**MEETING OF TRUSTEES OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**TUESDAY 13 JULY 2021 AT 4.00 PM**

**Present:** K Davies (KD) – Chair of Trustees, T Grimshaw (TG), Paul Hodgkinson (PH) - Executive Head Teacher, S Hincks (SH) 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 Trustees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from J Bennett. D McKeon had indicated that he would join the meeting later due to work commitments.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR TO THE TRUST BOARD**

The Clerk invited nominations to the position of Chair, which was a 2-year appointment.

**Agreed:** That Keith Davies be appointed as Chair of the Trust Board to serve until the summer term 2023

The Chair invited nominations to the position of Vice-Chair.

**Agreed:** That Tony Grimshaw be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Trust Board to serve until the summer term 2022

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made. DS advised that guidance in the Academy Trust Handbook now stated that Trustees should notify the Trust of any changes to Register of Business interests as any changes occur, rather than just submitting an annual return.

**Agreed:** That Trustees advise DS of any changes to Register of Business interests as any changes occur

**4. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business notified.

**5. MEMBERSHIP**

There were currently two vacant Trustee positions on the Board. The Executive Principal reported that he had liaised with a potential candidate called Pat Norton who he felt had skills that would complement the Board. Mrs Norton had been a Head Teacher and had experience of SEN in both mainstream and special schools via training, inspections and monitoring visits and would be able to effectively support and challenge the SLT. A copy of Mrs Norton’s pen portrait had been uploaded to the Gateway for Trustees’ information.

The Chair stated that he agreed that Mrs Norton would bring valuable skills and experience to the Board and recommend that any skills gaps be considered when appointing to the remaining vacancy. Trustees discussed this and it was agreed that finance, business or a medical background would be beneficial. PH stated that consideration could also be given to appointing a ‘virtual’ Trustee as this would widen the net. Trustees discussed the composition of the Board, which was currently 9 Trustees and whether this could be increased to 11. This would strengthen the skills base of the Board and increase the number of Trustees on each committee reducing the risk of meetings not being quorate.

The Chair also reminded the Board that additional Members also needed to be appointed.

PH proposed that he and RL work on recruiting a Trustee over the summer and further thought be given to increasing the membership to 11 Trustees if the recruitment drive was successful.

**Agreed:** To appoint Pat Norton as Co-opted Trustee to serve for a four-year term of office

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

**6. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 30 March 2021

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

**7. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Friday 11 June 2021, the Finance & Resources Committee Meeting held on Friday 11 June 2021 and the Risk & Audit Committee Meeting held on Friday 25 June 2021.

**Matters Arising**

**Standards Committee**

PH reported that a 7-point action plan had been produced from the Standards Committee Minutes to address the key issues being raised by Trustees during the meetings. PH reported that this had been received well by Trustees and the action plan would ensure that all actions were being addressed thoroughly and within an appropriate timeframe. It was therefore proposed that the same format be extended to the other Trust Committee meetings and Local Governing Board meetings to enable the Central Team and Academy Leads to respond to the challenge being presented by Trustees and Local Governors.

**Finance and Resources Committee**

DS reported that he had obtained quotes for the refurbishment of the play facilities at the Forwards Centre, but the work would not now commence until the autumn term. DS reported that he had also checked with One Education regarding the internal application process, and they had confirmed that agency staff would be able to apply for internal posts.

**Risk & Audit Committee**

DS reported that the recommendations made by the committee with regards to the Internal Audit had been fed back to Beevers & Struthers.

**8. EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL’S SUMMER TERM REPORT**

A copy of the Executive Principal’s summer term report had been uploaded to the Gateway. The main sections of the report included:

* News
* Academy Update
* Working with commissioners
* Bury
* System Leadership and facing outwards
* Leadership Training Programmes
* Capital Bid
* Wellbeing Award
* Summer school
* Who’s in Charge
* Trust Hubs
* Thank you to Trustees

**Academy Updates**

The Executive Principal reported that the closure of the Personal Learning Centre (PLC) had been sanctioned following three periods of consultation. Work continued with the DfE to ensure that the final stages of closure were completed properly, and the Trust was currently waiting the solicitors to sign the Deed of Termination before it was signed and sealed by the Regional Schools Commissioner. PH thanked all Trustees for their support and stated that although this had been a very challenging time, the right decision had been made.

