

MEETING OF TRUSTEES OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2020 AT 4.00 PM

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

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

KEITH DAVIES IN THE CHAIR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed J Bennett to the meeting as recently appointed Trustee. JB provided a brief overview of his skills and experience and introductions were made.

No apologies for absence had been received.

SH indicated that she may need to leave at some point during the meeting due to a personal matter.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

3.1 Register of Business Interests Form

DS asked that all Trustees complete and return the Register of Business Interests form.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR OF THE TRUST BOARD

Agreed: That T Grimshaw be elected as Vice-Chair of the Trust Board to serve until Autumn term 2021

5. MEMBERSHIP

The Executive Principal informed Trustees that K Halliwell had recently resigned as a Trustee due to increased work commitments. This now left two Trustee vacancies on the Board, one of which was a Co-opted Trustee and one was a Member Appointed Trustee.

Trustees discussed any skills gaps on the Board; it was agreed that there was ample educational experience on the Board and a representative from the Health, particularly the Mental Health sector, would be beneficial. PH stated that he now had some contacts in Public Health from his recent work so he would investigate this further to see if any colleagues were keen to undertake the role. It was further suggested that Finance, Business, and IT skills would be advantageous for the second vacancy. MS stated that having a Trustee with IT skills could help support Blended Learning.

Agreed: That KD and PH be delegated responsibility to fill the vacancies taking into account the skills gaps discussed

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 14 July 2020

Matters Arising

In response to questions PH confirmed that the actions relating to the Local Governing Boards were now completed. There had been a focus on recruiting Local Governors via Twitter, which had been very successful with only two Co-opted vacancies remaining across all the academies.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE

7.1 **Scheme of Delegation**

A copy of the current Scheme of Delegation had been uploaded to the Gateway. The Scheme of Delegation needed updating so it was suggested that a Working party be formed to review this document and any changes be ratified at the next meeting. In response to questions PH confirmed that the Scheme of Delegation was still suitable to be used in the meantime.

Agreed: That the Scheme of Delegation be reviewed by PH, KD, RL and DS and presented at the December meeting for ratification

Action: ES (next agenda)

7.2 **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference had been uploaded to the Gateway. Trustees agreed that this document was fit for purpose and no changes were proposed. However, if changes were needed once the Scheme of Delegation had been reviewed then these would be brought to the next Trust meeting for approval.

Agreed: That the Trust Board Terms of Reference be approved

7.3 **Committee Membership**

Trustees discussed the membership of the Committees. It was proposed that JB join the Risk & Audit Committee in place of KH.

Agreed: That J Bennett join the Risk & Audit Committee

8. EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL UPDATE TO TRUSTEES

The Executive Principal reported that Trustees had met informally on 17 September 2020 and a detailed update had been provided at that point.

COVID Response

PH stated that his involvement in other strategic groups had been very helpful in informing the Trust's COVID response. These groups had included:

- LA Tactical Co-ordination Group
- Health Protection Board
- Bolton Learning Alliance (BLA)
- National AP Executive Board

A weekly call to Stephen Bagnall at the DfE was also taking place.

Academy Sites

PH provided an overview of the work that had taken place on the academy sites to make them COVID safe. Some staff were needing to self-isolate and some had taken COVID tests but so far these had all returned a negative result.

It was noted that staff spoke to pupils regularly about COVID symptoms and the risk to themselves and others. No academies had yet had to close bubbles as no pupils had tested positive. A Trustee asked if pupils were complying with the COVID rules. PH explained that a small number of SEMH pupils at Lever Park were challenging the rules, particularly regarding the wearing of face masks and social distancing, so this was being closely monitored. Pupils in all academies tended to benefit from close contact support but this was no longer an option, so all staff had been required to adapt their approach to any challenging behaviour.

PH provided an update on how the academies were taking a socially distanced approach to learning including virtual assemblies. Senior Leaders were also socially distancing and had adopted the Distance Leadership Strategy.

An overview of the attendance figures for each academy were provided. Attendance at Lever Park had dipped to 41% so the Executive Principal and Vice Principal were monitoring this closely.

Local Governing Boards (LGBs)

Newly appointed Local Governors had now commenced their roles and had been assigned Link Governor Roles. Local Governors had participated fully in Governor Week.

The Academy Lead report template to the LGBs had changed for this term and was much more succinct. PH stated that he would like to share these reports with Trustees on a regular basis. ES advised that all LGB reports were uploaded to the Gateway and Trustees had access to these documents.

