

SEVENOAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL

MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES TEAM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2014 AT 7.45 PM

PRESENT

Melanie McInerney (Chair)
Steve Collins
Peter Davies
Alan Duffy
Kath Baillache (Clerk)

Natalie Fitz-Gerald
Simon Leigh
Trevor Thake
Bri Wood

Action

1. Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Business Interests

Apologies were received in advance from Victoria Kerton. There were no changes to declarations of business interests though a number of governors checked and resigned forms due for annual review.

2. Minutes & Actions arising from Resources Team meeting of 24th September 2014

Water usage - despite the increase in usage noted at the last meeting when compared as part of the benchmarking review water usage by the school was found to be lower than comparable schools. Confirmed that taps in rose garden toilet had been changed to automatic shut off. Bills are received 6 monthly so situation will be reviewed closely then. Confirmed that Site Manager had been asked to monitor the meter weekly however as he has only recently returned to work full time he may not have had time to review yet. Problematic to access the meter at certain times of day for health and safety reasons as it is near the bottom gate and therefore busy at drop off and collection times.

Asbestos - Rod McLay has been unable to come in and review the register this term. Agreed to carry this and the policy review forward to next meeting.

RM

Previous minutes were approved as a true record without amendment.

3. Admissions update

Included within a report from the headteacher to the committee and found very helpful.

There are 505 children on the school roll. There is currently one space in year 1 and 4 and 5 spaces in year 3.

New format parent tours are working well with 80 prospective parents having been shown around and 50 booked on future tours. 19 siblings are already signed up to start in reception in September 2015.

4. Finance

Financial accounts – monitoring report as at end of October 2014 shows a forecast yearend rollover surplus of £54,485.

Income

Update on individual support - funding has been received for an additional pupil and another statement application is pending approval. The SENCO is currently working on a further two applications. Under the new code of practice these will no longer be called statements but changed and renamed Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP).

Expenditure

Building Maintenance and improvement - an additional £5K needs spending on site security and ongoing drain maintenance. Following a security review adjustments have been made to a door in the dining hall and wood purchased to make more wooden gates. Items individually fall below limits requiring this committees approval however brought to their attention due to the overall amount involved.

Energy Bills were discussed in relation to the 5 year forecast provided to support the KCC loan application. EFA provided figures for new build based on an industry average & were actually higher than current usage. BW to query EFA calculations & double check that estimates in 5 year plan are realistic. Alan agreed to contact new build school in Coventry and ascertain their energy costs.

AD

Central heating control panel - unit, which operates the separate gas boiler system in the main hall used for lettings is not working properly and is now just out of warranty. The system works manually however automatic settings are essential for lettings. Discussed whether the lettings prices could be increased to help cover the expense. The cost of the repair is £1200 and was approved.

Concern was raised that the surplus is already falling each month. Budgeted surplus for year end was £77K but the forecast is already £20K down. Governors asked Bri to prepare a new 5 year plan highlighting any crunch points and areas of concern for the FGB in December given the knowledge that the surplus depletes year on year.

Savings - asked if there were other areas of the budget where savings could be made. ICT resources and capital highlighted as potential areas. There is no planned expenditure in this area apart from normal maintenance and upgrades for whiteboards.

Financial Impact of SEN code of practice changes - changes from the new SEN code of practice discussed i.e. school must now meet the first £6K for any 1:1 support i.e. half the teaching assistant cost. Additional resources e.g. intervention schemes and laptops that may be required to provide support must also be funded by the school. Therefore to provide support: best case is that child with EHCP will receive £6K and worst case is that school would need to fund £12K.

Current levels of 1:1 support:
 4 pupils receive full time support
 2 receive part time support
 2 pupils need additional support
 2 ECHP being processed

Given that partial funding is only received for those pupils with EHCP the school has the option to provide no support until EHCP is received, however this would adversely impact the teaching and learning of all pupils. The new funding arrangements are currently in consultation phase however apparent that financial burden on schools to provide support will increase. Bri is attending a briefing in December re the new funding formula. In advance she had completed that online ready reckoner and initial indications are that school would be £9K worse off.

