

MEETING OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

FRIDAY 5 MARCH 2021 AT 12.00 PM

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

In Attendance: V Gavin (VG) – Business Development Manager, R Leonard (RL) -Vice-Principal, D Smith (DS) - Finance Director and E Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to the Trust

TONY GRIMSHAW IN THE CHAIR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. DMc had been nominated to attend this meeting in place of KD, who was not yet present.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No items of Any Other Business were notified.

The Chair proposed that the Formal Consultation Update be discussed at this point to enable DMc to leave the meeting once the discussion had ended.

4. FORMAL CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Executive Principal reported that the formal consultation process was now complete and any issues arising from the consultation had been discussed with the Trade Unions. The next step was to move to the implementation stage of the restructure; however, one change to the original Savings Programme was proposed. The original proposal was to reduce the number of Learning Mentor posts at Park School by two. Trustees were informed that one post was now vacant due to a resignation and it was proposed that one post be kept in the structure due to the increased pressures on mental health provision and the increasing demand for services. A teacher at Park School was due to retire so this post would be deleted as per the original proposal.

KD joined the meeting.

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.

In response to questions about the closure of the PLC provision, PH stated that the Trust had proceeded to request ministerial permission, but purdah may present an issue.

The Chair of the Committee proposed that the Trust now move from the formal stage of the consultation process to the implementation stage and approve the change to the Savings Programme regarding Park School. There were no objections raised to the proposal, so it was therefore:

- Resolved:**
- i) That the proposed change included within the Savings Programme regarding Park School be approved
 - ii) That the Trust move from the formal stage of the consultation process to the implementation stage

DMc left the meeting at this point.

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

TG asked regarding the timeline for the reduction in commissioned places from Bolton Local Authority (LA). DS explained that the reduction of 18 places would come into effect on 1 September 2021. £180,000 place funding would be lost but the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) would now be implemented at 169, rather than at 187. The DPS charges would also be reviewed to reflect the staff pay awards and consideration was currently be given to this. Both these factors would help to mitigate the risks associated with the reduction in commissioned places.

TG asked why the LA were reducing pupil places if demand was expected to increase. PH stated that no rationale had been given by the LA but added that this was also a national issue in AP. The Trust would have to accept the reduced numbers but would have the capture the shortfall elsewhere. PH advised that the LA had said that they wanted to start paying for the reduced number of places now rather than in September, so a meeting was to be held next Friday to discuss this. TG expressed concern that the Trust had needed to reduce their staff team, but significant numbers of children could be arriving. PH stated that the Trust needed to start using agency staff to manage the numbers. TG asked if this would be a more expensive model for the Trust. DS advised that this would work out to be a cheaper model as pension costs were not paid for agency staff. PH added that staff had built up a good relationship with one agency and he was confident in the quality and calibre of staff provided. Agency staff also had the same training opportunities as other staff when working at BIT, which added to the quality of provision throughout the academies. PH stated that this was a sensible business strategy moving forward and would provide a good model if managed properly.

TG asked what strategies were in place to sell the 18 places to other Local Authorities; PH stated that this would be included in the Growth Strategy discussions.

TG asked if a response had yet been received from the Secretary of State. KD stated that this issue had been superseded by the updated DfE guidance.

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2020-21

Financial Monitoring – Spring Term 2020-21

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.

Capital Resources

At the meeting on the 12 June 2020, the Finance & Resources Committee had agreed to approve a proposal to work with AA Projects to submit bids to the Capital Infrastructure Fund. Comprehensive bids for the three projects (Roscoe Fold, Lever Park heating and Lever Park roof) had been prepared by AA Projects and details were included within the written report. DS advised that the outcome of the bids would not be known until June 2021. TG reported that he had liaised with AA Projects to ask if the position had changed at all due to Covid-19 and if the same amount of funding was still available. TG had been advised that this was not expected to be an issue as the Government was encouraging investment to create / secure jobs.

TG asked what amount the Trust would have to contribute to the work. DS explained that the Trust would need to contribute £48,000, but client contributions were funded by an interest free loan as part of the bid process. DS added that the Trust would see over £1,000,000 worth of improvements if the bids were successful, so the contribution was felt to be great value for money. TG stated that he felt the Trust had a built up a good relationship with AA Projects and this would benefit the Trust's estates and facilities management programme moving forward.

Three Year Forecast

DS reported that the Trust was in a good position moving forward and next year would see the full in-year savings from the Savings Programme. Pupil numbers were expected to increase and any staffing issues arising from this would be managed via the use of agency staff. The Trust's Growth Strategy had been delayed in parts due to the pandemic but was expected to improve the financial position moving forward.

7. TRUST GROWTH STRATEGY

The Executive Principal reported that aspects of the Growth Strategy had already been executed, including the strengthening of the Central Services Team. Further details of the Growth Strategy were highlighted including:

The vision within Bolton

- Expansion of the KS3 offer at Youth Challenge
- A fluid primary offer (including SEMH provision)
- Building capacity at Lever Park
- Post 16 provision
- Opening a Vocational Skills Centre of Excellence
- Creating more opportunities for mainstream schools to trade
- Developing a BIT behaviour support model and team

Opportunities beyond Bolton

- Increasing the School-to-School Support profile
- Exploring sponsorship opportunities i.e., Bury
- Bringing out of borough students into BIT's academies

Changes within the Trust's premises

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.

Building the Trust's profile

The Bolton Impact Trust profile would be enhanced to a wider audience using marketing materials, webinars, a revamped website, building of a training team and a GAP analysis of other Local Authorities.

Next steps

- Concluding the current savings programme and closure of the PLC
- Liaising with the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding diversification
- Speak with Bury LA regarding Spring Lane School
- Bolton LA discussions
- Marketing

TG stated that there was a clear strategy in place but asked where Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was included in the plan as this could greatly benefit the Trust. PH advised that there was a focus on engaging with local businesses and potential employers; however, moving forward there could be more emphasis on Corporate Partnership and PH welcomed TG's input into this. It was further suggested that the Chair of the Local Governing Board at Youth Challenge be invited to provide her input as she had a lot of experience in this area.

VG added that there would be a section on the website to become a sponsor of BIT.

Agreed: That PH, VG, TG and SH meet to discuss CSR and Corporate Partnership

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Agreed: That the next meeting take place on:

Friday 11 June 2021 at 1.00pm

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There no items of Any Other Business.

10. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

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

Minute Number 4 - Formal Consultation Update (2nd paragraph)

Minute Number 6 – Spring Financial Monitoring (1st paragraph)

Minute Number 7 – Trust Growth Strategy (Changes within the Trust's premises)

With no further business the meeting closed at 1.10 pm.