

The Viridis Schools Federation of Orchard, Southwold and Hoxton Garden Schools

**Resources Governing Body Sub-committee
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams**

On Thursday 5th November 2020 at 4.30pm

Committee Attendees

Sara Walsingham (SW)
Laura Theobald (LT)
Giuseppa Colella-Mare (GCM)
Clerk: Manna Ghidey

James Gowland (JG)
Hanna Lownsborough (HL)
Rachel Davie (RD)

1. Apologies/Consent for Absence

No apologies. All present.

2. Governing Body Organisation Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Sara Walsingham elected as Chair of the Resources Committee and James Gowland as Vice Chair.

a. Membership

(SW) Noted that Sara Fox has left the Governing Body and Resources Committee. Hannah Lownsborough is joining the Resources Committee.

b. Declarations of interest in items on the agenda & Register of pecuniary interests for 2020/2021

No changes have been made or noted.

c. Acknowledgement of TOR & Code of Conduct

No changes have been made or noted.

d. Governing Body Annual Calendar

No changes have been made or noted.

3. Agreements of the minutes from the last meeting

All in agreement.

(SW) Queried if the 2019/20 closing balance had been altered.

(GCM) Confirmed the balance had not been altered.

4. ½ Year Budget Review & Forecast, Current Status

a. Six month budget review

A six month Viridis Budget Monitoring Report was presented to The Resources Committee at the meeting.

Income – detailed on page 1 of the report

(GCM) Stated the balance carried forward from 2019/20 was 946K. There is no difference in the delegated budget and it is expected to be paid in full to the schools by the end of January.

- PPG is projected to remain the same.
- SEN funding will remain the same, however no money has been received yet. It is currently under investigation why this is but it is projected that all the money will be received.
- Other government grants may vary throughout the year depending on pensions contributions and apprentice teachers.
- The £5K Erasmus grant was not spent in the Summer Term due to COVID-19. This grant has been carried forward to the 2020/21 financial year, with the hope that it will be spent on a trip for the children in the 2021 Summer Term.
- Facilities Income is already at 56% achieved due to a refund from British Gas of £10K for SW because of overcharges on the account. There has also been a £2.5K Nursery Top-up funding for 1 or 2 fulltime children.
- Catering Income was anticipated to be around £100k but because of COVID-19 there has been a decrease in income from parents due to the partial school closure. As of the 6 month budget review the catering income is at £15K. Therefore the predicted figure has been decreased to £50K.

(SW) Queried if the schools could claim for the loss of income against the catering costs from the COVID grants

(GCM) Confirmed that there are grants that the schools can claim but this has not been reflected in the budget.

(RD) Added, there are separate grants for different things. The schools didn't meet the threshold for the COVID grant relating to cleaning. The COVID catch-up grant is directly related to academic catch up and will not cover the catering deficit. Applications have not been made for cleaning and catering costs.

(SW) Noted that some schools have had a reduction in income and this has impacted their overall budget for meals.

(GCM) Confirmed it doesn't impact the budget as the income and expenditure balance out. This is evident on the expenditure section of the report.

(JG) Queried if the receipt of any of the income had been impacted by the hack in the Hackney Council.

(RD) Confirmed that to her knowledge, the hack hadn't impacted Hackney Education or the finance systems.

- (GCM) Noted there has also been a loss of income for trips. This is due to no trips taking place because of COVID. This figure has been reduced to £5K. It is uncertain if trips will resume after Christmas but there has been no expenditure for trips. The residential trip in June 2020 was cancelled but the deposit already paid is being carried forward to June 2021.
- Extended facilities – There has been no after school clubs or any other clubs. Therefore there has been no income, hence this has been reduced by £60K. The only savings that has been made are on resources but no savings have been made on salaries. A loss may be made on the running of After School Club.
- UIFSM - An increase of approximately £13K has been received.

(GCM) Noted that overall, there is a £162K decrease in income compared to what was predicted.