Benchmarking

Analysis circulated comparing average income and expenditure against other Kent primary schools with 400-499 pupils. (34 schools were included in the selection) Natalie has gone through the figures with Bri. Figures were circulated with catering removed as most schools do not provide their own catering. Natalie was satisfied that Bri had examined the information carefully and explained the variances.

The main difference was that SPS spent considerably more on building maintenance and similar overall on staffing but slightly less on teachers. Further discussion covered :

	SPS - amount per pupil	SPS - % of total expenditure	Comparative school - amt per pupil	Comparative school - % of total expenditure
Water and sewerage	£11.46	0.27%	£14.95	0.36%
Supply teacher insurance	£1.85	0.04%	£18.64	0.45%

Supply teacher insurance showed a large variance and due to governing body’s previous decision to maintain a contingency pot within the budget to cover supply rather than pay the rising insurance premium with diminishing cover. Recently there have been significant number of staff absences however spread over range of individuals for short periods of time so these would not have been covered anyway.

Bad debt write off

Since the last meeting Lindsay Anderson (Finance Assistant) has sent an email requesting the write off of some long standing dinner money debts. The practice is to pass the debt to siblings if they remain uncollected. However a debt of £376 has built up for a family whose 4 children have now left the school. The debt is historical and arose from a large family not eligible for free school meals. The committee were also made aware of 2 further debts which are unlikely to be repaid but children are still in school. (£96 for a pupil in year 2 and £142 for a child in year 4). It was agreed that it would not be worth pursuing the debt through the small claims court.

None of the governors were aware of the debts which are not shown separately within the monitoring report as it is prepared on a receipts & payments basis. The loss has effectively been taken in the year it arose, included within 'catering'. Confirmed that clear procedures are in place and with the online payment system the largest debt is £35 and a debtor list showing debts over £11.25 i.e. one week of dinner money is produced weekly. Governors were satisfied that clear procedures were in place and that debts were historical. Write off approved.

Natalie to undertake monthly check with Lindsay to keep on top of bad debts and update committee.

Bri asked to check the level of work involved in producing a debtors and creditors report to accompany the monitoring report.

NF

Staffing

Report circulated by headteacher detailing the miscellaneous staff absences. Risks discussed of staff absence with the increasing size of the school.

Cover for absences - last year's change regarding cover supervisors taking the class if a teacher is off has also reduced the flexibility in school and increased the cost as supply teachers are then required. To cover recent teacher absences Jane Durkin has taken time out from her new role to support in the classroom.

Staffing Structure

Alan had circulated via email a copy of the new management structure detailing the roles and responsibilities of different roles. The intention is that this would be placed on the website with a link signposted in the Newsletter to inform parents and how changes impact on them. A similar format is being worked on for other staff in school although this is still a work in progress and will include classroom and subject responsibilities. It would also be useful to have one prepared for the governing body detailing individual roles and responsibilities. To be reviewed as GB responsibilities are re-assigned.

5. Premises

Visual Inspection – report circulated as at 10th October. Trevor has been through this with Bri and is happy that highlighted jobs are being completed within set timescales. Site Manager's assistant is also getting through a lot of work on site and picking up additional areas from the Site Manager over time by way of succession planning. Site Manager is also doing some advisory health and safety work at Shoreham school up to Christmas

Bottom Gate - problem highlighted last meeting has been improved by opening the bottom gate to ease flow of parents at beginning and end of the day. However the narrowness of the gate and path are still a problem for buggies. Bri is still trying to arrange a meeting with Highways to add additional road markings although she thinks they will be unlikely to act pre new build.

6. New Build Update

Update on design

The 'current draft information' was received from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) on Tuesday 19th November & circulated to governors. The covering email explained that this was in the process of being finalised and incorporated within the EFA feasibility report for Sevenoaks Primary School. The scheme has been devised following extensive discussions between the school, the EFA & KCC.

The EFA and architects (Mott McDonald, MM) will be coming to SPS in December to meet with school leadership team & the Governing Body to obtain their approval of the proposals. The Resources Committee was tasked with considering the outcome of the feasibility study and identifying what further information was required to enable the GB to make a fully informed decision on the proposal.

Proposal:

- A 'control drawing' was presented. This represents what is considered to be the optimum location, shape & style of the development based on the extensive surveying undertaken during the feasibility study. It is probable that this will be the final proposal but it may alter when the final contract is awarded & the appointed design & build team arrive on site. The building shown in an L shaped 2 storey building. Drawing indicates new car park in the same position with site entry and exit uninterrupted. Existing hard standing areas are to be maintained. It was noted that the whole new build site will be able to be isolated with separate access to limit disruption & maintain safety.
- Completion is projected for January 2017 and September 2017 at the latest.
- Confirmed that modules will be retained outside the scope of the new build.

Practicalities for consideration:

- The site of the new building will be isolated during construction. The biggest impact on the running of the school is likely to be the loss of the KS2 playground. However, the school is fortunate to have use of the 'top field'.
- Demolition was thought to be the most disruptive phase in terms of running of the school. Governors wanted to understand how this could be mitigated by coinciding with holidays or phasing of INSET days.

Issues for clarification:

- Sight of a schedule of work and understanding of flexibility of plan
- Understanding of disruption expected during process
- Temporary displacement issues e.g. playground area, parking, site and pedestrian access
- Demolition and clearing process - logistical challenge given the position of the modules.
- Service and maintenance charges

Next Steps:

- I. Bri has sent a copy of the plans to Juliet Hook a parent architect who has experience with school builds for her observations.
- II. Bri to send a preliminary set of questions to the EFA tomorrow in preparation for December's meeting.

Funding and Area comparisons

Together with the circulated plan was an area comparison document indicating potential sizes of different areas within the new build. This analysed the total space between the 3 funding streams:

- The 2 form entry (2FE) school to be paid for by the EFA (2072m²).
- Additional space & associated costs to be met by KCC to provide the infrastructure for the additional 3rd form of entry (KCC funded the new modular buildings which will be retained in situ but integrated into the rebuilt estate)
- Areas requested by the school to ensure that it would continue to offer the level of existing provision (402.8m²). Costs attributable to the school with a 10% contingency indicated that under current plans school would need to contribute £682K.

There was some discussion about how the space had been analysed & whether SPS was being asked to fund a fair proportion of associated costs which the analysis suggested was skewed to hallways and toilets.

Supplementary areas:

- IT suites (2 @ 62m² each) KCC has agreed to fund these in exchange for us agreeing to retain the modular units.
- Larger halls - the standard 3FE design hall is much smaller than existing, notwithstanding the stage area. Our fundraising aims to increase the size to that of the existing without stage. Main hall will be only area with ceiling high enough for PE. The dining hall will also be smaller but 3FE schools are given a studio as additional flexible space to be used at lunchtimes for dining.
- Shared teaching areas - currently use corridors for delivery of some teaching. The plan provides defined shared teaching areas which would absorb the space allocated to a library in the standard model. The exact layout and corridor size isn't known.

Hidden potential additional costs identified:

- Provision of staging for the hall
- Cost of relocating IT kit.
- Requirement for additional staff
- implications of increased numbers

The prioritisation ranking of the additional requirements was discussed for consideration in the event that not all of the funding is raised. The way the draft shows the allocation of costs isn't helpful from a fundraising perspective & this needs to be followed up to ensure it is correct.

