



CARLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Minutes of the Resources And Finance Committee meeting held at the school on Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 5.30pm

- 3rd draft with HT + LS amendments, + ComCh approval -

Governors:

Tim Carew – Parent Governor (**Committee Chair**)
 Georgina Harcourt-Brown – Deputy Headteacher and Co-opted Governor
 Charul Patel – Co-opted Governor
 Jacqueline Phelan – Headteacher and Exofficio Governor
 Laurence Simons – Co-opted Governor
 Yiannos Theodoridis – Co-opted Governor (*present via video call from Dublin*)
 Jess Wren – Co-opted Governor

Also:

Victoria Mitchell – Clerk To The Governing Board (*not in attendance - minutes written remotely*)

Tim Carew chaired the meeting and Victoria Mitchell wrote the minutes.

1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	Actions and timescale
	<p>1.1 The Committee Chair, Governor Tim Carew, welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 It was noted that Bursar Kate Grant had sent apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. It was noted that Governor Kate Steele had sent apologies for not being able to attend this meeting. It was also noted that School Administrator Dionne Jackson and Clerk To Governors Victoria Mitchell had been unable to attend this meeting. It was agreed the Clerk would write the minutes from an audio recording and delete the audio file once the writing was complete.</p> <p>1.3 It was noted that the Clerk To Governors does not have the contact details of the new Bursar for papers to be circulated. Information to be sent to the Clerk.</p> <p>1.3 The meeting was quorate.</p>	<p>The Clerk</p> <p>Bursar</p>
2.	Declaration of Interests	
	2.1 There were no declarations of interests made.	
3.	Committee terms of reference	
	<p>3.1 The Headteacher informed the meeting that the committee was currently using the terms of reference agreed two years previously. If governors had any updates to those terms of reference then they should inform the Headteacher, Chair Of Governors or Committee Chair Tim Carew before the next FGB meeting.</p> <p>3.2 <u>Question:</u> How often do terms of reference need to be done? <u>Answer:</u> They are reviewed every two years to check they are still relevant. If there are</p>	

	<p>any amendments needed then these are discussed and agreed with the committee before a recommendation is made from the committee to the FGB for the requested updates to the terms of reference to be ratified by the FGB.</p> <p>3.3 One governor recalled that the matter had been discussed at the Governing Board meeting one year ago when the thresholds for expenditure and virements to be approved by the committee were agreed and voted on. The Committee Chair stated that he believed there were few if any updates to the current terms of reference that were needed this year. It was agreed the Clerk To Governors would email the current terms of reference to the Committee Chair, the Chair Of Governors and the Headteacher and this would be received for approval at the next meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk To Governors to email the current Committee Terms Of Reference to the Committee Chair, Chair Of Governors and Headteacher and any amendments would be made prior to the next meeting.</p>	<p>The Clerk, Committee Chair, Chair Of Governors, The Headteacher</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Minutes from meeting held on 29 October 2019 and matters arising</p>	
	<p>4.1 The committee received and read the minutes of the committee meeting held on 29 October 2019. It was noted that this meeting had been dominated by the news received from Camden Council that proposed the school might be closed. The Chair Of Governors confirmed she had read through the sections of the minutes that related to this part of the discussion and that the Committee Chair would consider amendments to the the sections of the meeting that related to the Resources And Finance Committee specifically. These were accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p><u>Matters arising</u></p> <p>4.2 <u>Item 4.10</u> - this was a question about the details of budget line LE08 and had since been clarified by the Bursar using email.</p> <p>4.3 The Minutes of the Resources And Finance meeting held at the school on Tuesday 29 October 2019 were then agreed by the committee. As the Clerk was absent from this meeting a set of minutes would be presented at the next meeting of the FGB on 24th March 2020 for signature.</p> <p>ACTION: Clerk To Governors to bring a copy of the minutes of the Resources And Finance Committee held on 29th October 2019 to the next meeting of the Governing Board on 24th March 2020 to be signed.</p>	<p>The Clerk</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Update on possible closure of the school from a financial aspect</p>	
	<p>5.1 The Headteacher updated the committee on the work done in the school to address the the financial issues that had prompted the local authority to suggest the school may have to close.</p> <p>5.2 The Headteacher informed the meeting that she had met with the Deputy Head to complete a document showing the school was viable for the next three years. The Headteacher stated that they will now be able to prove that the school is financially viable for the next 3 years, although this would mean some changes to staffing. The Headteacher stated that after that the in-year deficit starts to come through. The aim is that the school will have saved enough money to meet the shortfall by then.</p> <p>5.3 The committee were informed that in order to calculate this revised financial plan the Camden forecast on pupil numbers entering reception was considered. A comparison was then made with the pupil numbers in the</p>	

