



DRINGHOUSES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Resources Committee Meeting (virtual)

held on Wednesday 5th July 2023 at 9.00am, via Zoom

Present: Ben Sutton (Headteacher) Ros Roberts
 Claire Neal (SBM) Natalie Wong
 Matt Boxall (Committee Chair) Claire Scott-South staff
 Mike Hay Kara Byworth

In Attendance: Dawn Gledhill (Peripatetic Bursar)
 Lesley Irving (Clerk)

		Action						
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies for Absence, Consents and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. All Committee members were present.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>							
2.	<p>Minutes of the meeting held 26th April 2023, matters arising and action plan. - previously distributed.</p> <p>Governors agreed that the minutes of the last meeting were a true and accurate record, and they were duly approved.</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p> <p>Action Points (carried forward from the last meeting)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Action</th><th>Person(s) responsible</th><th>Status</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Headteacher to distribute a school meal survey to parents.</td><td>HT</td><td>Completed. Results on agenda, under item four.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Person(s) responsible	Status	1. Headteacher to distribute a school meal survey to parents.	HT	Completed. Results on agenda, under item four.	
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1. Headteacher to distribute a school meal survey to parents.	HT	Completed. Results on agenda, under item four.						
3.	<p>Budget monitoring – previously distributed.</p> <p>The Peripatetic Bursar referred to the previously distributed reports, referring governors to the CFR Level Report for period two of the financial year. She explained that this showed an expected outturn of £49,853.</p> <p><i>A governor questioned whether this meant that the expected deficit had increased by £10k, to which the Peripatetic Bursar confirmed that this was correct; the deficit position had originally been predicted to be -£39k, and there had been an increase of £10k, relating to expenditure. She noted that there were predominantly three areas where increased</i></p>							

levels of spending had occurred without matching income:

1. There had been a £2k increase in energy costs since the start budget, based on April and May electricity charges. The potential mitigating circumstances were that there may be a compensating saving in relation to a surplus in gas costs, however the invoice for gas had not yet been received. Additionally, energy prices were predicted to reduce from 1st July, however it was not known what effect this would have in school - so this had not been factored into the monitoring report.
2. An increase in spending on learning resources had also negatively impacted the budget position, predominantly due to an increase in the need for external Special Educational Needs (SEN) packages. This was shown as additional spending as it had not been built into the start budget originally. A potential mitigating factor in relation to this was that Pupil Premium funding may be received. It was not known at this stage whether this additional spending would need to continue into the autumn term and beyond, or if Pupil Premium funding would be received. This would be monitored and reported back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity.
3. Catering costs had caused an increase in spend since the start budget, due to inflationary increases in food costs. There were mitigating factors to take into account, which may reduce the impact on the budget if successful, including sourcing cheaper/alternative food from different suppliers, and a potential increase in the price of school meals. These had not been factored in as it was not known what the impact on income would be and whether school meal uptake would be affected.

The Peripatetic Bursar advised that there had been no variances in relation to staffing costs since the start budget, and that she would need to see the impact of changes before factoring these in. However, she was aware of changes relating to:

Catering staff: additional hours for the School Cook for the administration of the in-house catering provision and a restructuring of catering team, including a Deputy Cook to enable continuity of provision.

Teaching Assistants (TAs): the start budget had incorporated a reduction in TA hours, however in reality this had been quite difficult to achieve as there was a greater need in school. There had been discussions with the Virtual School in relation to potential Pupil Premium funding; for the extra staff needed to support pupils, however this had not yet materialised. They would need to track whether this was received and how it would impact the budget. From September, a higher level of one-to-one support was needed, however not all children had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

Teachers: in the start budget, it had been intended that 0.5 of a full time teacher, who was leaving, would not be replaced by a teacher but covered by TA4 post. However, the TA4 role was needed for one-to-one support, so the teacher hours would need to be filled from September.

Midday Supervisory Assistants (MSAs) were now Play Assistants, on a higher grade, which would likely not impact the budget within the first year but would be a slightly higher cost going forward.

