

MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

FRIDAY 4 MARCH 2022 AT 12.00 PM

Present: K Davies (KD) – Chair of Trustees, Paul Hodgkinson (PH) - Executive Principal and D McKeon (DMc)

In Attendance: D Smith (DS) - Finance Director and E Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to the Trust

T Grimshaw, Chair of the Committee, had submitted apologies, therefore it was necessary to appoint a temporary Chair for this meeting. DMc had been nominated to attend the meeting in TG's absence.

KEITH DAVIES IN THE CHAIR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. An apology for absence had been received from T Grimshaw (TG).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

One item of Any Other Business was notified regarding the impact of no pay award for teachers in relation to pensions.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING

A copy of the minutes of the last meeting held on Friday 12 November 2021 and the extraordinary meeting held on Friday 3 December 2021 had been circulated with the agenda papers and had been approved at the autumn term Trust meeting.

KD asked for an update on the Capital Bid. DS explained that the bid had been submitted but he did not expect to hear anything until late spring.

5. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2021-22

Financial Monitoring – Spring Term 2021-22

DS directed Trustees to the spring term monitoring report, which showed that the Trust was currently anticipating an outturn surplus totalling £230,000, which was £112,000 less than the original budget.

DS highlighted the significant variances for each Academy. DS advised that at Youth Challenge a higher proportion of Key Stage 3 pupils with greater needs than in previous years had resulted in a requirement for additional staff to meet those needs. In addition to this, additional temporary staffing had been required to cover for long term absences associated with Covid. The combination of these factors had resulted in additional costs totalling £128,000. Trustees were advised that school closures during the pandemic lowered the base number of pupils commissioned by the local authority at both Youth Challenge Secondary (4 pupils) and Youth Challenge Primary (4 pupils). However, this was expected to be a one off and numbers were expected to rise back to normal levels moving forwards.

Trustees were informed that the Local Authority would be reducing commissioned places by 10 at Park School with effect from 1 September 2022 and this would impact the funding by £100,000. DS advised that initial indications were that Park School was potentially facing a financial challenge totalling £218,000 in the 2022/23 financial / academic year. The Trust would need to be proactive, and proposals were currently being developed which comprise a combination of increased traded places through effective marketing to schools and other boroughs, alongside a restructure programme to reduce costs within the Academy. This would be presented under the next agenda item.

The Executive Principal reported that he had spoken with G Whitehead (LA Assistant Director) who had acknowledged that children in the borough would need more provision that had been commissioned. Strategic options for Park School from September had been discussed and this should allow the Trust to claw back some legacy deficit.

DMc asked if the additional resources needed were capital resources or staffing. DS advised that it was mainly staffing resources that was needed but they were sourced via an agency. Some pupils had significant needs and needed to be very tightly supervised. The Trust had no choice but to spend to ensure the safety of certain pupils.

Agreed: To receive and note the Spring Term Financial Monitoring Report 2021-22

6. PARK SCHOOL REVIEW

The Board of Trustees, having designated details of the discussion that followed as confidential in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association, this information is excluded from these minutes.

7. OUTWOOD GRANGE UPDATE

The Executive Principal provided an update on the discussions with Outwood Grange.

Trustees were informed that Outwood Grange would like to forge a partnership with Bolton Impact Trust, initially on a five-year term. This would be for 24 places in KS3 and KS4 for Worksop pupils and £600,000 funding would be provided up front. PH suggested that an extraordinary meeting be convened to discuss this further with all Trustees. KD stated that a process of due diligence was needed and agreed that an extraordinary meeting would provide Trustees with an opportunity for questions. It was proposed that Members also be invited to the meeting.

In response to questions DS reported that he had thoroughly reviewed the partnership proposals and felt this to be a very low financial risk and he saw this as an opportunity rather than a risk. Finer details would be provided at the extraordinary meeting. DMC stated that the Trust was in a strong financial position, and this was an opportune time to consider such proposals. KD stated that Trustees also needed to consider the legal costs involved. DS advised that central costs, including legal costs, would be covered in the £600,000 funding.

The Clerk recommended that Trustees also ratify the Park School Saving Programme proposals at the extraordinary meeting as the proposals would result in change to the school's structure.

Agreed: That an extraordinary meeting of Trustees and Members be convened to approve the Outwood Grange partnership proposals and to ratify the Park School Savings Programme

Action: PH / KD (convene extraordinary Trust meeting)

8. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES MANUAL

DS advised that the Financial Procedures Manual had been updated to include Dee Luczka as a Member and Pat Norton as a Trustee.

Agreed: To approve the updates to the Financial Procedures Manual

9. HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) SLA

A copy of the HR SLA 2022-25 had been uploaded to the Gateway. Trustees were advised that a reference to the Equality Impact Assessment now needed to be included in the policy. However, it was noted that the report did not recommend a policy change and therefore did not require an equality impact assessment.

DS advised that the Competitive Tendering Policy provided an opportunity to waive going out to tender if the current policy demonstrated good value. DS stated that it would be a risk to go elsewhere when the Trust received good quality service from One Education. Therefore, Trustees were asked to approve an exemption from the requirement to obtain three quotes prior to extending the Service Level Agreement with One Education in accordance with the Trust's Financial Handbook on the grounds of the risk of switching supplier and receiving poor advice outweighing any potential financial savings.

Agreed: i) That the Trust enter into a further three-year HR SLA with One Education

ii) That an exemption from the requirement to obtain three quotes be approved

10. POLICY APPROVALS

The following policies had been uploaded to the Gateway:

Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy

Charging & Remissions Policy

In response to questions DS reported that there had been no changes to the policies and staff had received a copy of the policies.

Agreed: To approve and adopt the above policies

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed: That the next meeting dates be as follows:

Friday 10 June 2022 at 12 pm

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Teachers' pensions

DS advised that as teachers had not received a pay award this year this would impact negatively on their pensions. One Education had advised that if BIT paid £1 pay award to all teachers this would then prevent a static year and would benefit the pension funds. DS advised that this would £68 and would also be a goodwill gesture for staff. In response to questions DS reported that a £1 pay award had also been agreed and processed by other MATs.

Agreed: That a £1 pay increase be awarded to all teachers.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That the following item of discussion at this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association:

Minute Number 6 (Park School Review)

With no further business the meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

SUMMATIVE ACTIONS

| Minute Number | Responsible | Action |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6 | ES | Trust agenda for ratification |
| 7 | PH / KD | Convene extraordinary Trust meeting |

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Finance & Resources Committee)

