

**BOLTON IMPACT TRUST
MEDICAL ACADEMY
LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF THE PERSONAL LEARNING CENTRE**

**MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA THE ZOOM PLATFORM
ON 22 JUNE 2020 AT 4.00PM**

Present: Mrs D Luczka (DL), Mr L McBride (LM), Mr M Murray (MM), Mrs J Plowes (JP) and Mrs A Woosey (AW), Academy Lead.

In Attendance: Ms R Leonard (RL) Executive Vice Principal, Mr D Smith (DS), Finance Director, Mr M Moosa Trainee Accountant and Carole Brooks (Clerk to the Local Governing Board)

Mrs D Luczka in the Chair

1. VIRTUAL MEETING PROTOCOL

The Chair welcomed all present to the first virtual meeting of the Local Governing Board (LGB) The Clerk referred to the protocols as circulated clarifying the requirements for the meeting asking Governors to ensure that they were positioned in an area where the meeting could not be overheard. This was agreed.

Governors microphones were requested to be muted and all were asked to raise their hand if wishing to speak.

Agreed: That the meeting protocol as circulated and discussed be adopted and adhered to.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Mrs A Bottomley.

3. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

3.1 Meeting Chairing

The Clerk advised that in light of the current Covid 19 Pandemic it was advised as good practice to have a contingency plan in place should both the Chair and Vice Chair become unable to continue with their Governance role.

Governors discussed this matter and

Agreed: That Mr Murray undertake the role of Chair/Vice Chair of the Governing Board as required should the current Chair and Vice Chair become unavailable.

3.2 Notification of Vacancies

The Clerk reported that there currently remained vacancies for two Parent Governors and four Co-opted Governors.

Parent Governor vacancies

AW reported that a Parent Governor election had recently been undertaken, one Parent had put themselves forward and had been duly elected unopposed. They were currently in the process of completing the necessary documentation.

Co-opted Governor Vacancies

AW reported that she had received an expression of interest from Jane Westhead to join the LGB. It was noted that Ms Westhead was a professional who knew the Centre well and was currently working with some of the looked after children in the Centre. It felt that with the Trusts approval, she would be an asset to the LGB.

Governors were informed that Ms Westhead was currently in the process of completing the relevant documentation and compiling a brief resume of her professional background to be presented to the Trust Board at their next meeting on 14 July 2020.

At this point in the meeting AW raised concerns regarding the meeting arrangements at the Personal Learning Centre (PLC) noting the limited car parking arrangements and seating space in the meeting rooms available. It was further noted that as the membership of the Board increased, an alternative venue may need to be considered in particular when face to meeting arrangements resumed.

Action: DL and AW to further discuss alternative venues for future face to face LGB meetings.

4. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest or conflict of interest were made.

5. MINUTES AND URGENT MATTERS ARISING

Governors had received and reviewed the minutes of the Spring term 2020 meeting. It was confirmed that all actions had been addressed and that there were no urgent matters arising to be discussed which were not covered by items on the agenda.

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 25 February 2020.

6. FINANCE REPORT

Governors were guided through the financial monitoring report prepared by Mr Smith. DS referred Governors to the table highlighted at item 3.2 of the report. It was noted that the projections made were in line with the budget, despite not having been able to admit any new pupils as had been anticipated, due to the current pandemic crisis. DS noted that there were a number of variances that had been detailed within the report such as the additional member of staff that had been required for 1-1 pupil support.

DS confirmed that the PLC was part of the Wider Trust, who were currently in a positive financial position and projecting a surplus balance in excess of £300,000. It was noted that this was a considerably much improved position than had been reported at previous meetings.

DS confirmed that the new Dynamic Purchasing System was working very effectively and that the Trust had built up a very good working relationship with the LA, in particular with Bernie Brown, Director of People. It was felt that she understood and appreciated the needs of the alternative provision.

RL reported that when schools closed due to the pandemic, pupil numbers across the provision were lower, but with the recent changes announced by the Government for schools to fully return from September 2020, it was anticipated that pupil numbers would increase. It was noted that a number of enquiries from schools and applications for traded places had already been made since the Government announcement had been made and therefore felt confident that pupil numbers would steadily increase as the weeks progressed.

DL asked AW how many pupils would be leaving the Centre at the end of the summer term.

AW confirmed that the PLC would lose six pupils but were retaining one. The SEN team had approved that this particular pupil could remain at the PLC for a further year. AW noted that two new pupils had already been confirmed to commence from September 2020 and it was hoped that pupil numbers would continue to increase gradually. AW further noted that last year there had been ten pupils in the PLC and that following enquiries, it was anticipated that there would be eight or nine for this year.

DL asked what the minimum number of pupils was in order to maintain the positive financial arrangements of the PLC.