Expenditure – detailed on page 2 of the report

- Staffing – Expected to remain the same. There has been no movement of staff. Staff changes for this academic year had already been accounted for in the budget. Some savings may be made on travel due to a reduction in cross site movement and less need for taxis. No major changes are expected in the staffing level.
- CPD expenditure may increase as some courses have been booked for staff. All depending on whether the courses will be delivered by the training providers given the current pandemic.
- Premises expenditure - On track and the majority of the budget for building improvements has been spent due to most of the works being carried out over the summer. The remaining expenses are set costs including the water, energy and rates. Other occupational costs include Statutory Testing, Security and Hygiene costs which are on track.
- Cleaning– Expected to go over budget because of COVID-19. This is due to an increased need for hygiene and cleaning resources. Changes have been made in the way cleaning has been carried out around the schools. Contracted cleaning hours have been extended during the day to allow for extra cleaning with an emphasis on cleaning communal areas (including frequently touched areas – bannisters, door handles, etc.) and emptying bins.

(JG) Queried if the schools are able to recover any of the extra costs from the COVID Premium.

(RD) Confirmed there were separate applications that could have been made. After assessing the situation in the first quarter and evaluating the evidence criteria that needed to be met, it was decided that it wasn't something the schools needed to access. To ensure COVID security, overinvestment was made in terms of cleaning and added to the cleaning contract. This will not impact the budget in a significant way. It allows for continued and robust provision in line with the risk assessment.

(GCM) Noted that some of the changes implemented during the current pandemic may be kept in place going forward; particularly in terms of cleaning.

- Supplies and Services – Some savings will be made on General Resources, IT Resources and Administrative Supplies due to the partial school closures during the 1st lockdown and a smaller number of pupils and staff being onsite, therefore less resources were needed.
- Specialist facilities – Savings may be made since there has been a reduction in selling uniforms to parents as it has all moved online and parents are now buying direct from the supplier.
- Catering supplies – Approximately £75K less than predicted. This is due to honouring the 80% furlough scheme for catering staff not working because of COVID. A reduced quantity of food was needed because of the reduced number of staff and children onsite during the 1st lockdown. During the months of the partial school closure the invoices from the catering company were substantially less than normal.
- Agency Supplying Teaching – Supply Teaching costs reduced over the summer term. Long term agency staff were paid at the 80% furlough rate. Short Term (day to day) agency supply staff were not needed during the partial school closure months.
- Other Support Supply Staff and Therapists – Long term agency staff were paid at the 80% furlough rate. Reduced need for agency staff during the partial school closures. 1UP (Side Be Side) - haven't been in school during the partial closure and savings have been made on those costs.

b. Update on carry forward

(GCM) Predicts a carry forward of £600K by the end of this financial year. However, GCM anticipates it may be more. A large number of commitments have remained in the budget but it is unpredictable due to the current pandemic. If schools remain operational as normal then the next 6 months will see a more normal budget expenditure.

(SW) Noted that the last financial year carry forward was similarly predicted but the final carry forward was over £900K, and asked if there were plans to spend this surplus.

(RD) Stated that the current budget is being safeguarded at the moment but at the end of the year there will be a clearer idea of remaining budget and what this will look like for the rest of the academic year. Further in the meeting, the spending of surplus was discussed.

(SW) Asked for clarification on whether the plan was to spend the surplus based on the academic year and not the financial year.

(RD) Confirmed that the surplus from the 19/20 financial year budget is planned to be spent during the 20/21 academic year, and the 20/21 surplus will be spent across the 21/22 academic year.

A Surplus Spending Plan for 2020/21 was presented to the Resources Committee.

(RD) Noted there is a short action plan for the proposed carry forward. The Surplus Spending Plan is to clarify how the carry forward is proposed to be spent over the coming years.

