

**LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**FORWARD CENTRE ACADEMY**

**VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM ON  
MONDAY 14 JUNE 2021 AT 4.00PM**

**Present:** Vicky Byrne (VB), Deborah Crier (DC), Carleen Fernside (CFe), Christopher Fielding, Academy Lead (CF), Suzanne Harulow, Chair (SH), Damien Mills (DM) and Jenny Scott (JS).

**In attendance:** Rebecca Leonard (RL) Executive Vice Principal, Mubeen Moosa (MM) Trainee Accountant (for item 8), Nicky Berry (NB) Deputy and Carole Brooks, Clerk, Governance Services.

**Suzanne Harulow in the Chair**

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

SH welcomed all present, thanking all for their attendance to the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from Liz Douglas and Lynn Williams. There had been no communication received from Vicky Byrne, Carleen Fernside, Kirsty Smith or Charlene Parkinson, it was hoped they may still attend.

CF reported that Nicky Berry had advised that she may be late and would join the meeting as soon as possible.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest were made.

**3. NOTIFICATION OF 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'**

- Un-announced LA Inspection
- Governor Gateway Access

**4. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES**

**4.1 Notification of Governor vacancy**

The Clerk reported that a vacancy for one Parent Governor still remained.

CF reported that it was planned to hold an election in September 2021. It was noted that CF had recently contacted Joanne Blackburn (JB), previous Parent Governor asking if she would consider re-joining the Board should the next Parent Governor election prove un-successful. It was explained that although JB was no longer a parent of a pupil attending the Forward Centre, she was still eligible as a 'Parent' to serve in this position in the event that no other parents were willing to put themselves forward. JB had indicated that she would give the matter some thought.

CF noted that JB had contributed well during her time as parent Governor and had brought a lot to the LGB.

### **Carleen Fernside joined the meeting apologising for her late arrival.**

#### **4.2 Expiry of Term of Office**

The Clerk reported that the terms of office for the following Governors were due to expire:

- Damian Mills, Staff Governor on 6 November 2021
- Charlene Parkinson, Parent Governor on 14 November 2021

CF confirmed that he would also hold a Staff Governor election in the early Autumn Term 2021.

The Clerk noted that DM was welcome to put himself forward again if he so wished.

In the absence of Charlene, CF confirmed that he would contact CP to advise her that her term of office was due to end on 14 November 2021. It was noted that there would then be two parent governor vacancies.

#### **Action:**

- i) CF to undertake a Parent Governor election in the early autumn term 2021.
- ii) CF to undertake a staff Governor election in the early autumn term 2021.

**Agreed:** That CF re-approach Joanne Blackburn to ascertain her interest in serving as Parent Governor in the event of an un-successful Parent Governor election carried out in the early Autumn term 2021.

### **5. MINUTES/MATTERS ARISING OF THE LAST MEETING**

Governors had received the minutes of the last meeting held virtually on 1 February 2021 for their review and approval. Governors were guided through the minutes for accuracy, with no amendments being required.

### **6. MATTERS ARISING**

Governors confirmed that all matters arising that were not included on the current agenda had been actioned.

CF referred to the discussion at the last meeting regarding a child missing from education. Governors were to be assured that the family were now living in Bradford and had been contacted by the SEN Team and were now being supported by Bradford LA as appropriate.

#### 6.1 Website Compliance

CF confirmed that a review of the new website had been undertaken by LW. There were no major issues to report, and any matters that had been highlighted would be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

CF conveyed his thanks to LW for all her support in this area.

**Action:** LW to continue to undertake termly reviews of the FC Website, providing a report back to the Board at the next meeting thereafter.

It was noted that a number of tests had been undertaken in respect of the new websites across the Trust. The Trust were happy that they met the necessary requirements and statutory responsibilities.

## 7. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT

Governors had received the Academy Lead's Report prepared by CF providing information based on the Spring Term 2021. It was noted that the information shared relating to the four OFSTED categories of:

- Quality of Education:
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management

Aspects of the report were highlighted as follows:

### Attendance

Governors were informed that Pupil attendance to the FC was high at 93.7% compared to other Alternative Provisions (AP's). It was noted that an internal audit had been undertaken and the figures related to the pupils physically in the centre. It was noted that if the number of pupils who were accessing remote learning from home could be included, the figure would be around 95%.