reception class in the school for the last two years. The school currently has 18 pupils in the nursery who are pre-reception, the school is assuming that all of these children will begin at the school next year. The school may also be able to add another few pupils to total 25 in reception. Over the next few years the school calculated that it would have 25 pupils each year, slightly less than a one-form intake. The school also calculated fundraising £26,000 from premises hire next year and £35,000 the following year.

5.4 The Headteacher stated that changes to staffing would be necessary due to the fact that year 5 and 6 have more than 30 children. As part of this exercise, the staffing structure would be reviewed.

5.5 Question: How much has been raised from School Space since the school handed over the management of premises hire to them?

Answer:

Its only just started, so £8. However a regular weekly event plans to use the school grounds in the next week and two other groups have already been in discussions with the school about hiring rooms during the week.

5.6 Question: Do the premises also get hired out during the school holidays ?

Answer:

The school has been contacted by a company about the possibility of the school premises being used for a summer holiday play scheme. Because the school is in a good upkeep, it does not need any major works carried out during the holidays and so could be hired out.

5.7 Question: Has the figure of 25 pupils in reception been stress-tested in order to find out the minimum amount required for the school to be a going concern?

Answer:

The school budgeted just over £4,000 per pupil and assumed that half of those pupils will receive pupil premium funding, which is a conservative estimate.

5.8 Question: Will the school drastically restructure?

Answer:

The school has had two restructures already that did not impact on children. There may be some concern from others that drastic restructuring may impact on children with a high level of need but the school restructures smartly so pupils are not impacted more than they can cope. The restructure last year did not drastically reduce the number of staff in the school - most classes still have teaching assistants alongside their class teacher. The restructure that took place was more about altering people's working patterns in order to use time more wisely. It meant a reduction in the teaching assistants that work after 3:30pm. The key issue in ensuring the school is a viable concern as a one form of entry school in a building the size of Carlton Primary School is far less about staff timetables and more about ensuring extra income can be earned from hiring out parts of the large school premises to cover the costs of a building this size.

5.9 One governor stated that there was little faith in Camden's forecasts on pupil numbers and so the school was right to reject Camden's suggestion that the school should close. It was right that the school is instead making its own calculations on how to continue as a viable concern.

5.10 One governor stated that they felt Camden were being hasty suggesting the school should close based on their forecasts rather than waiting to see if

there was an upturn in pupil numbers as a result of the new residential developments being built around the borough. Another governor stated that it would be wrong to close the school only to find out in 5 years time there are not enough primary schools in the local area for the number of pupils.

5.11 The Chair Of Governors stated that the viability plan that was being discussed was being proposed on the basis that the situation on pupil numbers would improve in a few years time. It was confirmed that the viability proposals had been discussed and agreed in December 2019. They had been discussed with Camden Officer Richard Lewin. They have also been discussed with the local MP Kier Starmer, Camden Council Education Cabinet Member Cllr Angela Mason and the Leader Of Camden Council Cllr Georgia Gould and the three local ward councillors for this area. The three local ward councillors have been very supportive and pro-Carlton. The school staff have also been invited to read the viability plan in the Headteacher's Office. Two members of the parent action group have read the viability plan and others have had verbal discussions with the Headteacher.