Senior Leadership Team: changes were due to occur which may impact the budget however it was unknown what the outcome would be at this stage.

	<p>The Peripatetic Bursar explained that this was a precautionary budget based on what was known currently. As soon as she knew more, she would update governors.</p> <p><i>A governor questioned whether EHCPs were expected to be in place by September. The Headteacher responded that the two EHCPs currently in progress involved one child who was the significant EBSA case, and was currently not attending school, but was engaged in aspects of alternative provision funded by school. This EHCP was now in draft format, but the finalised version would be completed following other processes in action currently. The other child subject to the EHCP process was currently accessing extensive alternative provision, in conjunction with the virtual school funding programme, while utilising much of the mentioned TA4 hours in school. These hours were currently backfilled by funding from the virtual school but this was only committed until the end of the first half-term 2023/24.</i></p> <p>The Headteacher stated that the model of TA structure mirrored what seemed to be happening across the City and that, for the 2023/24 academic year, they had needed to move more of their TAs to one-to-one positions – although this was not necessarily reflected in the funding received. The only additional support that they may receive was from the Virtual School; he was quite confident that this would continue.</p> <p><i>A governor reflected that there were many unknowns, one being the pay award, and pondered how much of this would reflect the reality of the position in six months' time. He stated that they would need to exercise enormous caution and be open minded about what might happen.</i></p> <p><i>A governor expressed concern that the budget position had worsened by £10k since the last Committee meeting and that this trend may continue. The Peripatetic Bursar agreed that this was concerning however she had erred on the side of caution. There were many unknowns and potential mitigating circumstances which had not been factored in. She went on to say that last year's energy spend had £48k. They had budgeted £60k within this year's budget which seemed a reasonable increase, however the market was so volatile, this was difficult to predict. Regarding catering, she reiterated that the school were trying to think of alternatives to make this work better.</i></p> <p><i>A confidential matter was discussed at this point during the meeting – see confidential minutes.</i></p>	
4.	<p>Catering update – previously distributed.</p> <p>The School Business Manager (SBM) explained that catering had been one of the concerns raised regarding last year's budget. She referred governors to the previously distributed income and expenditure analysis documents and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ They had worked hard to keep the plate price in line and uptake of school meals was steadily increasing, which was positive. ○ A catering overspend was starting to materialise as the cost of school meals no longer covered the cost of food and food production. ○ A survey had been distributed and the preliminary results had felt positive; people were happy with the quality of meals and children were generally happy with portion sizes and the time spent queuing. They had asked for feedback on the menu and were using this feedback to build the autumn menu. ○ They were trying to source alternative providers for food, and discussions with their current provider, Millers, had resulted in some new approaches which were 	

being trialled.

- They had reviewed waste and reduced the amount of waste per meal from five spillages to two.

Referring to the price for a school meal, the SBM explained that this had last been reviewed in 2020, when the price had increased to £2.40. Since then, there had been numerous pay awards and increases in inflation and the cost of energy.

They had asked parents in the survey at what point they felt school meals would no longer represent good value for money, to which the majority of parents had responded that they felt £2.75 - £3 per meal would be reasonable. The SBM explained that if they increased the price of a school meal to £2.75, this would increase the income received to £4k. An increase to £3 would result in £6.5k income, and an increase to £3.35 would equate to £9k income. The SBM recommend that the school increased the price of a school meal and asked governors for their views regarding a price increase which would still be affordable for parents, and which would hopefully not impact the uptake of meals.

A governor responded that they felt an increase to £3 would be too substantial an increase and that they would risk losing uptake, based on principal. The SBM agreed, and advised that other schools had increased the cost of their school meals to £2.60 or 2.65. However, these schools tended to use external catering companies, who had more power in terms of the procurement of ingredients and their ability to buy in bulk/spread costs. She advised that she felt an increase of £2.75 would feel more manageable, as a parent.

