but MB felt that there may be some adjustment and a need to revisit the plan to adjust the budget further as strategic priorities develop.</p> <p>MB noted that the prospective Headteacher is recommending Google as the main platform. This may also include the purchase of notebooks and other hardware. Software does not fall under capital.</p> <p>RS asked if the Headteacher was able to attend the Strategy Day on 12th June? MB confirmed that he would be visiting next week to meet with staff.</p>	
	<p>Comparison of budgets vs actual income received in previous years.</p> <p>MB shared data on previous years deficit - MB highlighted an increase surplus every year, year on year.</p>	
	<p>Final proposed budget 2023/24 for recommendation to the FGB</p> <p>SS noted that two budgets were provided –one with and one without capital expenditure.</p> <p>MB noted that a number of capital expenditure projects should be included in the budget and others paused. £1M of capital expenditure has been identified. There is a clear need to ring fence this money.</p>	

	<p>MTL asked about the timeframe for when the LA may look to claw back the reserves? This was not clear but is increasingly likely in the economic climate.</p> <p>SS noted that council budgets were also becoming tighter and their financial situation is becoming more tricky.</p> <p>RS noted that Harrow LA were mindful that Whitchurch has £1million in reserves. They have identified that the school has the largest reserve for a primary.</p> <p>MTL felt it may be worth thinking strategically about how the money could be spent. MB felt that it was therefore important to ensure that projects were identified and planned.</p> <p>RSAM asked about how £1M was allocated? MB noted the kitchen must work as it is critical but other projects were open to be discussed. Under the previous design there was an incomplete list of work which amounted to £40k. Further works will need to be identified to ensure that the works can properly take place.</p> <p>BD noted, following his conversation with DQ, further monies could be allocated to SEND. MTL confirmed that plans for staffing are being put in place to develop structures of the teams, including SEND. MB suggested that this could be considered with the SEND Lead to understand how SEND was accounted for.</p> <p>RS asked about the models for teaching assistants. MB explained that at his school, there was at least one teacher and one teaching assistant in every class. Children with EHCPs have an additional adult. The children with EHCPs are in the same class so they can benefit from a teacher, TA and LSA. There are, however, many models for this. The school has not used an agency staff member to cover sickness in four years. MB noted that in addition, those TA staff are typically long term agency and/or university graduates. MB felt that it was easier to train a graduate into exactly how his school wished the role to be carried out.</p>	
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	<p>Governors noted the proposed budget and did not have further questions. SS explained that the budget was fairly finalised.</p> <p>SS noted the forecast for 2024-2025 etc. Governors noted the final position. MB noted that future years were very finger in the air and could not be used in a meaningful way. They are requirements for the LA but the education landscape changes very rapidly which makes these less reliable.</p> <p>PT asked about what the LA do with Year 2 and 3 projections? MB explained that this was due to financial planning regulations. They were not reconciled.</p> <p>SS noted that in terms of the forecast in future years, the income is the same, however, inflationary charges have been included.</p> <p>The proposed budget was accepted by the committee for recommendation to the FGB.</p> <p>ACTION: Budget tabled at the FGB for approval.</p>	<p>Budget tabled at the FGB for approval.</p>
	<p>View My Financial Insights</p> <p>MB explained that View My Financial Insights was a very useful tool to understand finances. School view provides an excellent overview.</p> <p>Under Comparing Costs teaching and support staff has the lowest costs compared to all comparator schools. Approximately £400 less per pupil is being spent at Whitchurch on staffing.</p> <p>MB felt that this identified a shortfall in staffing and that other expenditures are possibly too high in other areas. There would therefore be value to looking at areas for cost savings to then build up the staffing sustainably.</p>	

	<p>MB noted that there may be contextual information which needs to be taken into account and understood.</p> <p>As a contained 4FE school, the cost per metre is very high. BD noted the more important figure was the utilisation rate which provides a far more meaningful metric.</p> <p>SS updated Governors on energy costs. The LA were under the impression that all the school was double glazed. SS has asked for double glazing to be added to the LA's rolling works. The LA are visiting next week to look at where energy usage can be made more efficient. The LA are suggesting that the school install more solar panels as a cost of £49K (paid by the school). SS has also spoken about the lights staying on all night – this should be remedied under buildings and covered by the LA.</p> <p>MB noted the Educational Consultancy may also want to be reviewed. There is an Educational Consultant but other people who can provide valuable insights to Governors.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to review the VFMI for areas of investigation to lines of enquiry.</p>	<p>Governors to review the VFMI for areas of investigation to lines of enquiry.</p>
	<p>AOB/Staffing</p> <p>MTL noted that he has spoken to teaching staff to map out next years allocation. The school is carrying five vacancies – adverts have been placed. For one role, there is a shortlist of 12 (with 30 applicants). MTL and MB interviewed last week. 3 have been offered a role and one took a position elsewhere. Further adverts are live and there looks to be more applications.</p> <p>For support staff, MTL will be looking at the structure of the teams – for example, reviewing safeguarding and SEND etc and how this links to the leadership team. MB felt that it was important to spread the responsibility amongst capable people and but also maintain accountability. MTL is looking at developing a class share model for phase leaders which will allow them to also take on whole school responsibility. It will also support their aspirations and career progression; whilst supporting them becoming strategic.</p>	

	<p>MB asked if Exit Interviews took place? MTL noted that this was done by the line manager. MB explained that at his school, the Chair of Governors, conducts this. MTL explained that staff were provided with an option to speak with another governor. PT felt that this could provide valuable insights and he would be happy to do this.</p> <p>ACTION: Governors to take on view of the SLT regarding Exit Interviews.</p>	<p>Governors to take on view of the SLT regarding Exit Interviews.</p>
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14.	<p>PART TWO CONFIDENTIAL</p> <p>None</p>	
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Post Meeting Action Log:

No	Item
1.	Budget tabled at the FGB for approval.
2.	Governors to review the VFMI for areas of investigation to lines of enquiry.
3.	Governors to take on view of the SLT regarding Exit Interviews.

Accepted as a true and accurate record by the Chair _____