- IT Hardware – A portion of the surplus has been assigned to buying new iPads and Classroom Desktop PCs for Teachers.
- Capital Works – 2 new play structures have been installed at Hoxton Garden. At SW works were completed on the rooftop playground and at Orchard some playground works were completed included new decking.
- Other plans have been committed but not yet achieved. Including the renovation of library books and library area refurbishments which is projected to be carried out in the Spring Term. Additional Class Staff costs have also been included in the Surplus Plan.

c. ICT Expenditure Review 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 (to date)

An ICT Expenditure Summary for 2019/2020 and 2020/21 was presented to the Resources Committee

(GCM) Stated the ICT Expenditure Summary is to clarify the expenditure and to give some transparency around companies that have been used over the 2019/20 financial year and the 2020/21 financial year including 6 months planned expenditure still ongoing.

- 2019/20: ICT expenditure included the leases for the LCD boards, iPads and Chromebooks in the classroom. The replacement and installation of the new servers was also carried out in 2019/20 along with the upgrade of all the Wi-Fi access points. The remaining expenditure was used on upgrading all the office and SLT desktop computers. This time round the PCs were bought out right instead of buying in to a lease agreement.
- 2020/21: The final instalment on the LCD boards lease agreement was paid in September 2020. The 2nd lease for the Chromebooks and iPads still has a further 1 and ½ years of payments in the lease agreement. The additional expenses to be added to the 2020/21 list is for the project to upgrade the classroom desktop computers and the Teacher iPads that has been proposed during this Resources Meeting.

(SW) Queried if there is a forward looking plan on keeping the IT equipment and software up to date.

(GCM) Stated that within the Viridis, the timeframe cycle for updating the IT hardware and software is on average 3-4 years. With a maximum cycle of 5 years', all depending on the budget situation.

(SW) Noted that some of this equipment is now 2 years old.

(GCM) Clarified that the LCD Boards are nearly 2 years old but GCM doesn't see this being a problem as long as there is no fundamental changes to the way teaching is carried out. The LCD boards should have a longer lifespan. This is all depending on software compatibility.

(SW) Noted that it is anticipated then, that in a couple of years, the IT software and hardware may need to be reviewed. This will need to be considered in future budgets and a contingency plan will be needed to cover this in the future.

(JG) Queried if the suppliers were selected following the procurement policy and procedures.

(GCM) Confirmed that the procurement policy was followed and that 3 quotes were sought and presented at the governors meetings.

d. ICT Procurement Quotes for new purchase

A spreadsheet detailing the costs and quotes from three different suppliers was shared with the Resources Committee.

GCM explained that the proposed plan is to replace all the classroom desktop computers and teacher iPads across all three sites. Quotes were sought from three different suppliers with the intention to purchase 65 desktop PCs and 80 iPads. The current PCs in use have outdated software and are extremely slow. The current iOS software does not support the generation of iPad currently in use. GCM proposes that Toucan Computing is the supplier selected as they are reliable and professional and past experiences with them have been positive.

(SW) Noted that Toucan Computing also provides 3yr warranty whereas the other 2 companies do not.

(GCM) Confirmed the warranty is on the hardware.

(GCM) Explained that the proposal is to buy HP computers because HP has a scheme in place for education establishments where they recycle old computers and reimburse a small amount of money for each item (£100 in cash, £150 in voucher). Apple also has a similar scheme, whereby they give a small voucher for each working item. They will collect and dispose/recycle all the old computers.

The Resources Committee voted in favour of Toucan Computing as the nominated supplier to carry forward with this project.

5. Staffing Update

a. Current structure including leadership structure/risks: recruitment, retention, teacher training, maternity cover

A document containing an overview of the staffing structure was shared with the Resources Committee.

