

## NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

### Part A Minutes of Local Governing Board Meeting Held at the school on 26 March 2024 at 4.30 pm

Naureen Khalid (NK)	Appointed Governor, Chair	Present
Jonathan Capon (JC)	Appointed Governor	Absent
Ade Fasui (AF)	Appointed Governor	Apologies accepted
Sol Ade-Otchere (SO)	Appointed Governor	Present
Steve Penny (SP)	Appointed Governor	Present
Eileen Xiaoyu Zhang (EXZ)	Parent Governor	Present
Jenny Wilkins (JW)	Appointed Governor	Apologies accepted

**In attendance:**

Alan Blount (AB) - Headteacher  
 Claire Viner (CV) - School Business Manager (SBM)  
 Karen Fitzpatrick (KF) - Independent Clerk

Item	Minutes	Action
1	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked governors for taking the time to attend this budget review.</p> <p>The Clerk to Governors was absent as they were taking their child to hospital. The Chair thanked Karen Fitzpatrick for stepping as clerk for the meeting.</p>	
2	<p><b>Apologies for Absence and Quorum</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ade Fasui and Jenny Wilkins, who had both been uncertain whether they would be able to attend.</p> <p>The meeting was quorate with four governors present.</p>	
3	<p><b>Declaration of Interests</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of business or pecuniary interests.</p>	
4	<p><b>2024/25 Budget</b></p> <p>The School Business Manager (SBM), who had circulated the budget and summary document in advance of the meeting, responded to questions.</p> <p>Q – Where there were increased or decreased figures in successive years – how was that % calculated?</p> <p>These reflected rates of inflation and in the majority of cases the school was instructed on what percentages to use for the next and subsequent years. All department heads were asked if they had any specific requirements so that they could be taken into account. One example of this was that the music department wanted to buy a baby grand piano and some upright pianos at a cost of about £20k. The majority of departmental budgets would vary year on year.</p> <p>Looking at summary budget for year 5, there was always massive dip because of inflation. Expenditure had to be decreased in order to set a balanced budget year on year. This was</p>	

offset by the cumulative carry forward figure. Currently the predicted carry forward for year 5 was £643k. As much as departmental budgets had to dip at the moment, it was possible to set a balanced budget for year 5.

This was the SBM's fifth year with the school and the methodology she used could be seen to work when the current budget position was compared to that in 2019.

Q – Were gas and electricity prices expected to remain stable in the coming years?

The figures for these had not arrived yet and the instruction had been to leave the budgets as they were. This was the first draft of the budget. The allocations could be increased as needed, there was a contingency. Over the next four years the bottom line would stay at 2% of GAG.

Q – Were the figures shown for the individual line items refined and adjusted over the coming years?

Allocations were made in order of priority – first resourcing the school, then non-negotiables and utilities, then needs of departments, and the rest would go into contingencies. The Trust documents stated what could and could not be done, for example the teaching contingency could not be more than 3% of GAG. The general contingency could not be more than 1% of GAG.

Q – What was the other income in the 5/600 series?

These covered anything not listed. For example, 338 – computer science hub, 533 – science learning partnership, lettings and other income.

Q – What was included in line 22 – rental income? Was Gift Aid included?

Gift Aid was money reclaimed from donations. One line was lettings. Another was twilight lessons.

The SBM would find out exactly what went into each of these lines from the new Management Accountant. It had been discussed previously that there were too many lines under the heading, which was a restriction in the finance package, but not helpful.

Q – Were there losses under catering?

There was a new catering contact in place and the SBM had yet to be notified of next year's figures. Catering was not making a loss.

Q – What was the exact overall contingency in the budget. Teaching was £163k and the collective surplus appeared to be about £750k. It would be necessary to compare overall surplus against expenditure in order to assess the financial risk element.

Contingency was set as a percentage of the budget. Teaching was set at 2% of GAG. The general contingency was set at 1% of GAG. The surplus was 2% of GAG.

Q – In terms of contingency was the £163k the only one or were there others? Had they been prudent in costing

Any additional contingency would be shown in lines 75-78. The Headteacher informed governors that when the contingency had been increased in the past it had been clawed back by the Trust.

Q - Had they been prudent in the cost lines?

This was in lines 75-78.

Q – Maintenance services – future years seemed low.

That was the cumulative surplus. If year 5 had not been brought down it would not be a balanced budget over the five years. If nothing changed in the next five years there would still be enough money in rest of the budget to run the school, in spite of the fact that year 5 had gone down to set a balanced budget.

There were no figures for the IT re-charge or catering as yet. They would not vary greatly from what was shown. Will keep 2% of GAG. General and teaching contingencies would remain the same.

Q – Furniture and equipment – there appeared to be a lot allocated for 24/25.

This was a contingency. When the IT re-charge and catering was known this would be used to compensate for any variation coming through for draft 2.

Q – The cost of subscriptions appeared to be high?

The SBM had tried to consolidate subscription costs into one place because in the past they had hit departmental budgets quite hard. The contingencies in years 3, 4 and 5 would compensate.

Q – Why did the budget reduce to £2k, was this an attempt to reduce reliance on subscriptions?

Looking at the surpluses on the bottom line, by year 3 surpluses and contingency would easily allow £5k to be put in, and a further £5k if needed due to price increases. The subscription costs had been centralised to make things easier for heads of departments.

Q – So would it be necessary to keep an eye on subscriptions and IT because the budget allocations had been reduced considerably?

IT would reduce from £65k. A lot of the money would go into capital. Currently the school was spending on the digital strategy and leasing rather than buying. IT replacement costs as old equipment had already been replaced. There was also a move to Surface Pro's. Possibly the budget would not reduce to £11k, but it would be down from £65k.

Q – The allocation for cleaning and household materials had reduced, how could cleaning costs go down?

Extra money had been allocated in the next two years for equipment purchases.

Q – The percentage of the budget to be spent on Senior Leadership Team remained the same – was it envisioned that those costs would be stable for the next five years?

	<p>The figures were taken from payroll adding United Learning inflation figures. No other changes were expected.</p> <p>Q – L12 – Why was the number dipping in 25/26? Was it expected that there would be less students?</p> <p>These figures were put into the system in the background, rather than calculated by the SBM. It was not expected that there would be less students, it could be an inflationary factor.</p> <p>Q – If the surpluses were exceeded – increase exceeds cost – would make the budget position healthier.</p> <p>The surplus could not exceed 2% of GAG.</p> <p>Currently, out of the 12 schools supported by the business partners, Newstead was the only school not setting a deficit budget. The others were unable to set a balanced budget.</p> <p>The school only got baseline income, so had to manage budgets carefully. Monthly meetings were held with the management accountant to ensure that the school did not deviate from budget.</p> <p>Q – Under revenue – Pupil Premium would be increasing between 24-25?</p> <p>Pupil Premium funding ran from April – March, current figures had to be used in the budget, rather than forecasting on anticipated eligible pupil numbers. The difference was £10k.</p> <p>Q – Was extra expenditure to support those pupils reflected in the budget?</p> <p>It was, for the pupils currently on roll. The Pupil Premium statement, to be published by December 31st, was based on the current pupil numbers and funding.</p> <p>Of the £10k income, 50% would be spent on quality teaching and learning, so there would be an extra £5k spend.</p> <p>Q – What was the lump sum of £145k?</p> <p>It was a lump sum payment in the GAG funding.</p> <p>Q – What did the health and safety line cover?</p> <p>There was a new health plan available for UL staff at a cost of £50 per person, which included a flu vaccination for all staff. The total cost was £7,450 . The assistance plan had been launched today. It was an incentive plan that included benefits such as cash back on dental costs.</p>	
5	<p><b>Confidential Matters</b></p> <p>There were no confidential items in terms of publication of the minutes.</p>	
6	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There was no other matters of business to report.</p>	



7	<b>Future Meetings</b> Future meetings would be held on 14th May and 25th June 2024 at 6.30pm.	
8	<b>Closure of Meeting</b> The meeting closed at 5.05 pm. The Chair thanked everyone for their time and the clerk for stepping in.	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_