Funding Questions for EFA

- Clarification on allocation of areas for funding and a breakdown of m² costs
- Can the costs of circulation areas be proven as essentially represent a quarter of school's fund raising expectation and the % seems high.
- Site security

Fundraising and Communication

Fundraising is proceeding well with around £60K having been raised to date, inclusive of matched funding. However full funding cannot possibly be raised by the decision point in December, therefore the need to have the LA underwrite the fundraising based upon a clear programme of prospective fundraising activities and projected receipts that will demonstrate that the money would be repaid before the new school opens. (average SPSA fundraising generates £30K per annum). A letter has been sent to Rebecca Spore (property) outlining the proposal however this was pre receipt of costings and is therefore not confirmed. However leverage is that SPS is a community school putting £700K into a project for a building owned by KCC.

Still for exploration:

- Grants and charitable trusts to apply for
- Donations from local businesses
- Ensure Gift aid claims are processed
- Parental / staff donations

Key to success:

- Continued fundraising by the school for supplementary requirements. Speculative projections Year1 - £100K, year 2 £50K and year 3 £50K (normal annual SPSA contribution in region of £30K). If £250K is raised the school will receive the maximum matched funding
- Once feasibility study is completed, officially launch the project
- Backing from KCC finance dept that they will underwrite the fundraising and a clear understanding of the terms. Need to speak to Keith Abbott (KCC Finance director) asap regarding this. Discussed that as average fundraising equates to £30k they may only agree to support to a value of £90K.

Straw poll held to see how many considered possible to raise £350K over 3 years. Felt that this was a stretch but that all opportunities should be maximised. To approve the decision governors would need:

Finance

- Confirmation that KCC will underwrite the fundraising. Establish conditions and caveats to support.
- Confirm confidence of payback of fundraising over 3 year period
- Confidence that loan repayments could be afforded within the 5 year plan (Loan proposed - borrow £200k over 10 years - term previously minuted as 7 years ie £22K per annum pay back). This could be partially drawn down and repayment only starts once drawn down,)

Building Design

- Content of design, specifics of what is to be included
- Disturbance issues during build resolved to ensure safe day to continued running of the school.

Summary

Chair reiterated that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for a £6 million school. Need to be inspirational and deliver a building that will be practical and operational. The choice is to refurbish the existing school though KCC have reducing available funds and had put school forward for the Priority Schools Building Programme or build a new school in which we have some input. No other options.

Governors present agreed unanimously that new build needed to be pursued. Decision needed by end of December but as yet no confirmation of a visit date from the EFA nor of KCC underwriting the S151 agreement. Aim to have full discussion & EFA representation at December full GB meeting.

Governors will need to decide whether they would be happy to approve the new build proposal by the end of December (the EFA timescale) if KCC agreed to underwrite the fundraising.

7. AOB
None.

Meeting closed at 10.05pm

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21st January 2015

Actions arising from the minutes:

<i>Action</i>	<i>By whom</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Completed</i>
1. Bri to send preliminary questions to the EFA prior to FGB meeting	BW	Post mtg	
2. Contact KCC Finance dept re underwriting fundraising	BW	Post mtg	
3. Prepare revised 5 year plan highlighting areas of concern	BW	DEC FGB	
4. Alan to contact new build in Coventry re energy bills	AD	Term 3	
5. Rod to undertake review of asbestos policy and register	RM	Term 3	
6. Bad debt monitoring / debtors report	NF/BW	Term 3	

	Resources Team
Standing Items	<p><i>Chgs in Business Interests</i> <i>Review expenditure and Forecast</i> <i>H&S update</i> <i>Staff update – teaching standards, PM timescales</i> New Build <i>School security issues</i></p>
Jan / Feb	Risk Review
Term 3	<p>Finance Review revised 3 year plan (Nov mtg) Review Catering Contract Play 4 Ages annual update Compliance update (BW)</p> <p>Staffing Non-teaching staff review Clerk’s appraisal & pay & conditions review HTPM review update (c/f)</p> <p>Premises Fire safety procedures <i>Ck pupil data added to emergency plan c/f</i> <i>Asbestos register review c/f (RM)</i></p> <p>Review: H & S Policy (ann) Asbestos policy c/f</p>