(RD) Stated on the 1st page of the document is a breakdown of the leadership teams across all 3 schools, including the differences in structures. The differences relate to the number of leaders needed depending on the number of children on roll. Currently, at Orchard the capacity is 630 with 612 pupils on roll; at SW the capacity is 420 and 366 on roll and at HG the capacity is 420 with 299 on roll. There are two members of the leadership team on maternity leave with their responsibilities being distributed amongst the other members of the team. Newer members of the leadership are being supported by established leaders of the team. There are no potential risks across the leadership teams in any of the schools.

(RD) On the 2nd page of the document is an overview of teaching staff that have left over the last 3 academic years. During 2017/18 there were 21 leavers, 2018/19 15 leavers and in 2019/20 there were only 12 leavers. This is a Federation wide number of leavers and not per individual school. The number of Apprentice Teachers has also been included in this overview where a total number of 7 Apprentice Teachers have been appointed Federation wide in each of the last 3 academic years. This shows a growing stability in teaching levels across the federation with the number of leavers reducing each year.

However, this academic year, 6 Apprentice Teachers have been recruited in order to fully support our NQT+1's and the NQT's for this academic year due to the teaching time missed throughout the partial school closure.

Retention Strategies are also listed in the document. RD referred to the strategies as being really important for the Federation. These strategies and the ways in which the teachers are supported are constantly reviewed. As discussed in the FGB meeting there is a wellbeing policy that overarches this thinking and takes into account the steps already in place, ensuring that everything possible is being done to support the teachers. The retention also sits within the wellbeing policy as happy and stable teachers is highly encouraged. This also relates to other members of staff within the school; including teaching assistants and other support staff.

(SW) Asked how many teachers there are across all 3 schools.

(RD) Confirmed there are 53 teachers across the Federation.

(HL) Queried how the Viridis Federation compares with industry standards?

(RD) The *Schools Financial Value Standards* (SFVS) audit takes place every year and within that they compare staffing proportions locally and nationally. There is no cause for concern for the Federation's staffing. In comparison with the last academic year there is an average of 4 leavers per site. RD will monitor this trend over the next 2 to 3 years to establish a clearer understanding of what is happening and when to mitigate those risks. During the last resignation period there were significantly less resignations compared with previous years. The aim is to reduce the number of resignations over the next couple of years so there is a natural shedding of staff.

6. Pay Committee Performance Management Update

a. Confirmation of pay committee approval

(JG) Stated that the pay committee met to discuss RD's performance management against the objectives that were set last year. RD exceeded expectations and it has been a fantastic year for RD and all the schools Head Teachers. JG conveyed his thanks to RD for all that has been achieved in the last year, particularly given the extraordinary and unprecedented situation presented in the last year. The current school year's objectives were also discussed as best as possible given the wider context.

JG confirmed there is nothing to be approved by the Resources Committee.

(SW) Reiterated praises on behalf of the resources committee for the last year.

7. Health & Safety

a. Staff Training including Health and Safety/Fire Safety

(RD) Confirmed, at the beginning of the academic year, all staff undertook online training on Health and Safety and Fire Safety. RD and GCM are currently looking at sourcing other options for staff training as a similar model has been used over the last couple of years. This is to ensure that assessments are changed overtime and to make sure it remains diverse and relevant.

b. COVID Secure Risk Assessment

(RD) Stated that the DFE submits guidance which has been updated several times throughout the pandemic. This has been reflected in The Viridis risk assessment and is being reviewed and updated every 2 weeks. The guidance is double checked and the risk assessment is updated and actioned with anything that needs to be. The current risk assessment shared in the Resources Meeting has been highlighted in yellow where current updates are having biggest challenges to reiterate.

Another guidance update was published yesterday (04/11/2020) relating to the 2nd national lockdown. Not many significant changes relating to the risk assessment. One of the areas that does need to be better considered is any visitors coming into the schools; which will be evaluated and communicated to staff within the next day. Members of staff who are in the Extremely Clinically Vulnerable Group and were shielding during the 1st lockdown are not currently at work and will be shielding/working from home during this lockdown. This effects 5 members of staff across the Federation.

