

MEETING OF MEMBERS & TRUSTEES OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

TUESDAY 15 DECEMBER 2020 AT 4.00 PM

Present: K Davies (KD) – Chair of Trustees, B Atkinson (BA), J Bennett (JB), Paul Hodgkinson (PH) - Executive Head Teacher, S Hincks (SH), D McKeon (DMc) and M Sidebottom (MS)

In Attendance: 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 T Grimshaw and R Leonard (Vice-Principal).

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No items of Any Other Business were notified.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 6 October 2020 and the extraordinary Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2020

Matters Arising – Tuesday 6 October 2020

Scheme of Delegation (Minute Number 7.1)

A copy of the updated Scheme of Delegation had been uploaded to the Governance Gateway. PH advised that there had been some amendments to committee responsibilities and some items had been moved to the full Trust Board i.e. appointment of the Executive Principal.

PH stated that he would check to make sure the updated Scheme of Delegation linked in with the Terms of Reference.

Agreed: To approve the updated Scheme of Delegation

Action: PH

Committee Membership (Minute Number 7.3)

Agreed: That KD be appointed to the Finance & Resources Committee

5. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Friday 13 November 2020, the Finance & Resources Committee Meeting held on Friday 13 November 2020 and the Risk & Audit Committee Meeting held on Friday 27 November 2020

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

The Executive Principal reported that after a turbulent year the Trust now needed to look forward and reassemble some form of normality, with a clear focus on educational standards and he had met with V Gavin and D Smith to map out plans regarding this for the spring term.

6. EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL'S AUTUMN TERM REPORT

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

- Introduction
- Partnership Work
- Pupil Numbers
- Academy Updates

Introduction

The Executive Principal reported that the injection of funds from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had been welcomed and would enable the Trust to rebuild and start to move forward again. The funding had been provided with some conditions attached regarding diversification and work on this was already underway. This included diversifying into other areas and a significant amount of work was taking place with Bury and other authorities. The Trust's home tuition offer was also being developed. Discussions had also taken place to change the designation of the Forwards Centre to become a hybrid AP / Special Primary School and the opening of the Park School Sixth Form.

PH thanked KD and all Trustees for their unwavering support during recent months. PH also thanked RL and DS for their support and tremendous work.

Partnership Work

PH stated that to move partnership work forward he had needed to relinquish some roles that did not impact on alternative provision, including the BLA and BASS partnerships. However, the Trust remained fully committed to working in partnership with the LA and with schools and they were currently working on several live school to school support assignments. The Trust was also part of the presentation team for the Bolton Learning Partnership SEND hub.

PH informed Trustees that the relationships with the National AP Executive Board, the Northwest AP hub and the National Association of Hospital Education were more fruitful and plans for January were exciting. On behalf of the National AP Executive Board, PH had been asked to lead on their school to school support work and would be co-ordinating a series of national AP enquiry visits.

BIT had accepted an offer to be a strategic partner for a new Teaching School bid in Bury and the Trust would be Special School/AP partner to Chantlers Primary School, Bury, Derby High School, Bury and the Prestolee MAT, Bolton. PH stated that he looked forward to developing these partnerships further in the New Year.

Pupil Numbers

A meeting had been held with the LA on 10 November to discuss pupil numbers for 2021-22. The LA had informed BIT that they wanted to commission 10% less pupil places next year and from September 2021 the Trust would sell 170 AP places to the LA as opposed to 187 this year. PH stated that he was concerned that the LA had not analysed current versus projected numbers carefully enough and the Trust's analysis suggested that there was significant disparity between calculations. An email had been sent to the LA to seek clarification on this matter and a response was awaited.

Academy Updates

A detailed update for each Academy was included in the report, each report covered the following areas:

- Pupil Numbers
- Staffing / Sickness / COVID impact on staffing
- Building / Resources issues
- Curriculum developments
- Outward facing / networking
- Pupil Achievements
- January priorities

PH stated that all academies had had a busy term and there had been a lot of good work taking place. An update on the Curriculum Development for each Academy had been provided at the Standards Committee meeting.

The Executive Principal invited questions at this point.

The Chair asked where what direction the Trust would take the pupil number issue. PH stated that this would be discussed further at the meeting with the LA on Friday. He was concerned where children would go next year when pupil places were reduced but acknowledged that this was a commissioner issue and a focus needed to be on pupils already on roll.

DMc stated that the Executive Head Teacher's report was very positive, despite the extreme challenges presented this term and it was clear that a tremendous amount of hard work had been carried out this term.

Agreed: That the Executive Principal's report be received and noted

7. FINANCE UPDATE

Trustees were directed to the notes of the meeting with the ESFA and the RSC and the Bolton Impact Funding Condition letter.

DS stated that the ESFA had been very supportive of the Trust and the additional income would help the Trust move forward. The financial projections reflected in year savings of £308,000, which have already been achieved. Trustees were informed that a further in year saving of £80,000 was anticipated and this would reduce the projection to £456,000. There would still be careful management of the budget moving forward and the further additional income from the ESFA may need to be accessed later in the year.