A governor stated that they agreed that £3 would seem too high and asked whether, when predicting increased revenue, were they assuming that the uptake of meals stayed the same. The SBM confirmed that the figures were based on the current uptake; they may see this reduce a little.

In response to a governor question, the Headteacher confirmed that the survey was still open, and that further results may be received.

A governor commented that it was interesting that some people would be prepared to pay a substantially higher amount, and that this may help when considering further price increases in future. They may want to consider an annual price increase. He agreed that the least resistance to a price increase would be to increase the cost of a meal to £2.75. Food inflation had increased by 20%, and they would only be increasing the cost by 10%.

Referring to the survey, a governor remarked that quite a significant proportion of the responses in relation to portion sizes and queuing were not very positive and that he would not want them to just dismiss this feedback. The SBM responded that they could perhaps look to stagger when classes entered the dining hall more, and that they were planning to open two counters so that children could go through faster. The SBM agreed to conduct a further analysis of the survey responses when the survey had closed.

Action: SBM to review final catering survey results and feedback at the next Resources Committee.

A governor noted that, from a parent's perspective, she felt that the meals represented good value for money and that she would be happy to pay £3 per meal. However, she noted that this could be a significant increase for families with more than one child. She queried whether another option would be to increase the price to £3, with a discounted

SBM

	<p><i>rated of £2.75 or £2.80 for sibling meals.</i> The SBM responded that this would be extremely difficult to administer. Parent Pay and the pre-ordering of meals was set at a price per child/adult, it would be difficult for the system to know which charge should be applied.</p> <p>Governors agreed to increase the price of a school meal to £2.75, from September 2023.</p> <p><i>A governor queried whether the price increase needed to be approved by the FGB.</i> The Clerk responded that she would confirm, however this could be ratified at the following week's FGB.</p>	FGB agenda
5.	<p>Premises and Capital Plan update - <i>previously distributed.</i></p> <p>The School Business Manager explained that quotes for some replacement carpets had been received and that the scheme of redecoration, which was close to completion, was scheduled to continue during October half term.</p> <p>Some internal walls were being erected to form breakout/intervention spaces, and some outdoor improvements were planned, along with some other smaller scale projects.</p> <p>Noting that there was £16k of Capital funds within the budget, the SBM explained that installation of solar panels seemed to be a large outlay for little return. She confirmed that she would look for alternative ways to spend the funds; potentially new windows for the Early Years unit, which couldn't be repaired.</p> <p>The SBM advised that there are some solar panel grants which could be accessed, however she didn't think that the school would meet the eligibility criteria.</p>	
	<p>Staffing update</p> <p>The SBM explained that a member of kitchen staff who had been on long term sick had now been dismissed, under a medical capability hearing, however the notice period of twelve weeks would be based on full pay. A small pay rise had been awarded to the Assistant Cook, however this change benefited the school as it offered continuity in provision.</p>	
6.	<p>Policy review</p> <p>Whistleblowing - (CYC adopted policy)</p> <p>First aid in schools - (pre-checked by Matt Boxall prior to submission to this committee)</p> <p>Governors approved the Whistleblowing and First Aid in Schools Policies.</p>	
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>There were no items raised under Any Other Business.</p>	
8.	<p>Determination of Confidential Items</p> <p>A confidential matter was discussed under item three, which would be captured within confidential minutes.</p>	
9.	<p>Dates and time of next meeting:</p> <p>Meeting dates for 2023/24 would be confirmed at next week's FGB.</p>	

The meeting closed at 10.09am.

These minutes were approved at the Resources Committee on 27th September 2023.

**DRINGHOUSES PRIMARY SCHOOL
Action Plan following the Meeting of the Resources Committee
held on Wednesday 5th July 2023**

Action		Item	Person(s) responsible	Timescale
1.	SBM to review final catering survey results and feedback at the next Resources Committee.	4	SBM	

Items for next meeting:

SBM to review final catering survey results and feedback to Committee.

Items for FGB:

Ratification of Committee's decision to increase the price of school meals from £2.40 to £2.75