(HL) Queried if this was national guidance on shielding.

(RD) Confirmed it is national guidance.

(RD) Informed the Committee that there has been no need for a whole bubble or year group isolation so far to date. Only 1 member of staff has tested positive for COVID which happened during the half term and therefore has not impacted the school. A small number of parents have tested positive and those children affected have been in self isolation within the correct time frame. No children have test positive for COVID.

Throughout the week core instructions and provisions around safety and hygiene are revisited. There is a weekly staff briefing specifically about staff and children's hygiene. Parts of the risk assessment are specifically discussed during these briefings so the importance of keeping the schools COVID Secure is constantly being reiterated.

All members of staff across the schools have had meetings with the HT so they have had an opportunity to discuss their own needs against the current guidance so any issues that may impact any individuals are made aware. RD will continue to revise and update the guidance particularly around the cleaning to make sure the schools are fully compliant with the risk assessments and to ensure quality assurance is happening.

No further questions.

8. Impact Statements for Sports Premium, PPG and COVID Funding

- a. Update on Sports Premium Statement**
- b. Update on PPG Statement**
- c. Update on COVID Funding**

(RD) Stated that typically at this point the Sports Premium and PPG Statements would be shared with the Resources Committee but this had been held back. This is due to the incoming COVID funding having an impact on the Sports and PPG premium in the context of the new academic year and what will be planned as a result. All three funding streams will intertwine with each other and therefore it is important to ensure there is clarity on the spending. The statements are due for completion and will be shared in the Spring Term Resources Meeting in detail to discuss how that funding is being allocated and how those changes have been impacted by the current situation.

In terms of the COVID funding, the government has pledged £80 per child (from Reception to Year 6) as additional funding to support with academic recovery and catch up. At Orchard this equates to just under £50K, at Southwold approximately £30K and at Hoxton Garden approximately £23K. In total, the expected value is approximately £100K.

With that money, the plan is to recruit a specialist Speech and Language Therapist who will lead Speech and Language Therapy groups across all 3 schools. Currently, as part of the Federations normal buy in service, a therapist is allocated to the schools and oversees all 3 schools with the Federation. A significant improvement has already been made by the service that is available but that service can be supported very effectively if one person is leading intervention groups across the schools which will significantly improve outcomes, particularly for EY children. This also ensures continued provision of TAs in each classroom across the school and this means TAs can be used for quality first in class interventions rather than redistributing that resource across the school. The intention is to begin this process from January.

(SW) Queried if the websites had been updated with the PPG statement even though the statement will not be seen in this meeting.

(RD) The statements are due to go up on the websites in the coming week. Regarding COVID catch up, there is some vagueness on how the funding is being distributed to schools and no COVID catch-up funding has yet been received. It has been confirmed that it is being distributed in 3 waves; 40% in Autumn Term, 33% in the Spring Term and the remainder in the Summer Term. This will be supplemented to ensure the provisions that have been planned can be achieved.

(GCM) has enquired with Yukon at HE, why the funding hasn't been received. Yukon informed GCM that The Federation is not on the first list of schools that will receive the COVID funding. GCM is in contact to find out when the schools will receive the money.

(JG) Stated the statements will be important this year with everything that is happening. There is very little scope for the children to get involved in weekend activities. The plans for the COVID catch up will make an impact.

(RD) Noted that it was important not to rush the statements because being back at school and seeing where the levels the children are at was essential in prioritising what is important. After 6 weeks, the areas that need addressing can be isolated rather than having a statement that wasn't going to have an impact.

(SW) Queried if 1UP (Side by Side) supported the vulnerable pupils during the last partial closures.

(RD) Confirmed that 1UP had been supporting the schools and provisions were put in place right across the partial school closures but it was a revised service as they were not able to provide the same level of capacity. That is why there was a reduced invoice amount. They provided some online therapy sessions and were proactive in following up with children they support. There are two new leads at two of the schools and another is due to start. They are working towards rebuilding their services.