5.12 The Chair Of Governors informed the committee that as a result of the detailed nature of Carlton's response to the threat of closure they had been informed by Camden that they will need more time to read the document. As a result the Camden Cabinet meeting to discuss whether to have a consultation on a possible school closure had now been deferred to the 1st April 2020 Camden Cabinet meeting. Richard Lewin has asked for another meeting at the school at the end of this term.

5.13 The Deputy Headteacher expressed concerns that if Camden make a decision to go to consultation this will last 9 months. The decision would be made after Carlton have begun the admissions process for entry to the school in September 2021. This would result in parents who have secured school places at Carlton being subsequently told the school will not be open.

5.14 The school have asked Camden for approximate figures on how much it will cost financially to close down the school, an approximate figure on the cost of making all the Carlton Primary School staff redundant and the cost of other write-offs. This will demonstrate to the school that there are some scenarios where closing the school could be more costly than keeping it open.

5.15 The committee expressed concern about the stress that was being caused to staff and parents about the possible school closure. A number of parents had expressed concerns to the school leadership since hearing the news. The Deputy Head agreed that it was difficult to alleviate the concerns of parents and particularly vulnerable parents when there was no news or information on Camden's plans.

5.16 Question: When can the school be certain of the numbers admitted to the school in September 2020?

Answer:

This is a very difficult number to predict ahead of September 2020. The school may offer 60 children places at the school but parents decline offers or accept then take their children elsewhere right up to July each year.

5.17 Question: When did Camden begin running the school admissions process?

Answer:

This was around 2009 (though this is an approximation). Their allocations are

	audited, although the whole process was easier to manage when the school used to run it ourselves.	
6.	Budget update	
	<p>6.1 It was reported that the Committee Chair met with the Headteacher the week before the meeting and viewed the school's financial accounts. The Committee Chair reported that he could see no significant surprises and no significant changes to the agreed school budget.</p> <p>6.2 The Committee Chair also reported that there was currently anticipated to be a £40,000 underspend at the end of this financial year.</p> <p>6.3 <u>Question:</u> Why is there this underspend? <u>Answer:</u> The school had planned to redecorate parts of the building, but this hasn't been done. Instead the Site Supervisor has been carrying out maintenance and renewal, such as replacing hinges on classroom doors where they have been seen to be wearing out in order to increase the life of the building's current fixtures and fittings.</p> <p>6.4 <u>Question:</u> What is the difference between the fixed and the adjusted budget? <u>Answer:</u> The fixed budget is the budget that was agreed for the beginning of the financial year. The adjusted budget is where issues have arisen during the year, such as a rise in prices, or a member of staff leaving and the resultant costs of replacing them or savings made if the school decides not to replace them - these all could make differences to the budget that was agreed for the start of the financial year. These adjustments are agreed and become the adjusted budget. Also some of the budget lines in the the fixed budget contained a small contingency. Where those contingencies haven't been spent the money has now been reallocated to other areas.</p> <p>6.5 <u>Question:</u> So what is the contingency of £107,091 in the adjusted budget? This seems like a huge figure. <u>Answer:</u> That figure isn't in the fixed budget and it isn't in the actuals so we don't think this figure in the accounts has any real world significance.</p> <p>6.6 <u>Question:</u> The £40,000 underspend, if it is still there at the end of this financial year, it is added to the carryover into financial year 2020-21. However some of this £40,000 underspend is ring-fenced for Capital projects. How much is ring fenced for Capital projects? <u>Answer:</u> £23,128 is ring fenced. The school should receive a further £7,000 a year for devolved Capital spending at the start of financial year 2020-21.</p> <p>6.7 The committee discussed a figure of - £537,660 that appears in the budget on 31st December 2019. They agreed it was unclear whether this was an overspend or an underspend or what it represented. The committee agreed it was important for the financial accounts to be clear enough for governors to understand, probe and challenge the figures in the School Budget. The budget figures presented to governors needed to be understandable. It was agreed to request clarity from the Bursar on this - Governor Laurence Simons will email a question on this to the Bursar.</p> <p>ACTION: Governor Laurence Simons to email the Bursar to ask for</p>	