DS explained that the natural pattern was that pupil numbers would usually commence fairly low in September and gradually build up over the following weeks. The budget had been prepared to be presented to the Trustees at the next meeting on 14 July 2020 and would also highlight the pupil numbers in each of the five Academy's. However, it was anticipated that numbers would commence at ten, increasing to around sixteen or seventeen as the weeks progressed.

AW referred to two students requiring 1-1 support noting that the rate charged for the support required and provided was almost double the standard charging rate. This was therefore financially beneficial to the PLC.

A Governor referred to the remote learning offer and asked if the PLC were considering expanding their offer.

AW explained that in the past the one to one Tutor would attend the pupils home in order to provide the required tuition but this did not prove cost effective in relation to staffing costs and transport arrangements against the income it generated. However, due to the current pandemic the PLC had improved its technology and were now providing an online learning offer that was proving to be very successful and it was hoped to continue with this provision as a starter for those students who were school phobic. It was noted that but for the Pandemic this may not otherwise have been completed.

AW commended the staff team and pupils on how well they had adapted to using the various online learning platforms such as Teams, Google Classrooms and also the video's that had been provided by 'Wise Up', thanks to MM and LM. It was noted that the platforms used had delivered the 'whole package' and had not just been academic related.

7. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT

Governors had received the Academy Leads report prepared by AW for their review and information.

A further review was undertaken with aw providing additional information in the following areas:

7.1 Spring Term 2020 (pre-closure)

AW referred to the spring term data as detailed within the report. It was noted that she had been very proud of the commitment and hard work shown by the staff team and students to reflect that 100% of all year 11 students were 'on target'. The results were currently confidential however, it was noted that the PLC could provide information to support what had been recommended.

School Development Plan (SDP)

AW reported that prior to 'lock down', work had been undertaken in respect of the SDP with a focus on 'well-being'. One to one meeting's had been held with all staff up to the date of closure and had proved very beneficial so would continue.

Online Feed back

AW reported that it had always been difficult in the past to gain feed back from parents, however, a request for online feedback had been made and had been responded to very successfully with a number of parents completing and returning the questionnaire. Therefore, the statistics recorded within the circulated report were a true reflection of Parental satisfaction.

7.2 Safeguarding pupils during Coronavirus lockdown

AW reported that the Staff at the PLC had worked very closely with Rebecca Leonard (RL), Vice Principal for the Trust in meeting the Trusts approach to the necessary Safeguarding requirements. Staff members had made daily contact with all students and established very good working relationships prioritising those who were more of a cause for concern. However, it was

noted that there had not been any 'Priority 1' students and that if staff had not been able to make contact with a student for more than two days an 'eyes on' visit would be made.

AW reported that this level of contact had also provided a good opportunity for staff to link up with Parents/Carers to discuss any problems or mental health related issues that they or their children may have and using the checklist in place as a means of additional support.

Governors were assured that thorough plans had been made for the safe return of all students with all risks being mitigated. Paul Hodgkinson (PH), Executive Principal and RL had undertaken a rigorous review of the PLC and the plans in place and had been very happy to make the necessary proposal to the Trust in respect of re-opening of the PLC. Governors were assured that the Trustees had confirmed that they were satisfied with the processes in place and had approved the re-opening of the PLC.

RL informed Governors that PH had been very impressed with the standard of safeguarding arrangements in place at the PLC and the adaptations that had been made to support social distancing within the working environment. These had been in the best interests of the pupils and the staff team.

DL highly commended AW and her staff for all their hard work and continued dedication to the PLC provision. DL was very impressed with the way AW and her staff team had adapted to a new way of working under the current circumstances of the Covid 19 Pandemic Crisis and that she felt confident that all the necessary safeguarding practices and policies were in place. DL expressed her thanks to RL for amending the current Safeguarding Policy so quickly in relation to Covid 19. DL thanked AW for her continued hard work and commitment and asked that thanks on behalf of the LGB also be conveyed to the whole staff team.

7.3 Remote learning strategy and its impact

AW confirmed that as detailed within her circulated report and discussed earlier in the meeting remote working had been very successful. The staff and students had responded very positively to a new way of working. It was noted that this platform would continue as a starter to encourage engagement of those students who were school phobic.

7.4 Staffing during the Coronavirus lockdown

Further to the circulated report AW commended the staff team on their continued commitment, dedication to their work and their flexible approach to their role under these circumstances. The team had met virtually via Microsoft Teams on a daily basis in order to keep in touch and maintain links. It was noted that this linked into the staff well-being arrangements that had been included within the SDP.

Questions were invited, but none were raised at this point in the meeting.

8. **GOVERNOR VISITS**

Governors had received the following reports following the monitoring visits to their area of responsibility:

- Leadership and Management – D Luczca
- Health and Safety – Alison Bottomley
- Website Co9mpliance – Joy Plowes
- Behaviour and Attitudes – Liam McBride

DL thanked all Governors for undertaking their ‘virtual visits’ and for the provision of such detailed reports.