COVID was having a significant impact on the Trust's finances but this would be discussed further under the Financial Report.

On behalf of Trustees, the Chair thanked the Executive Principal and his team for the huge amount of operational work that had been undertaken to ensure both staff and pupils could work and learn safely.

9. SUMMER OUTCOMES

Outcomes Analysis 2020

RL reported that a huge amount of work had been carried out on the grading process. Academy staff had worked with other staff across the Trust and mainstream colleagues.

There had been a significant increase in the number of Year 11 pupils in 2019/20, with an additional 38 pupils from the previous year. RL reported that there had been an increase across the Trust in the number of pupils achieving at least 1 GCSE grade 1-9 in English and in Maths as well an increase in those gaining a 4-9 in maths. English saw a slight drop in the number of pupils achieving a 4-9 however this correlated with a lower number of pupils predicted a 4 or above. There was a significant rise in the number of pupils meeting their GCSE baseline targets. English moved from 67% in 2018-19 to 81% in 2019-20. Maths increased from 58% to 80%.

A significant amount of work had taken place on developing the curriculum prior to lockdown. Youth Challenge had expanded their curriculum with the introduction of qualifications in Hair and Beauty and History as well as an increase in qualifications in Sports Leaders and PSE and higher-level qualifications in Construction. There had been a push on alternative subjects at Park School, which had been well received. The number of GCSE's available to pupils had increased from 9 to 11 with the replacement of Double Science with the individual sciences. BTEC Hair and Beauty had been successful in engaging pupils at the Wellbeing Centre who were unable to gain other qualifications.

RL stated that the academies had worked hard in trying to find a subject for everyone. Academies that traditionally offered academic subjects were now embracing vocational subjects and vice versa. Pupils who previously refused to engage at all had engaged with the BTEC Hair and Beauty courses and had secured successful Post-16 outcomes. MS stated that Post-16 destinations was the real test for the Trust and 113 pupils out of 115 leaving with a nationally recognised qualification was a testament to the work that all staff put in. RL stated that some funding had been received and Youth Challenge had allocated a set worker to focus on retaining the Year 11 destinations.

A Trustee referred to the issues in English last year at Youth Challenge and asked for an update on this. RL stated that a huge amount of work had taken place in English with a significant amount of analysis taking place. Good progress had been seen from the mock exams and it was felt that this would have continued if the exams had taken place.

KD referred to the areas of development for each academy in the report and asked if these were included in the Academy Leads performance management. RL confirmed that these were included in the performance management and a lot of focus was placed on this.

PH stated that a significant amount of qualifications were now available to pupils, the curriculum was well tailored, and the offer had been recognised by Ofsted. Pupils were prepared to leave alternative provision ready to compete with their mainstream peers.

10. **FINANCE**

Financial Monitoring

Indicative Outturn 2019/20

DS referred Trustees to the Financial Monitoring Report and highlighted the indicative final outturn position (both revenue and capital) for the 2019/20 year, based upon transactions that had occurred in the period 1st September 2019 to 30th September 2020. The Trust's Balance Sheet position, as at 31st August 2020, the financial impact of reduced pupil numbers in September 2020, arising from the Coronavirus situation and the projected cashflow position for the period up until August 2021 were also included in the report.

DS provided an update on the Capital Resources and the summarised Balance Sheet, which was subject to external audit. DS reported that the pension deficit had been revalued in August 2020 and had now increased to £4.565m, which was an increase of £1.949m. DS reported that he had contacted the External Auditor regarding this significant increase, who had confirmed that this was beyond the control of the Trust and should not be a cause for concern for Trustees. Trustees noted the increase and agreed to keep this under regular review.

2020/21 Financial Update

Trustees were informed that due to the current situation, the starting number of pupils for the 2020/21 financial / academic year, was significantly less than that of previous years. There were currently 34 less pupils than anticipated in the budget, DS advised that if this reduction in numbers continued then the financial impact for the whole year could reach £800,000. A Trustee asked if the increase in traded services would mitigate this impact. DS confirmed that it would mitigate this to some extent but not enough. Initial DfE guidance received in relation to the impact of Coronavirus on funding advised that for the summer term, schools should continue to fund AP based on previous patterns of placements and commissioning. However, this seemed to be at the discretion of the Local Authority and Bolton were currently basing the numbers on actual pupil numbers rather than previous commissioning patterns. A Trustee referred to the Executive Principal's discussions with colleagues in similar provisions and stated that there should be consistency in the way that APs were funded during the pandemic. DS explained that BIT's commitment with Bolton LA was different from other APs as the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) was a purely contractual agreement rather than a Service Level Agreement. PH and DS were due to meet with Bernie Brown, Director of People Services, tomorrow to discuss this further. PH stated that if BB would not commit to the previous patterns then Trustees would need to look at making significant changes to mitigate this loss of income. KD suggested that an extraordinary meeting may need to be convened to discuss the financial strategy moving forward.