Trustees were directed to the Three-Year Forecast. DS stated that the forecast was a worst-case scenario and income may be slightly higher than reported. The increments and inflationary pressures may not be as quite as high due to recent announcements about a public sector pay freeze. KD asked if the staffing restructure would reduce increment pressures. In response DS explained that the restructure affected Learning Mentors in the main so this would not have a huge impact.

PH advised that staff at the Personal Learning Centre had been very involved in the consultation discussions and had engaged well in the process. PH stated that all scenarios were being considered and he would continue to press the LA on this, particularly as mental health was now a huge issue in Bolton. KD noted his concern that any diversion from the savings programme would be at odds with what had been presented to the ESFA. PH acknowledged this but added that the Trust should look at all options moving forwards.

Agreed: That the Financial Monitoring Report December 2020/21 be received and noted

8. SKILLS AUDIT SUMMARY

DS directed Trustees to the Skills Audit Summary and stated that the report showed a wealth of experience and skills across the Trust Board. The summary would be a useful

reference point when recruiting new Trustees as any skills gaps could be easily identified.

BA stated that one Trustee had identified some areas for development and asked how this Trustee would be supported. DS stated that development and training opportunities were available, and Trustees were encouraged to access the Governance Services training programme. Newly appointed Trustees would also gain experience over time and become more confident in their role. PH added that Trustees were usually invited to visit each Academy site as part of the induction, but this had not been possible due to the pandemic. Once the visits were able to take place again this would provide invaluable knowledge and help Trustees to develop in their role.

DMc stated that some of the questions on the Skills Audit could be misinterpreted and skew the responses and therefore suggested that an example for certain questions could be provided to make this clearer.

SH proposed that more consideration be given to the ethnic mix of the Board and this be a requirement when recruiting new Trustees. PH stated that he and KD had discussed the gender and ethnic representations on the Board and had agreed that further consideration needed to be given to this. PH stated that he had had discussions with a potential new Trustee, who was from a BAME background and had experience in the health sector and, if appointed, this would begin to change the demographic of the Board membership. KD stated that diversity needed to be registered as a key objective, to improve the balance of gender and ethnicity on the Board.

9. TRUST POLICIES

The following policies had been uploaded to the Governance Gateway:

- Appraisal Policy 2020 to 2022
- Capability Policy 2020 to 2022
- Disciplinary & Dismissal Policy 2020 to 2022

DS reported that these were One Education Policies, amended to reflect consultation with Trade Unions. DS informed Trustees that RL had undertaken a significant amount of work on the policies and proposed that these be approved for use within the Trust.

Agreed: To approve and adopt the Appraisal Policy, Capability Policy and Disciplinary & Dismissal Policy 2020 to 2022

10. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITORS

DS reported that changes to the Academies Financial Handbook now meant that the Internal and External Audit could not be carried out by the same company, therefore precluding Haines Watts from this process. The External Audit would continue to be

conducted by Haines Watts and after careful consideration it was proposed that Beever Struthers be appointed as the Trust's Internal Auditors. A copy of the Internal Audit Proposal from Beever Struthers had been provided.

DS advised Trustees that as Beever Struthers were not familiar with BIT they would need to spend more time on site than Haines Watts would; however, he had negotiated with them to reduce the number of days to 12 as per Proposal 1 at an annual cost of £6,288.

DMc asked if the Trust needed to undertake any procurement process for this appointment. DS explained that this was not necessary as the cost was less than £15,000; however, Beever Struthers had been highly recommended and DS felt that they would provide good value for money.

Agreed: That Beever Struthers be appointed as Internal Auditors and proposal 1 be initially accepted at an annual cost of £6,288

11. SCHOOL TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF PAY AWARD

A report detailing the School Teachers and Support Staff Pay Award 2020 had been uploaded to the Governance Gateway. DS advised that the Pay Policy, which incorporated the pay award had been approved at the Pay Review Committee meeting on 13 November 2020.

Agreed: To ratify the School Teachers and Support Staff Pay Award 2020

12. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

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

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

DS stated that the Statutory Accounts would usually be approved by Trustees and Members at this December meeting; however, due to the pandemic the deadline for submission had been extended to 31 January 2021 and the Auditors would not be

signing off the accounts until next week. It was therefore proposed that an extraordinary meeting be scheduled in January to approve the Statutory Accounts before the deadline. PH stated that an extra meeting would also provide an opportunity to feed back to Trustees on the progress of the consultation.

Agreed: That an extraordinary Trust meeting be scheduled for January 2021

13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Agreed: To consent to the absence of T Grimshaw

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

The Chair wished everyone a very Merry Christmas and thanked all Trustees for their hard work and support during a very challenging year.

With no further business the meeting closed at 4.45 pm

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Trust Board)

ACTIONS

Minute Number	Person Responsible	Action Required
4	PH	Check to make sure the updated Scheme of Delegation linked in with the Terms of Reference.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING