

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF
BOLTON IMPACT TRUST
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON
FRIDAY 3 MARCH 2023 AT 12.00 PM**

Present: K Davies (KD) - Chair of the Committee, P Hodgkinson (PH) – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and J Paradine

In Attendance: V Gavin (VG) – Director of Business Operations, D Lucksa (DL), D Smith (DS) – Financial Consultant and E Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to Trust

K DAVIES IN THE CHAIR

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies had been received; all Trustees were present.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

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

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

One item of Any Other Urgent Business was notified relating to potential capital spend.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

A copy of the minutes of the last meeting held on Friday 11 November 2022 had been circulated with the agenda papers and had been approved at the autumn term Trust meeting.

There were no matters arising, which were not covered on today's agenda.

5. HOW DOES FINANCE WORK IN AP AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

PH provided an overview of how finance worked in AP and Special Schools and explained the process of high needs funding, which comprised of a combination of place funding and top-up funding. PH stated that the top-up funding presented significant challenges to the Trust in being able to budget accurately. KD asked if there was anything to suggest that a Labour government would look at a different funding model. PH stated that there was nothing to suggest this, and it was unlikely that they would commit to any changes to policy.

Action: PH (circulate presentation slides to Trustees)

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 – SPRING TERM

A copy of the Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23 – Spring Term had been uploaded to the Gateway.

The report outlined:

- The financial monitoring position (both revenue and capital) for the 2022/23 year.
- The Trust's cashflow position as at the 31 January 2023, including monthly cashflow predictions up to August 2024.
- The Trust's Balance Sheet, as at the 31 January 2023.

Trustees were directed to Table 1, which demonstrated that the financial outturn position for the Trust for 2022/23 was a surplus totalling £130,000, which was £104,000 less than the original budget.

DS advised that this related to four significant variations at this stage in the year, as detailed below:

- Employee costs – pay award for teaching and support staff
- Reduced pupil numbers at The Forwards Centre – Sept to Dec
- Park School
- Lever Park

DS advised that eleven additional members of staff had been employed at an annual cost of £372,000. This reflected a combination of staff previously employed on an agency basis and increased staffing required to meet increased pupil numbers at Lever Park. A Trustee referred to Table 1 and asked why the Third Party Spend had not reduced following the recruitment of the agency staff. DS explained that new agency staff had also needed to be recruited to support new pupils and provide one to one support for some current pupils; however, additional funding had been received to support this.

Three Year Forecast 2021/22 to 2024/25

DS directed Trustees to the Three-Year Forecast and advised that this assumed that charges for services would be increased in line with inflation in future years and that an in-year revenue surplus of £130,000 would rise to £199,000 in future years. Trustees were advised that the capital loan in relation to the Trust's contribution towards boiler and roof replacement schemes at Lever Park would require repayments to commence in 2023/24 and these repayments were shown within the forecast.

Cashflow Statement

DS directed Trustees to the Cashflow Statement and advised that this presented a healthy picture.

KD thanked DS for his report and stated that the financial situation would continue to be monitored towards year end.

Agreed: To receive and note the Financial Monitoring Report 2022/23 – Spring Term

7. HR REPORT

PH reported that there were currently 110 staff employed by the Trust. Attendance was being managed for 12 members of staff and a brief overview was provided. PH stated that there were currently some very complex staffing issues, but all were genuine reasons for absence.

*In accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association, this matter has been designated as confidential in **PART B** of the minutes, thereby excluding the information from that which is to be made available to any interested persons.*

Trustees were informed that there had been minimal disruption from the recent strikes and PH provided an update on individual classes.

PH provided an overview of the Wellbeing Survey responses, which were reported to be very positive. The Central Team had actioned some of the responses i.e., looking at Behaviour Strategies at YC and the consistent use of the Behaviour Policy. However, Academy Leads would now be responsible for looking at their own individual academy responses.

PH reported that he would be conducting Staff Voice activities in all the academies and the CEO Drop-Ins would continue. The Wellbeing Survey would be repeated in the summer term.

A Trustee asked if the issues at Park School had affected some of the feedback. PH stated that Park School had actually received the most positive feedback throughout the Trust, and this was likely to be due to the swift response to issues from the Central Team and SLT. In response to questions PH stated that Youth Challenge had more negative feedback compared to the other academies but there were many challenging children currently on roll at this provision and the autumn term was historically very difficult. Behaviour was a noticeable feature of the Youth Challenge feedback, and this was being actioned.

