**MEETING OF TRUSTEES OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**TUESDAY 30 MARCH 2021 AT 4.00 PM**

**Present:** K Davies (KD) – Chair of Trustees, J Bennett (JB), Paul Hodgkinson (PH) - Executive Head Teacher, S Hincks (SH), D McKeon (DMc) 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 Trustees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence had been received from T Grimshaw.

**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. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Trust Meeting held on Tuesday 15 December 2020 and the extraordinary Trust Meetings held on Wednesday 20 January 2021 and Wednesday 10 March 2021.

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

**5. COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Agreed:** To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held on Friday 5 March 2021, the Finance & Resources Committee Meeting held on Friday 5 March 2021 and the Risk & Audit Committee Meeting held on Friday 19 March 2021.

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

**6. EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL’S SPRING TERM REPORT**

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

* Introduction
* Restructure Update
* Provision Update
* Partnerships
* Staff Health and Wellbeing
* Quality of Education
* Year 11s
* Vocation Study
* Business Development
* Governance

**Introduction**

The Executive Principal reported that students and staff had returned to the Academy sites and the Trust was now starting to see the green shoots of recovery with an increased steady flow of referrals. Work continued raising the profile of BIT and the Trust had recently featured on Sky News and had received positive feedback.

The Executive Principal reported that he had been invited onto a Podcast with Dr Pooky Knightsmith on 13 April to talk about the support the Trust offers to its most vulnerable students and he had also been invited to sit on a panel with Sir Tim Brighouse at a webinar on 18 May. PH stated that he hoped these additional pieces of work would continue to raise BIT’s profile to a wider audience.

**Restructure Update**

PH provided an update on the recent redundancy selection panels, which resulted in one member of staff requesting voluntary redundancy and two compulsory redundancies. PH was due to meet representatives from different supply agencies in the next few weeks to start building a pool of casual staff should they be needed as new referrals arrived.

Trustees were advised that the Personal Learning Centre (PLC) had now received ministerial permission to close. RL had hosted a meeting between the Head of the Personal Learning Centre and the Head of Park School. All students on the PLC register would be offered a place at Park School from September if they needed one.

**Provision Update**

**Forwards Centre** - The Academy Lead at the Forwards Centre had continued the conversations that were started in November 2020 with the Local Authority Leadership Team around re-designation of its status to become a hybrid Short term/SEMH Primary Special School. Trustees were informed that discussions have been very productive, and it had been agreed that a joint report be prepared that would be presented simultaneously to the Council Leadership Team and BIT Trustees.

**Lever Park –** The Executive Principal and Academy Lead at Lever Park would be attending a meeting with Bolton LA around a temporary increase above the agreed 69 places to support Bolton with an increase in in-year demand for SEMH provision. Many Year 11s were leaving in July so this would help to mitigate the financial impact of this. PH added that although Bolton had an increase in demand for SEMH provision, the Trust still needed to balance this with the commissioning agreements with Wigan and Salford.

**Youth Challenge Secondary –** This provision was currently full, and a meeting had been held with the Academy Lead to analyse demand patterns due to the growing need for KS3 places. 41 pupils would be starting in September and the provision was expected to be full by the end of that month. A Trustee asked if this was a change in previous patterns. RL advised that historically the demand was in KS4, but this was now moving to younger pupils in KS3. Some of these pupils had very complex needs and would require long term placements. DMc stated that he did not expect this picture to change anytime soon, and the wider reaching strategy needed to look at long term investment and training. PH concurred with this and added that this was not just a Bolton issue, and this would be impacting on AP throughout the country. PH stated that it would be a very challenging situation to have the biggest AP provision in Bolton already full from September. PH stated that he was happy to discuss this further with Bolton LA, but consideration also needed to be given to the diversification strategy into other Local Authorities i.e., Bury.

**Youth Challenge Primary –** demand for places remained low and this would be closely monitored. PH stated that this could be for several reasons including vulnerable pupils being able to be supported as schools were quieter during the pandemic or schools might be becoming more skilled in supporting children who traditionally required the two-day offer.

**Park School –** Demand for places had been lower than expected, so again this would be closely monitored. PH stated that hospitals and mental health provisions elsewhere in the country had waiting lists in place and it might be a case in Bolton that diagnosis of conditions had been delayed due to the pandemic. MS stated that there had been a significant impact on children’s mental health in Bolton and it was likely that there was a backlog of cases being referred. DMc concurred that it was very difficult for pupils and families to access external specialist support at the moment and CAHMS currently had a significant waiting list. SH stated that absenteeism was likely to be covering up the real issues and suggested that BIT contact schools directly to promote their services and work with schools directly to support pupils with mental health issues. PH replied that the marketing brochure advertising the Trust’s services would be sent out after Easter.

**Partnership Work**

PH stated that School to School Support assignments continued and the Trust was currently supporting Spring Lane School in Bury via the DfE Covid19 support programme. PH had been supporting the new Head Teacher and the Local Authority had asked to meet on Wednesday 31 March to discuss extending the support agreement.

**Staff Health & Wellbeing**

There had been a strong focus on supporting staff throughout the pandemic and the restructure. A weekly celebratory letter was being sent from the Executive Principal and Vice-Principal to thank staff for their work and to celebrate their achievements.

**Year 11s**

PH reported that discussions had taken place with Secondary Academy Leads and it had been unanimously decided to extend beyond the traditional May half term finishing date for the majority of Year 11s. Some would leave at half term to start work or finish off their studies remotely, but most would continue to attend site until the end of June. Priority 1 safeguarding students or those students with significant mental health issues would have the option of staying until 22 July.

**Vocational Studies**

PH stated that the Academies were now offering more vocational options than ever before and provided an overview of the courses available. This would enhance the curriculum offer and Trustees were informed that the next step would be to ensure that the Trust are able to offer access to vocational curriculum on a traded basis with schools.

**Business Development**

PH provided an update on Business Development including the new Training / Services brochure and BIT website, charging for School to School support assignments and CPD / Training programmes.

**Governance**

PH advised that there were currently no vacancies on the Local Governing Boards. PH and KD would work together to fill the two vacant Trust positions.

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

**7. FINANCE UPDATE**

Trustees were directed to the Financial Monitoring Report for spring term 2020/21. DS reported that Trust was currently anticipating a significant deficit totalling £298,000, which was an adverse variance of £548,000 from the budget. However, this position did not include the funding from the ESFA in January 2021 and therefore it was anticipated that the Trust would reflect a balanced position by the end of the year due to the actions taken within the Savings Programme.

Trustees were informed that the Local Authority had agreed to fund the Trust based on 169 places for the period of January to March in line with the guidance issued to commissioners in January 2021 that Alternative Provision should be funded based on previous commissioning patterns. DS reported that this had resulted in increased income of £123,000 from the income that would have been received if based on actual pupil numbers.

In response to questions DS reported that he had not projected for any additional pupils and staffing would need to be increased on a temporary basis using agency staff as pupil numbers increased.

DS provided an update on the proposal to work with AA Projects to submit bids to the Capital Infrastructure Fund, as agreed by the Finance & Resources Committee at their spring term meeting.

DS advised that the cashflow position was much more positive and the additional ESFA funds were currently not expected to be needed, although this position would continue to be closely monitored as would the Park School referrals discussed earlier in the meeting.

Trustees were directed to the Three-Year Forecast, which showed surpluses over the next three years. KD asked DS if he anticipated the outturn position to improve further. DS stated that he did expect the position to improve further as the figures did not reflect new pupil numbers or the growth strategy.

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

**8. POLICY APPROVAL**

The following policies had been uploaded to the Governance Gateway:

* Data Protection
* Complaints Policy
* Grievance, Bullying & Harassment Policy
* Designated Teacher Policy for Looked After Children

RL reported that the policies had been reviewed via the policy approval schedule, which had been agreed at the Risk & Audit Committee meeting held on Friday 19 March 2021.

**Agreed:** To approve and adopt the above listed following policies

**9. RETIREMENT OF PARK SCHOOL ACADEMY LEAD**

PH reported that he had received notification of retirement from the Park School Academy Lead with effect from July 2021. PH reported that he had spoken with the Chair of Trustees about recruiting to the position and it was proposed that the position be advertised internally initially. If the position was not successfully filled, then this would be advertised externally. The proposed recruitment timescales were reported as follows:

Advert placed 31 March 2021

Closing date 23 April 2021

Shortlisting 26 April 2021

Interviews 5 May 2021

In response to questions PH explained that an internal advert would go out to all staff across the Trust. The Chair stated that he felt it was good practice to develop staff internally where possible.

**Agreed:** That that the Academy Lead post at Park School be advertised internally in the first instance

**10. DATES OF NEXT MEETING**

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

**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

**11. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**Agreed:** To consent to the absence of T Grimshaw

**12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Business.

**13. 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 4.50 pm

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

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

(Chair of Trust Board)