(GCM) Confirmed that 1UP didn't charge for some of the Summer Term period, between April and June.

9. Premises Update

a. Capital Works Expenditure (breakdown 2019/2020 and 2020/2021)

(RD) Stated during the last resources meeting it was discussed about identifying the companies that had been used for premises work across the financial year.

(GCM) Explained that an analysis of the money that was spent on premises work across the last financial year and the 1st half of this year was conducted. It was then sorted by company and the total amount spent on that company was calculated. Some of the companies are specialists in their fields and are quite proactive in understanding the requirements of schools and the need to work around school timings. A number of these companies have good relations with the federation.

(SW) Pointed out, for instance, Alliance Facilities, the procurement policy states that 3 quotes for anything over £50K are required. £68K has been spent in total with Alliance Facilities. SW asked if three quotes have been sought even though it's for lots of different jobs. Accumulatively, this would still fall within the £50K threshold.

(GCM) Stated that the problem with that is, when the jobs are commissioned, they are not always at the same time and not always confirmed. There isn't an overall schedule of works across the year and the quotes are not asked for at the same time. A lot of these jobs are unexpected and come up as we go along throughout the year.

(RD) Stated that the outcome of the document was to identify whether spending was disproportionate with one company compared to another. The jobs are accumulative over a financial year. Other quotes have been established even though the listed jobs do not meet the threshold of procurement. It is important that evaluations of the breadth of companies is happening which is often discussed during

the half termly premises meetings. Having a conscious breadth of comparison reduces the risks of reliance on regularly used companies.

An example of this is the proposed flooring repairs to the damaged floor on the ground floor corridor at Orchard. 4 or 5 quotes have been sought from different companies to look at the quality of their work and the costings. The projected cost is under £5K which is a small amount in terms of procurement but it was important to explore all options and not just to lean towards one company due to reliance rather than thinking about the breadth.

(SW) Stated it is difficult to find a solution to this especially as the works are ad hoc and reactive.

(JG) Appreciated the listed document and stated it satisfied what was asked in the previous Resources Meeting. JG expressed an interest in using this document as a framework for next year's works. It is helpful to determine where money has been spent with one company and to understand how it got to that total figure.

(RD) Clarified that in light of these discussion in previous resources meetings, a review section has been added to the procurement policy to account for this. What hasn't changed is any of the threshold criteria. The updated document also accounts for both Federation works and individual school works.

(SW) Noted it is about being aware and not being blindsided and just knowing what you're doing.

(RD) Noted that once the Procurement Policy has been approved along with the Financial Procedures and Code of Practice, the final documents will be produced and shared in the appropriate way.

10. Policies

a. Pay Policy

(SW) Queried if the pay policy had any changes.

(RD) Confirmed there were no changes. The latest update from Hackney is the 2019 policy but an updated version may be shared in the near future. The Federation is still working to the 2019 policy until there is an updated version from Hackney.

No further comments or changes. All in agreement and approved.

b. Procurement Policy

No comments or changes. All approved and in agreement.

c. Code of Practice and Scheme Delegation

(RD) Noted that this policy was reviewed and checked. No changes because the levels of procurement haven't changed.

(GCM) Added that the procurement policy, the code of conduct policy and the financial procedures policy were not signed in February because they linked into each other. Once the procurement policy has been approved then they can all be approved together.

No further comments or changes. All in agreement and approved.

d. Finance Procedures

No comments or changes. All in agreement and approved.

(GCM) To send all the policies to be signed off on the approval by the Chair of Governors and the Chair of the Finance Committee.

11. Any Other Business

a. Caretaker House (initial discussion)

To be discussed during the Spring Term Resources Meeting.

(RD) Noted that Hackney has approved the facade works at HG. Awaiting an update and will be shared in the Spring Meeting.

12. Glossary of Common Terms

Meeting ended at 6.00pm