DS reported that the reduced income was also impacting the cashflow by around £50 - £60k per month. Two cashflow scenarios were provided based upon funding being on actual pupil numbers or previous commissioned places. If funding continued to be based on actual numbers this would present real challenges by December and discussions had been held with the ESFA to mitigate this via a £300,000 loan, which would be back up by a robust Business Plan.

A Trustee stated that the Trust had worked extremely hard to improve the financial position only to be facing new financial challenges, which are out of the Trust's control due to COVID 19. MS stated that secondary schools were now beginning to stabilise following the return to school and exclusions would inevitably start to increase. This may be a temporary situation for the Trust, but the challenge would be to manage this until exclusions returned to the usual numbers. PH concurred with this and stated that the LA would need BIT to offer its usual provision once exclusions increased; however, they were unlikely to be able to do this if they continued to receive funding for actual pupil numbers rather than previous commissioning patterns. This point would be stressed to the LA. TG stated that it would be crucial for the Trust to be proactive in presenting ideas to the LA to try and resolve this situation.

Agreed: That the Financial Update including the summarised Balance Sheet be received and noted

ESFA Communications

A copy of the letter from Eileen Milner, Chief Executive of the ESFA, to the Trust's Accounting Officer had been uploaded to the Gateway. DS provided a brief overview of the content of the letter but added that there was nothing to highlight that Trustees were not already aware of.

Agreed: To receive and note the letter from Eileen Milner, Chief Executive of the ESFA, to the Trust's Account Officer

11. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Chair introduced Victoria Gavin, newly appointed Business Development Manager, to Trustees. VG provided an overview of her employment background and provided her initial thoughts on the Trust's Business Development Plan. Trustees were informed of the short, medium, and long-term priorities and it was reported that 130 letters had been sent out to schools regarding the Traded Provision. VG stated that she was currently working on the Trust Brand and each academy would receive brand guidelines. Research had been conducted into the current logo and a decision made to retain this.

12. BOLTON GOVERNANCE SERVICES TRAINING PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Clerk reported that the Bolton Governance Services Training Programme for 2020/21 was available and Trustees could book courses online. Several courses were being offered online during the Autumn Term 2020 including the Governance Induction, which may be beneficial for newly appointed Trustees. RL stated that the training on Statutory Committees may be beneficial for Trustees and Local Governors. The Clerk suggested that RL contact Marie Foley to see whether this could be held in-house if several governors were looking to attend.

13. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

Trustees were reminded of the agreed meeting dates for 2020/21:

Autumn Term:

Standards Friday 13 November 2020 at 11.00am

Finance Friday 13 November 2020 at 1.00pm

Risk & Audit Friday 27 November 2020 at 11.00am

Trust Tuesday 15 December 2020 at 4.00pm

Spring Term:

Standards Friday 5 March 2021 at 11.00am

Finance Friday 5 March 2021 at 1.00pm
Risk & Audit Friday 19 March 2021 at 11.00am
Trust Tuesday 30 March 2021 at 4.00pm

Summer Term:

Standards Friday 11 June 2021 at 11.00am
Finance Friday 11 June 2021 at 1.00pm
Risk & Audit Friday 25 June 2021 at 11.00am
Trust Tuesday 13 July 2021 at 4.00pm

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

14.1 2021/2022 HOLIDAY PATTERN

A copy of the proposed 2021/22 holiday pattern had been uploaded to the Gateway. It was noted that the proposed pattern was in line with local secondary schools.

Agreed: That the 2021/22 holiday pattern be approved

15. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

MS reported that D McKeon (DMc) had submitted his apologies during the meeting.

Agreed: To consent to the absence of D McKeon

16. 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

PH thanked all Trustees for their hard work and support.

With no further business the meeting closed at 5.30 pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Trust Board)

ACTIONS

Minute Number	Person Responsible	Action Required
5	KD and PH	Fill Trustee vacancies
7.1	PH, KD, RL, DS	Review Scheme of Delegation

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Approve Scheme of Delegation