**MEETING OF TRUSTEES OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**TUESDAY 5 OCTOBER 2021 AT 4.00 PM**

**Present:** K Davies (KD) – Chair of Trustees, J Bennett (JB), T Grimshaw (TG), Paul Hodgkinson (PH) - Executive Head Teacher, Mrs P Norton and M Sidebottom (MS)

**In Attendance:** R Leonard (RL) – Vice-Principal, D Smith (DS) - Finance Director and E Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to the Trust

**KEITH DAVIES IN THE CHAIR**

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed Mrs Norton to her first meeting of the Trust Board.

Apologies for absence had been received from D McKeon.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

**3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business notified.

**4. MEMBERSHIP**

There was currently one vacant Trustee position on the Board. PH stated that he had worked on filling this vacancy alongside RL over the summer but without success. Trustees may need to look further afield and appoint a Trustee who was happy to join meetings virtually. PH had a potential candidate in mind and would pursue this further with the Chair of Trustees.

Discussions had taken place at the summer meeting regarding increasing the membership to 11 Trustees if the recruitment drive was successful. PH proposed that the membership should not be increased at this point in time and focus be placed on filling the one vacant position.

**Action:** PH and KD (work on recruitment of Trustees)

**5. FORMS FOR COMPLETION**

Trustees were asked to complete and return the following forms:

* Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent Form
* Register of Business Interests Form

Trustees were asked to note the Code of Conduct and the revised Governance Gateway Agreement.

The Clerk asked Trustees whether they were happy for their contact details, including email addresses to be shared amongst the Trust Board.

**Agreed:** i) That Trustees give their approval for their contact details, including email addresses to be shared

ii) To receive and note the Code of Conduct and the revised Governance Gateway Agreement

**6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

Executive Head Teacher’s Report (Minute Number 8)

KD asked for an update on the Who’s in Charge programme. RL advised that 25 referrals had been received, which was higher than the number could be accommodated. The next programme was due to start on 15 November 2021.

Dates of Next Meetings (Minute Number 15)

JB reported that he was unable to attend the Risk & Audit Committee meeting on Friday 26 November and asked if this could possibly be changed. Trustees agreed that the meeting be moved to Friday 3 December 2021 at 9am. It was noted that the Pay & Appraisal Committee would meet at 10am.

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 13 July 2021

**7. REVIEW COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

PH reported that there were no recommended changes to the Scheme of Delegation.

PH and RL had liaised with the Clerk regarding the Trust, Trust Committee and Local Governing Board terms of reference. The Governance Services Team had recommended that GDPR / DPO Reports be added to the terms of reference. KD asked whether this was currently included; DS confirmed that this was not explicitly included and proposed that GDPR / DPO be included in the Finance Director’s termly finance report at Local Board meetings. GDPR breaches and any matters arising from Academy DPO reports would also be added to the termly Trust Risk & Audit Committee agendas.

It was agreed that Mrs Norton be appointed to the Standards Committee.

**Agreed:** i) That the Scheme of Delegation be approved

ii) That the Terms of Reference be approved subject to GDPR / DPO reports being added to the appropriate terms of reference

iii) That Mrs Norton be appointed as a member of the Standards Committee

**Action:** Clerk (update Risk & Audit Terms of Reference)

**8. EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL’S UPDATE TO TRUSTEES**

The Executive Principal presented his update to Trustees. The main areas included:

* General Updates
* Pupil Numbers
* HR and Wellbeing
* Outward Facing Work

**General Updates**

The Executive Principal reported that there had been a very positive start to the autumn term across the Trust. The Central Team move to the PLC was now complete and the Director of Standards role had quickly become an important addition to the team.

The Trust had now adjusted the way in which Tony Purcell (TP), Secondary External Adviser, would work. TP would be attached to the Central Team, the SEFs would first be tested internally by the Central Team then externally by TP.

The summer schools at Youth Challenge and Lever Park had been very successful. The farm at Lever Park was also a huge success with lots of pupils engaging with this. Building work across the Trust was now complete and thanks were extended to TG and his team for their hard work.