### Behaviour

Pupil behaviour was good in general. The pupils on site were being supported by a core group of staff together with some agency staff. There had been an influx of new pupils along with some new staff members and therefore the experienced staff had been somewhat stretched. Staff had gone back to basics in terms of reminding the pupils of the behaviour standards that were required. This had also supported the newer staff members, helping them to better understand the standards and expectations that were in place.

### Staffing

CF confirmed that Nikki Berry had been successful in securing the appointment of Deputy Head and was proving to be above and beyond all expectations.

### Vandalism on site

CF reported that recently there had been a number of instances of vandalism on site. It was noted that the Forward Centre had never experienced vandalism to this level before and had therefore contacted the Police who were monitoring the centre on CCTV 24/7.

The Police had circulated details of who they had identified on the CCTV. It was to be noted that none were from BIT, it was thought that the vandals in question attended other local schools.

Questions of the Academy Leads report were invited but none were raised.

## **9. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Governors had received the financial report prepared by David Smith. In the absence of Mr Smith, Governors were guided through the report by MM, Trainee Accountant.

MM reported that the FC held a deficit budget of £20,000 compared to the £99,000 that had been projected previously.

MM informed Governors that the Trust had implemented a savings programme resulting in measures being taken to reduce the number of permanent members of staff. It was noted that four Learning Mentor posts and one Teaching Post had been made redundant.

It was planned to continue into the future with a more flexible staffing model by employing fewer permanent staff and recruiting agency staff on a need led basis. This had been recommended by the DfE and ESFA, particularly in light of the Pandemic.

It was noted that a pool of high-quality agency staff had been built up and therefore felt confident that the quality of provision would not be compromised. It was also noted that this model had been recommended by the ESFA and DfE particularly in light of the current circumstances of the Pandemic.

MM noted that pupil numbers were now starting to increase, and income was therefore also improving. It was further noted that the LA had returned £60,000 based on the pupil numbers held on site between January and March 2020 which had been a great boost.

CF confirmed that initially there had been class sizes of around 24 pupils. However, this had now risen to 39 which in turn generated more income. This would therefore balance out the cost of employing additional agency staff. It was to be noted that 13 of these pupils would leave the FC in July 2021 reducing class sizes to around 26. CF further noted that 33 pupils was the model they worked to that would trigger the need for an additional agency teacher.

MM noted that the funding received from the DfE and LA had been of significant help with the projected deficit being reduced to £20k.

## 9. **POLICIES**

CF confirmed that there were no policies to be approved at this time. However, it was noted that the Accessibility Plan had been updated and was now live on the website for Governors to access as required.

**Agreed:** That Governors note and approve the changes made.

**Action:** Governors to access the Accessibility Plan on the website for information

## 10. **NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

### 10.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair reported that she had been unable to attend the summer term Chairs' Briefing. The Clerk reported that has been held virtually on 10 May 2021 where the following matters had been highlighted:

- Governance Services Update
- Nurturing the team on your Governance Boards
- Summer Term Meeting Updates:
  - Governance Conference
  - Ofsted Inspections this term
  - Early Years Foundation Stage — New Framework
  - Re-launching the role of the Link Governor for Training

10.2 Rebecca Leonard, Vice Principal for the Trust had attended the Partnership Meeting held on 24 May 2021. Governors were referred to the report that had been circulated on the Gateway for their information.

The Clerk noted that the following information had been presented:

- Update on the work of the Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership.  
(Shona Green, Safeguarding Officer)
- Overview of the most recent updates and reforms to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.  
(Head of Service for Children with SEND)
- An outline of the proposed changes to the EYFS Framework to be implemented from September 2021 alongside key findings from early adopter schools.  
(Start Well Service)

RL informed Governors that there were some significant changes ahead in respect of Safeguarding, SEN, Early Help and the language used, for which the launch date was yet to be advised. RL referred to the circulated report advising the Link Governors with

responsibility for SEN and Safeguarding to consider the questions that had been included within her report to assist them with their monitoring role.

### 10.3 Link Governors Report on Training / Recent Training undertaken

RL reported that she would re-circulate the link to the Governance Services training opportunities to all Governors encouraging them to access any relevant training to further enhance their role. It was noted that if there was any other specific training that they felt would be useful to let her know and she would endeavour to make the necessary arrangements.

RL reported that an analysis of the Skills Audit would be undertaken to inform any gaps or training needs and Governors would be directed to specific training as required.