8. BIT RESOURCES REPORT

Trustees were directed to the Resources Report. VG provided an overview of the headlines including:

- Wellbeing
- Office Teams
- Branding and Marketing
- Contracts
- New processes
- Premises
- Major building works
- Health & Safety
- Update to 2022/23 proposals

Branding & Marketing

Trustees were informed that the website was continuously updated by the Central Team and the academies. A full snagging list of the website was currently being completed including its content and aesthetics to ensure it met Trust requirements. VG stated that an external compliance review would be undertaken but she would also welcome Trustee feedback on the website and whether information was easy to access. The Chair encouraged new Trustees to look at the website as this would provide a complete overview of the work of the Trust.

Since the report was written a quote for signage had been received for £12,000. VG stated that she would get two more quotes for comparison.

Trustees were highlighted to an issue with regards to the Youth Challenge site, with the main concern being security of the site, which currently had open access. This presented a safeguarding risk, and the Central Team were working with the Academy Lead and Bolton Council to ascertain if the council could contribute to the cost of appropriate security fencing as this was a Council site. VG proposed that this be added to the Risk Register for on-going monitoring.

VG stated that she had completed staff voice at Park School. The results were very positive; however, there were some concerns around the suitability of the building, which was tight on space and has no real access to a safe outdoor space. Trustees were informed that the building next door (31 Chorley New Road) had become available and currently this seemed the most viable option to expand Park school as a temporary measure. Details were provided in Appendix 1A for approval by trustees. A Trustee asked how much it would cost to adapt the site. VG explained that three quotes had been received for accessible toilet facilities ranging from £5,000 to £18,000. A full survey had been completed and she would need to scrutinise this in detail. The Chair proposed that the decision whether to proceed with 31 Chorley New Road be delegated to himself and the CEO once all the information had been received.

VG provided an update on Lotus House and reported that next half term the Trust would initiate negotiations to come out of the lease earlier than the 12 months break clause that was initially in the contract. In response to questions VG explained that the maximum liability that the Trust would incur would be £41,000. A Trustee asked if Outwood Grange would be asked to contribute. PH stated that he was in discussions with Outwood Grange regarding this but reminded Trustees that BIT had received £60,000 for the project at the outset.

Trustees were informed that WN1 Lighting had completed a lighting survey and would undertake a comprehensive consumption analysis and develop a proposal, which would include details of the Trust's current energy consumption levels and associated costs and provide a comparison on both consumption and costs with the proposed new LED lighting solution. VG stated that she was waiting the report and would present this at the next meeting.

VG stated that the boiler project at Lever Park had gone well with no major issues or concerns. Trustees were informed that a £100,000 underspend was predicted and VG was currently working with AA projects to see if some of this underspend could be utilised for other work that fell in line with the scope of the project. The following areas had been highlighted so far and AA Projects were completing a walk round over half term to see if they could identify any other areas.

- Removal of an old water storage tank
- New pipework in science classroom
- Boxing in of current new pipework

A Trustee stated that this was a big underspend and asked why this had occurred. VG stated that this had been due to the type of boiler that Lever Park was able to have installed. DS stated that the Trust contribution was 30% so there may be a reduction in contribution costs.

It was noted that the Lever Park roof project was currently delayed due to high costs of materials.

VG reported that moving forwards she intended to work with the Facilities Manager and the Academy Leads to develop a 3-Year Plan with regards to any building works or requests that they may have for their Academy sites. This would allow the Trust to allocate the capital funding and locate additional funding where required.

The Chair asked if any progress had been made in issuing Trustees with BIT email addresses. PH confirmed that this was in progress and lanyards would also be provided to wear when on site.

Agreed: i) That the issues with regards to open access on the Youth Challenge site be added to the Risk Register
ii) That KD and PH be delegated responsibility to make a decision with regards to 31 Chorley New Road for ratification at the next full Trust meeting

9. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Friday 9 June 2023 at 12 pm

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

10.1 Capital Spend

PH reported that he had conducted a walkaround school with Pat Norton (Trustee) and she had suggested some minor aesthetic work at Lever Park. PH agreed that this would enhance the provision and asked for a mandate from Trustees to go ahead and provide further information on the scope of work, which could be funded by capital spend.

Agreed: That PH provide further information on the work at Lever Park

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the matters designated as confidential, thereby excluding the information from that which is to be made available to any interested persons, is contained within **PART B** of the Minutes.

With no further business the meeting closed at 1.00 pm

SUMMATIVE ACTIONS

Minute Number Responsible Action

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Standards Committee)