**Pupil Numbers**

PH directed Trustees to the report on pupil numbers and highlighted the number of LA places remaining at each Academy at this point in the term. Lever Park was already at the commissioned number of 69 places so the Trust would trade with other Local Authorities to fill non-LA commissioned places. PH informed Trustees that he had met with LA Officers and had been advised that they were potentially looking to reduce commissioned numbers at Park School. PH stated that this no longer posed a threat to the Trust and in fact provided more opportunity to sell higher yield places to other authorities.

PH reported that Youth Challenge Secondary were taking some very challenging pupils. As a result of this it was unlikely that the Academy could increase numbers over the commissioned numbers; however, Trustees should be aware that it was likely that the LA would request this.

In response to questions PH stated that the pupil numbers were as expected at this time in the term and there were no surprises. MS asked if there was still a dip in the number of Year 11’s coming through. RL stated that numbers of Year 7 and Year 8 pupils continued to increase; however, there were now more Year 10 and Year 11 pupils coming through now schools had re-opened. RL added that there was also an increasing number of children from other alternative provision coming through.

MS commented that it would be useful to have the traded pupil numbers included in the report.

**Action:** PH (include traded pupil numbers in future reports)

**HR and Wellbeing**

PH reported that there was now a Vocational Skills Co-ordinator (TLR role) working across the Trust. Recruitment for a Grade 3 administrator and a Grade 6 Office Supervisor was currently underway.

The Trust and all Academies were currently completing a staff wellbeing audit and a Wellbeing Webinar would be delivered to all staff this half term. 15 Staff, Trustees and Local Governors had recently attended Safer Recruitment Training led by One Education. 2 Leadership Development programmes would start on 1 October and would run throughout the Academic year. KD asked if the Wellbeing Webinar had been arranged internally by staff or by One Education. PH stated that the webinar had been developed internally; however, the content was based on the One Education policies. Wellbeing would be monitored by the Local Boards with a Wellbeing Governor allocated to each Board.

**Outward Facing Work**

The Executive Principal reported that the DfE had made a formal request for an extension to the Trust’s support assignment at Spring Lane, Bury. The Trust had recently been advising MATs in Surrey and East Anglia and colleagues from Locksley School were visiting BIT on 20 and 21 October. Colleagues from Stockton had requested to visit after half term and PH had accepted the role of co-chair of the AP/SEND Council with the Foundation for Education Development (FED). PH added that he was also in Westminster on 8 October meeting DfE colleagues with the AP/SEND CEO Network.

A third-party external partner had approached BIT to ask if they would consider building an alternative provision for them. PH provided further details to Trustees and asked if they would be happy for this to be explored further. In response to questions DS provided a brief finance update and added that the ESFA would be supportive of the Trust in moving forward with this. KD stated that expansion of this capacity would support the sustainability of the organisation, this provided an exciting opportunity, but this of course would need a thorough business case putting together. It was suggested that the Business Strategy Sub-Group be re-formed to look at this in more detail.

**Agreed:** That the approach from a third-party external partner be explored further via the Business Strategy Sub-Group.

**9. QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND RESULTS**

RL directed Trustees to the Outcomes Report for 2020-21.

RL reported that there had been an increase in the number of pupils achieving at least one GCSE grade 1-9 in English and in Maths for the third year running. RL stated that the grading process over the last two years had suited BIT pupils better than exams. RL provided an update on the grading process used in the Trust and stated that this had gone through a great deal of scrutiny. All staff had received training in their academies on the JCQ guidance and had been partnered with another teacher in their subject from the Trust or a mainstream colleague to moderate their portfolios. A Trustee asked what plans were in place for the return of exams. Trustees were advised that work on exam technique had already started before the pandemic, and this would be picked up again. CPD offered to staff regarding exam skills would be developed throughout the Trust.