**Action:** RL to analyse the Skills Audit to inform any training needs and report back at the Autumn term meeting.

#### 10.3.1 Governance Training Programme 2021/22

The Clerk reported that the 2021/22 Governance Training Programme would be available on the Bolton Governance Services website before the end of the current term and that governors would be informed via email when it was available.

**Action:**

- i) Any newly appointed Governors to access the National Induction Training.
- ii) All Governors to make the necessary arrangements to access suitable courses to widen their knowledge and enhance their Governance role.

#### 10.3.2 Link Governor Briefing Sessions

The Clerk reported that a Link Governor Briefing session was to be held virtually this evening, on 14 June 2021. The session had been arranged to re-launch the role of the Link Governor for Training and to undertake consultation on the Governance Training Programme for 2021-22. It was envisaged that the autumn term session scheduled for 21 September 2021 would be held in person at Bolton Science and Technology Centre (BSTC).

#### 10.3.3 Governor Skills Audit

CF reported that as part of SH's visit to the FC he an evaluation of the recent Governors skills audit had been undertaken. It was noted that the outcome had highlighted minimal issues including:

- Lack of experience across the Board in Chairing
- Lack of experience across the Board in the area of Finance

Governors were informed that for the next Governor week, it was planned to hold a training session on how the FC and Alternative Provisions (AP's) were financed.

Governors confirmed that this training would be very useful and beneficial to them.

SH noted the importance of evaluating the gaps and addressing them following completion of the skills audit in order to maintain the effectiveness of the Board.

Vicky Byrne joined the Meeting.

#### 10.4 Bolton Governance Conference

The Clerk reported that the Governance Services Team was planning to hold a Bolton Governance Conference in the Spring of 2022. The Team had invited Chairs at this term's Briefing session to share their preferences for either a physical conference at the Mercure Bolton Georgian House Hotel in Blackrod or a virtual event. Responses would inform planning and further information would be provided in due course.

### 11. GOVERNOR VISIT REPORTS

Following a very successful Governor week, the following monitoring reports had been submitted for Governor's review and information:

- SEND Provision – Carleen Fernside
- Single Central Record (SCR) – Deb Crier
- Teaching and Learning – Jenny Scott
- Changes to the FC Business Model – Liz Douglas
- Governor Training/Skills Audit analysis - Suzanne Harulow

CF thanked Governors for attending Governor week, noting that this had been well supported by all Governors. Governors were to be commended for their commitment, challenge and support, this was very much appreciated and valued.

Nicky Berry joined the meeting.

### 12. GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE

#### 12.1 Bolton Governance Gateway Discussion Boards

A detailed report had been provided in support of the agenda item. As a result of feedback Governance Services had incorporated a discussion board service on to the Gateway site. This allowed for secure communication between all members of the board for general information about meetings, events or links to specific guidance and points of interest, the discussion board should not be used to relay personal or sensitive information about individuals.

Once activated the discussion board could be "switched on" for MAT's at Trust and/or Local Boards limiting discussion facility to those individual levels.

**Agreed:** To request that the Clerk activate the discussion board for the Local Board.

#### 12.2 Governance Recruitment

Further detail on how the Governance Services Team could support the recruitment of Local Authority Governors for maintained schools and assist for co-opted governors, or trustees and local governors for academy trusts had been provided in the supporting agenda report.

An online application was available on the Governance Services Website in order that schools could signpost potential candidates to the site for further information about the role and to complete the online form.

Details of three external organisations that work with Local Authorities or directly with individual schools and academy trusts to help find and place those interested in serving as a governor or trustee had been provided. These were Inspiring Governance, Governors for Schools and Academy Ambassadors.

When recruiting any Board should begin by establishing what skills or experience, they may require by referring to a skills audit which it is good practice to undertake annually. Governance Services could assist in undertaking and reviewing a skills audit for your board through the Development Health Check service.

If vacancies were longstanding, and the Board had the right number of governors with the necessary skills and experience, they may look to reconstitution to a smaller, more focused group and the clerk could provide further assistance to take this forward.

**Agreed:** That there was currently a wide range of skills across the Board but that a review of the skills audit would be undertaken in order to make an informed decision on any skills required as vacancies arise.