	<p>The majority of works that have needed to be carried out on the premises so far this year are the responsibility of the school to pay for. The cost of these works will therefore be incurred by the school.</p> <p>8.2 The Headteacher stated that since the last meeting the school swimming pool developed a leak and had to be fixed.</p> <p>8.3 One of the boilers in the school switches itself on and off - the Site Supervisor has contacted the boiler repair company who will fix this fault.</p> <p>8.4 A freezer in the school kitchen needs to be replaced unexpectedly. This has not been budgeted for.</p> <p>8.5 Asbestos needs to be removed from the basement below the Site Supervisor's Office.</p> <p>8.6 Some of the bricks in the outer walls of the school building needed replacing - these bricks were replaced by the Site Supervisor, saving the school several thousand pounds. The Site Supervisor also erected posts to hold up the walls of the nursery which were found to be leaning. The Headteacher praised the work of the Site Supervisor who has carried out these and other various works around the school, going above and beyond his job description to benefit the school.</p> <p>8.7 The Headteacher stated that she would meet the Site Supervisor on Friday to plan for works that need to be carried out next financial year. She anticipated the repairs and maintenance budget would require more funds allocated to it next financial year for repairs and maintenance works to be carried out.</p> <p>8.8 <u>Question:</u> Are improvements to the multi-sensory room included in the premises budget next financial year? <u>Answer:</u> The school plans to redecorate the main stairwell next financial year and we will also visit the multi-sensory room to consider what refurbishment and improvements should be carried out on it. Fundraising will be required to refurbish this room, or applications for grant funding.</p> <p>8.9 There were no further questions and this ended the premises update.</p>	
9.	How has the school moved on as a result of this meeting?	
	<p>9.1 One governor stated that the meeting had discussed and established that these financial spreadsheets presented to governors needed to have greater clarity in order for governors to understand them, and a narrative needed to be provided. Another stated that the better the governors are able to understand the school finances then the better the decisions the governors will make to move the school forward. One governor stated that the committee was beginning to identify the key risks to the school, such as the threat of closure and tie these risks into the school's finances. One governor stated it was good for governors to hear how the Site Supervisor has worked hard and saved the school money.</p>	
10.	Any other business	
	Bursar to become a signatory to the school bank account?	

	<p>10.1 The Headteacher asked the committee if they would permit Bursar Kate Grant to become a signatory to the school's bank account. The Headteacher stated that this was important as the Bursar often telephones the bank as part of their job. The Headteacher stated however that the Bursar would not be signing cheques.</p> <p>10.2 Governors on this committee verbally agreed that Bursar Kate Grant should become a signatory to the school's bank account, but will not be signing cheques.</p> <p><u>Resources And Finance Committee meetings to be held during the working hours of the Bursar?</u></p> <p>10.3 The Headteacher explained that the Bursar works two days a week and is not able to work during the evening. As a result governors are asked if it would be better for the Resources And Finance Committee meetings to take place during the day so that the Bursar can attend these meetings. This would allow the Bursar to give clear explanations and answer questions on the school budget spreadsheets and other matters where necessary.</p> <p>10.4 The committee discussed the matter and agreed 9am would be a good time to hold the committee meetings on a day that the Bursar is working at the school.</p>	
11.	Date and time of next meeting	
	<p>11.1 It was agreed the next meeting would be rescheduled to take place on Tuesday 28th April 2020 at 9am.</p> <p>ACTION: Committee members to take note of the rescheduled time and date of the next meeting. The Bursar to also attend this meeting.</p>	All committee members
12.	Confidential items	
	<p>12.1 There were no confidential items.</p> <p>12.2 The meeting then ended.</p>	

The meeting ended at 6:54pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair Of The Committee/Chair Of Governors)

Print Name: _____ Date: _____