Key priorities from last year for Lever Park had been to develop the vocational curriculum and accreditation routes. The Vocational Skills Co-ordinator (TLR role) was working across the Trust and there had been an increase in the number of qualifications available to pupils. RL advised that the Trust would no longer be setting Functional Skills targets or measuring progress against them. This would still be used for some individual pupils where it was felt to be appropriate but there would be a move to GCSEs for measuring progress.

RL reported that the reduction in the number of Year 11 pupils across the academies impacted on the outcomes data. The SLT were always trying to better understand what the data was telling them and there was ongoing work taking place to simplify and improve systems used to measure outcomes across the academies. MS stated that the changing cohort year on year also presented a huge challenge.

RL reported that academies also had a big focus on destinations and getting the right destinations for individual pupils. Secondary academies in the Trust were doing a great job regarding careers and were continually building links with local companies.

MS stated that the outcomes report would be interrogated in detail at the Standards Committee meeting.

**10. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – INDICATIVE OUTTURN 2020/21**

Trustees were directed to the Financial Monitoring Report, which had been uploaded to the Gateway prior to the meeting.

DS stated that there were no significant changes to report from July. The Trust was currently anticipating an outturn deficit totalling £49,000, which was an adverse variance of £299,000 from the budget. This position did not include the receipt of £300,000 cashflow support from the ESFA in January 2021, and therefore it was anticipated that the Trust would reflect a surplus position totalling £251,000 once the accounts were finalised.

Reduced pupil numbers commissioned by the Local Authority had resulted in an anticipated reduction in AP top up income of £886,000. However, this position had improved from the original anticipated £1.1m reduction due to an additional £123,000 being received due to changes in the funding guidance during the pandemic and a significant increase in referrals to Youth Challenge.

The Trust had brought forward capital resources of £73,000 and had received a further £34,000 of devolved formula capital funding in 2020/21. Work would commence on the Forwards Centre play facilities during the October half term break. DS reported on the Infrastructure Fund Bids and advised that the Lever Park Heating Project totalling £503,553 had been successful.

Trustees were advised that the cashflow position was positive. TG stated that the Trust was now in a stronger financial situation and asked how this would impact on the bidding position. PH reported that the DfE had asked the Trust to produce a growth report, so this showed confidence in BIT and its capacity moving forward. TG stated that he felt the strong financial position would make the Trust a more attractive prospect, which in turn would provide more options for expansion.

KD asked for clarification regarding the Trust’s pension deficit. DS reported that the Auditor had confirmed that the Trust would never be required to repay this deficit.

KD stated that the Trust had worked extremely hard in getting through the financial implications of Covid-19. DS added that the staffing changes also had a positive impact as the Trust could now respond to any change in pupil numbers much more quickly. MS asked if any staff had refused to be double jabbed, as this could have consequences for the Trust. PH provided an update on this.

**Agreed:** That the Financial Monitoring Report – Indicative Outturn 2020/21 be received and noted

**11. BOLTON GOVERNANCE SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAMME 2021/22**

The Clerk had provided a link to the Governance Services Training Programme for 2021/22. JB reported that he had attended Safeguarding training and he would present some questions at the Risk & Audit Committee. PH suggested that JB could also liaise with RL in the meantime.

**12. DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

Trustees were reminded of the agreed dates for 2021/22:

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| --- |
| **Trust**  Tuesday 14 December 2021  Tuesday 29 March 2022  Tuesday 12 July 2022  **Standards & Finance**  Friday 12 November 2021  Friday 4 March 2022  Friday 10 June 2022  **Risk & Audit**  Friday 3 December 2021\*  Friday 18 March 2022  Friday 24 June 2022 |

**\***Date changed from Friday 26 November 2021

**13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence of S Hincks and D McKeon.

**14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

**15. CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Agreed:**That no items of discussion at this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy’s Memorandum and Articles of Association:

With no further business the meeting closed at 5.30 pm.

The Chair thanked all Trustees for their attendance.

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

(Chair of Trust Board)

**Summative Actions**

**Minute Number Person Responsible Action to be taken**

4 PH and KD Recruitment of a Trustee

7 ES Update Risk & Audit Terms of Reference

8 PH Include traded pupil numbers in future reports