### 13. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) REFORMS

Governors were referred to the detailed information contained in the accompanying agenda report. The EYFS framework set out the standards for all Early Years providers to ensure that children from birth to five learned, developed, were healthy and kept safe. The rationale behind the changes to the statutory framework included:

- To improve outcomes at age five, particularly in early language and especially for disadvantaged children, with an emphasis on self-regulation and executive function
- To reduce workload by minimising the amount of time spent gathering unnecessary evidence and spending less time on tracking and data collection to enable more time with children.
- To promote good oral health as a statutory expectation

Some schools had already been using a new early adopter framework as part of the EYFS reforms from September 2020 to August 2021.

The new EYFS framework, published on the 31 March 2021, should be used by all Ofsted registered early years providers in England from September 2021.

CF confirmed that this matter was not really applicable to the Forward Centre but that the information provided was very useful to note.

**Agreed:** To receive and note the report on the Early Years Foundation Stage Reforms and how this will be implemented.



## 14. GOVERNOR IMPACT STATEMENT

### 14.1 Impact made at this meeting.

CF confirmed that Governors had a significant impact on the success of the FC through the support and challenge they presented in respect of the Academy Leads termly reports and the related information and also through Governor week.

Governors were to be commended for their support and commitment to the Forward Centre this was very much appreciated and valued.

The Clerk reported that this matter had been discussed at other LGB Meetings and it had been agreed that whilst impact could be seen from the challenge, discussions and agreements made in termly LGB meetings, it was felt that the majority of the impact made was during Governor week and Governors monitoring visits to the provision and their individual areas of responsibility.

The Clerk noted that in other LGB meetings, it had been agreed that this item should be removed from each termly meeting agenda and only be included as a standing item on an annual basis on the summer/autumn term agenda. Mr Hodgkinson had agreed to prepare the annual statement for Governor's approval and subsequent upload to the website.

Following discussion, it was

**Agreed:** That the item relating to 'Governor Impact at each termly meeting' be removed from each termly agenda and be included on an annual basis on the Summer or Autumn term agendas.

**Action:** PH to complete an annual Impact Statement for Governors approval at the next meeting.

## 16. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

**Agreed:** That the Local Governing Board meeting dates for the 2021/22 academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term 2021: Monday 11 October 2021 at 4.00pm

Spring Term 2022: Monday 7 March 2022 at 4.00pm

Summer Term 2022: Monday 13 June 2022 at 4.00pm

The Clerk noted that it was hoped that face-to-face meetings would resume in the new academic year, this was subject to the circumstances of the pandemic. However, for the present time Governors were to assume all meetings would continue to be held virtually unless otherwise informed.

It was noted that if Governors preferred their meetings to continue to be held virtually that was agreeable and that a blended approach of some virtual and some face-to-face meetings may also be considered.

## 17. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence from this meeting of Charlene Parkinson, Kirsty Smith and Lynn Williams.

**Action:** CF to contact CP and KS to ensure their well-being and to remind them of the need to submit an apology to the Chair, Clerk or Academy Lead if unable to attend future meetings.

## 18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### 18.1 LA Inspection

CF informed Governors that some months ago the LA informed the Trust that as part of their Quality Assurance monitoring, they would be carrying out some 'no notice inspections' on AP's.

CF stated that it was to be noted that this was being carried out as nationally, some AP's were not meeting the required standards.

Governors were informed that a team of three Inspectors attended the provision for around 2 – 2.5 hours, meeting the Academy Lead, Damian Mills, the staff team and the pupils on site.

DM confirmed that the two inspectors who he met had a very professional approach listening to the information that was being conveyed to them and felt that they had a good understanding of AP settings.

CF agreed that that the Inspection had been a very positive experience and commended the Inspectors for their approach.

### 18.2 Governance Gateway Access

The Clerk referred to Governor access to the Governance Gateway reporting that a security patch had recently been applied which would auto remove any Governors who had not accessed the site during the past year. This was to ensure that access for any Governors who may have left and had not been taken off would be duly removed.

Governors were informed that there had been instances of serving Governors being auto removed simply because they had not accessed the site in the previous year. With this in mind Governors were requested to ensure that they access the Gateway ahead of each meeting

Governors were thanked for their co-operation in this matter.

**Agreed:** That Governors note the update to the Governance Gateway and the need to ensure access is maintained.

## 19. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Agreed:** That none of the matters reported in the minutes of this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Chair thanked CF and his staff team for all their hard work and continued dedication.

CF thanked Governors for their contribution to the meeting and for their on-going support and commitment to The Forward Centre. It was recognised that Governors time was limited due to their own individual work commitments and the dedication shown was very much appreciated.

The meeting closed at 5.00pm

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Governors)

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