JP referred to the PLC’s website noting that whilst the site was compliant, she felt that there were some improvements that could be made regarding accessibility and the format of the Site. However, the visit undertaken, and discussions held had been very positive.

DS informed Governors that a discussion had been held regarding the format of the website at another LGB meeting where it had been noted that the website required a re-launch. It was noted that this was currently being considered in the near future following a further discussion to be held at Trust level.

9. **BUILDINGS AND PREMISES**

9.1 Building Matters/Urgent Work

AW reported that there was no urgent work required to be undertaken at the PLC at this time.

The Caretaker of the building had ensured that all the necessary statutory checks had been undertaken and the building had been maintained to the required standard, particularly in the current circumstances.

Governors were informed that a Smart Board was required to be purchased for the ‘Red Room’ to enable all pupils to see the Board effectively.

Governors were assured that the two-metre social distancing rule would be observed, and markers had been put in place to highlight the distance required.

10. **SUPPORT FOR GOVERNANCE**

The Clerk reported in recognition that schools and academies were not currently operating in the usual way the Service would continue to be available to provide support, advice and guidance virtually, by email and by telephone.

Clerks would be assisting boards on undertaking virtual meetings and meeting statutory duties with documentation shared securely via the Bolton Governance Gateway.

For information, the Service had put together guidance on virtual meetings which could be found on the Governance Services website. This guidance would be updated throughout the term in order to provide additional information to support boards with their meetings.

During social distancing, isolation and shielding, it was important to provide some normality in services and we would therefore offer a suite of virtual training and development for governors and trustees to access. This would replace planned face-to-face sessions for this term and further information about the sessions available had been issued via an additional e brief.

The NGA Learning Link, brokered through our Training and Development Service Level Agreement, remained available for access. Further information on e-learning can be found on our website.

RL noted that it was intended to have one Governor responsible for maintaining Training records across the five LGB's, however, she was undertaking this role at the present time. Governors were encouraged to book on any LA training courses that they felt would enhance their Governance role and to advise RL or AW following completion to enable the training records to be accurately maintained.

The Clerk reminded Governors that at this moment in time the Team were unable to provide the full suite of Courses on a face to face basis but that there were a number that could be undertaken virtually as had been detailed above and on the information circulated.

11. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Agreed: That the Local Governing Board meetings for the 2020/21 the academic year be held as follows:

Autumn Term: Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 4.00pm*** See note below
Spring Term: Tuesday 9th February 2021 at 4.00pm
Summer Term: Tuesday 15th June 2021 at 4.00pm

Governors were assured that they would be informed ahead of each meeting if the meeting would be virtual or face to face.

At this point in the meeting, a Governor asked if virtual meetings could be continued on a permanent basis particularly in light of the previous discussion around parking issues at the PLC site and needing a larger venue as the Governor Membership increased.

A discussion was held regarding this matter and it was felt that a balance was required.

The Clerk noted that whilst this arrangement may suit most Governors, virtual meetings or individual Governor virtual attendance were only usually practiced in specific circumstances. It was noted that whilst the protocols had been agreed, if this was to become a regular meeting

platform, it was thought that a more in depth policy would need to be put in place to support this arrangement.

Action: RL to further discuss the matter of holding all future meetings virtually at the next Academy Management Team meeting.

***Since the meeting took place it a been realised that there was a clash of dates with the Autumn term Trust meeting. RL therefore asked the Clerk if the LGB meeting could be moved to Monday 5 October 2020 instead. The Clerk confirmed her availability, noting that she would advise Governors of the change to date when circulating these minutes for their review. Any queries would be reported back to RL as required.

12. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Alison Bottomley.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

13.1 Working Hours/Arrangements for the PLC

AW noted that whilst there had not been an item on the agenda for reporting AOB she wanted to ask for LGB approval for the PLC to revert back to a full working week as opposed to finishing earlier each Tuesday as had been agreed at a previous meeting.

AW explained that in order to be able to extend the offer with a wider range of subjects, the PLC would be required to be open for a full week to enable the additional teaching provision.

AW noted that if approved, it was proposed to hold future Staff team meetings once per half term as opposed to weekly and therefore would be required to finish early on that day only. Staff would remain until 3pm on all other days.

A Governor asked if this matter had been discussed with the staff team and if so, how had they reacted.

AW confirmed that the Staff Team had been consulted and were all in favour.

Governors discussed this matter and

Agreed: That with effect from 1 September 2020, the PLC revert back to full time Staff working a full week until 3.00pm daily and only finishing early on one day every half term to facilitate the time for the half termly Staff Meeting.

14. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Agreed: That none of the matters reported in the minutes of this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

DL thanked AW and her Staff team for all their hard work in particular during the current circumstances of the Pandemic. Thanks, was also expressed to RL and PH for all the support provided and to Governors for their continued support.

The meeting closed at 4.45pm

Signed as a correct record: _____
(Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Governors)

Date: _____