Trustees were informed that there had been an unprecedented surge in referrals at Youth Challenge Secondary as permanent exclusions in Bolton had risen significantly since March. The provision was likely to reach its full allocation of Bolton students early in the Autumn Term. Work was taking place on designing an appropriate curriculum for the new student demographic as many of the referrals were Year 7 and Year 8 students.

Referrals into Youth Challenge Primary were currently very low, and this would continue to be carefully monitored. However, the Forwards Centre was likely to be at full capacity early in the new term.

There had been a move away from the one-client model at Lever Park. The September start list was full, with the agreed allocation from Bolton plus students from Wigan, Salford and Lancashire. A Trustee asked if out of borough pupils were accessing the Trust’s other provisions. PH reported that all provisions were looking to move away from the one client model and that Park School had received referrals from Rochdale. Work would continue in marketing out of borough places for all provisions in the next academic year.

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.

**Working with Commissioners**

TG referred to the challenges with regards to the high needs block and stated that Trustees had predicted the increase in numbers, which could now cause problems for Bolton LA. RL reported that the commissioned numbers had been reduced from 187 to 169 but the Trust may not have the capacity to admit other Bolton students over 169 moving forward as they were no longer working on a one client model.

MS referred to the no notice Quality Assurance visit and asked what this had looked like for the Trust. PH advised that four officials from Bolton visited unannounced at Youth Challenge on 9 June to scrutinise Curriculum, Safeguarding, Attendance and Behaviour. They had also inspected the Forwards Centre and Park School on the 10 June. There would be no official feedback, but the visits had been very positive.

**Capital Bid (CIF)**

Trustees were informed that the Lever Park Heating project, totalling £503,553 had been successful and AA Projects had been appointed to project manage this. It was too late for the work to commence over the summer so discussions were taking place as to how this would work if done over the winter. If this was not feasible then this may need to be postponed until the spring term. Unfortunately, the bid for the replacement of the roof at Lever Park had not been successful. TG asked if the roof bid would be appealed or resubmitted. DS explained that the bid could not be appealed this year but could be amended and resubmitted next year.

**Who’s in Charge Programme**

RL provided an update on the Who’s in Charge programme and stated that this had had a significant impact on the families taking part. KD asked if there was a commercial opportunity to market this programme. RL explained that there was demand for this programme, but the course was very specialised and time consuming as it was a 8-week course with 4-hour sessions delivered by two people. KD stated that a business case could be put together to see if this would be financially viable. TG asked who would pay for the course. RL explained that this would be the Local Authority (Social Care) or the school, there would not be a charge levied to parents. MS stated that he would be interested in this programme but suggested that the Trust build the model internally first. RL invited Trustees to attend a session to see first-hand the course delivery.

**Thank you to Trustees**

The Executive Principal thanked all Trustees for their hard work and commitment in what had been another very challenging year. PH stated that Stephen Bagnall and Carol Hill from the ESFA had stated that they had been very impressed with the current position of the Trust and PH stated that this could not have been achieved without the support and challenge provided by Trustees.

**9. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – 2020/21 – SUMMER TERM**

Trustees were directed to the Financial Monitoring Report for summer term 2020/21, which had been uploaded to the Gateway prior to the meeting. The Chair reported that the report had been scrutinised in detail at the Finance & Resources Committee meeting. DS reported that the Trust was in a positive financial position due to the savings programme, additional income and increased pupil referrals and would end the year in a surplus position.

**Agreed:** That the Financial Monitoring Report Summer Term 2020/21 be received and noted

**10. APPROVAL OF BUDGET 2021/22**

The Budget Report 2021/22 had been uploaded to the Gateway prior to the meeting.

DS reported that the initial budget for 2021/22 reflected an anticipated in year surplus position of £232,000. DS stated that he had been prudent in the projection of pupil numbers in case of future lockdowns; however, the Trust had already secured the predicted number of pupils for September. Trustees were informed that all academies were operating at a budgeted surplus position.

DS referred Trustees to the three-year forecast, which included projected income from the Business Strategy, as discussed at the Finance & Resources Committee meeting.

TG, Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee, stated that the Trust financial position had undergone a huge transformation over the last few years and the current position was a credit to the whole team for their outstanding efforts.

**Agreed:** To approve the budget for the Trust for the 2021/22 financial year and the three-year forecast

**11. ACADEMY TRUST HANDBOOK**

The following documents had been uploaded to the Gateway:

* Academy Trust Handbook
* Academy Trust Handbook Covering Report
* Letter from Baroness Berridge to Academy Trusts
* Visits 1 and 2 – Business Critical Controls (including the Trust’s response)

DS advised that the new handbook was due to come into effect on 1 September 2021. This covered a broader range of topics and was now called the Academy Trust Handbook rather than the Academy Financial Handbook. A covering report had been included for Trustees highlighting the changes to the handbook and included a detailed plan for how the Trust would respond to each action.

DS stated that many of the requirements were already in place but highlighted the following for Trustees’ information:

* The Trust already outsourced its services to the Bolton Governance Services Team who met the requirements of the Clerks Competency Framework.
* The Trust was proactively seeking to recruit a Member who was not also a Trustee.
* The Trust would plan an independent external review of governance, possibly via the National Governors Association.
* The Trust would re-tender for the external audit contract before this expired in 2021/22

KD recommended that the Action Plan be added to the Risk & Audit Committee agenda to enable the actions to be monitored and any associated risks be discussed by the committee.

**Agreed:** i) To note the changes to the Academy Trust Handbook and endorse the action plan

ii) That the action plan be added to the next Risk & Audit Committee agenda

**Action:** ES (add action plan to next Risk & Audit Committee agenda)

**12. SCHOOL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SELF-ASSESSMENT**

The School Resource Management Self-Assessment and Covering Report had been uploaded to the Gateway. DS reported that the questionnaire had been submitted to the ESFA to outline the Trust’s approach to school resource management. Three of the questions were answered ‘in part’ therefore an action plan had been produced in response to this.

**Agreed:** To receive and note the School Resource Management Self-Assessment and subsequent action plan

**13. ANNUAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

A copy of the annual Trustee / Governance Impact Statement had been uploaded to the Gateway. This covered the following:

* Description of Trustee activities
* Main areas of focus
* Impact of Trustees work

PH stated that there had been impactful governance at both local and Trust level and this was reflected in the impact statement, which would be uploaded to the website.

**Agreed:** To approve the annual Trustee / Governance Impact Statement

**14. UPDATED NGA GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS**

The Clerk advised that the NGA had updated their guidance for members. Members had been emailed the link and it was also recommended that Trustees also read the guidance.

**Agreed:** That Trustees the updated NGA guidance for members be noted

**15. DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

The proposed meeting dates for 2021/22 were provided:

|  |
| --- |
| **Trust**  Tuesday 5 October 2021  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 26 November 2021  Friday 18 March 2022  Friday 24 June 2022 |

Trustees discussed whether the meetings would be held virtually or face to face. The Chair stated that the remote meetings had been successful and had provided flexibility for Trustees. PH stated that virtual meetings may also assist in recruiting to the vacant Trust post.

**Agreed:** That the above dates be agreed, and the meetings continue to be held virtually

**16. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence of J Bennett and D McKeon.

**17. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

**18. 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 8 (Academy Updates – last paragraph)

With no further business the meeting closed at 4.50 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**

5 PH and RL Recruitment of Trustees

11 ES Add action plan to Risk & Audit agenda