

LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD OF BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

THE PERSONAL LEARNING CENTRE (PLC)

**VIRTUAL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM
MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 2021 AT 4.00PM**

Present: Mrs D Luczka (DL) (Chair), Miss H Jerstice (HJ), Mr L McBride (LM), Mr M Murray (MM), Mrs J Plowes (JP), Mrs J Westhead (JW) and Mrs A Woosey (AW), Academy Lead.

In attendance: Mrs J Gregory (JG) Deputy Academy Lead, Mr D Smith (DS), Finance Director, Mr Paul Hodgkinson (PH), Executive Principal, Miss R Leonard (RL), Vice Principal, Mr M Moosa (MM) (trainee accountant) and Mrs C Brooks, Clerk, Governance Services.

Mrs Luczka in the Chair

Virtual Meeting Protocol

Governors were reminded of the virtual meeting protocol as had been agreed at a previous meeting.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed all present, in particular Helen Jerstice, and Jane Westhead as newly appointed Co-opted Local Governors.

Apologies for absence had been received from Alison Bottomley and Nikola Moore

There had been no communication from Leanne Waring, newly appointed Governor, it was hoped that she may still attend.

AW confirmed that Josie Fuller, also a newly appointed Co-opted Governor had been required to resign due to increased work commitments.

Action: PH to seek a suitable candidate for the vacant Co-opted Local Governor position, subject to approval being gained from the Trust.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 Declaration of Pecuniary or Conflict of Interests

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

2.2 Annual Forms for Governors completion

The Clerk referred to the slight change in process for the annual completion and return of the following forms for this year:

- Register of Business Interest
- Declaration of Eligibility and Privacy Consent
- Safeguarding Declaration
- Code of Conduct Acceptance (no change to content)

Register of Business Interests

In accordance with the academy's financial handbook, entries in the Academy Trust's Register of Business Interests (RBI) were to be reviewed annually. All Trust Members, Local Governors and the Principal were asked to complete the LA model pro-forma and return it to Mr Smith for retention. It was noted that the entry included:

- relevant business and pecuniary interests
- details of any governance roles in other educational institutions.
- any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)

The Clerk noted that trustees and local governors were required to complete this information and that failure to do so may be in breach of the Trusts Code of Conduct.

Mr Smith explained that all Governors would receive a pack of the required forms including Declaration of Eligibility, Code of conduct acceptance, Register of Business Interest and Safeguarding Declaration required for their completion and return to him either via email or post in the stamped addressed envelope whichever was preferred.

Agreed: That all governors complete the Declaration of Eligibility, Register of Business Interests, Safeguarding Declaration and Code of Conduct Acceptance forms and return them to David Smith at the earliest opportunity.

Action: DS to make the necessary arrangements for a pack of the RBI, Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Declaration forms to be forwarded to all Governors for their completion and return at the earliest convenience.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR 'ANY OTHER BUSINESS'

There were no items of 'Any other Business' notified at this point in the meeting.

4. **MINUTES/MATTERS ARISING OF THE LAST MEETING**

Governors had received the minutes of the last meeting held virtually on 22 June 2020 for their review and approval.

Matters Arising

Governors reviewed the actions from the minutes, and it was agreed that there were no matters arising that had not already been included on the current agenda.

AW referred to the discussion in relation to using a larger venue for LGB meetings. However, due to the circumstances of the Pandemic, all meetings were currently being held virtually and therefore consideration would be given to seeking a more suitably sized venue as and when required.

Agreed: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Governing Board held on 22 June 2020

5. **NOMINATED GOVERNOR ROLES**

5.1 Chairs' Briefing

The Chair reported that she had attended the virtual live event of the autumn term Chairs' Briefing meeting held on Monday 28 September 2020.

The Clerk noted that the following points had been highlighted:

- Autumn term updates:
 - Changes to the School Exclusion Process During the Pandemic
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education Update
 - Academies Financial Handbook
 - Financial Transparency in schools and academies
 - Ofsted Monitoring Visits
- Governance in the Years Ahead – 'Keeping our Board's vision at the core of our planning'

The Clerk noted that PH and DS had confirmed that the finance related updates would be shared at Trust level.

The Chair referred to the importance of the LGB ensuring that the vision be incorporated in future meetings.

AW suggested that she meet with DL outside of this meeting to further discuss this matter and include on future LGB meeting agendas.

Action: AW and DL to arrange a meeting to discuss ways of incorporating vision for the PLC/LGB into future meetings.

5.2 Link Governors Report on Training / Recent Training undertaken

The Clerk reported that the 2020/21 Governance Training Programme was now available on the Governance Services website. It was noted that a Link Governor briefing had been held virtually on 14 September 2020 where it had been reported that there were a number of new training opportunities available in the programme to assist governors in their role, taking into account national initiatives and changes in legislation.

RL confirmed that she had attended the virtual briefing as the Training link Co-ordinator across Trust where the presenters of the briefing had highlighted a wealth of courses were available for Governors to access as was detailed within her circulated report.

RL recommended that Governors access as many courses that they could to enhance their Governance role, particularly whilst these were all being presented virtually. It was noted that these could be accessed at a convenient time to suit each individual. Once completed, Governors were asked to advise RL to enable her to maintain accurate Governor training records.

RL referred to the National Induction course for the new Governors noting that this was a very beneficial course to undertake. It was noted that RL would direct the new Governors to any other courses that she felt would be beneficial.

RL referred to Safeguarding and the recent updates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2020 and the Model Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Governors were informed that once all the LGB meetings had taken place for this term she would forward part 1 of this document to all Governors requesting that they read the document and return a signed declaration to confirm that they had read and understood it. It was noted that a short quiz may also be undertaken to confirm Governors understanding.

RL noted that a review of the Governor skills audit would also be undertaken to inform any gaps in skills across the Trust with Governors being directed to access related courses.

Governors were also asked to advise RL of any external courses attended and to ask for any other link role related training that they felt would be beneficial to be arranged.

PH noted that whilst there were a vast number of excellent courses made available by the LA, not all were as relevant to Alternative Provision (AP). Governors were requested to consider any training needs in order to up-skill and enhance their Governance role to further discuss with PH or RL who would endeavour to source courses to best meet their needs.

RL concurred with the comments made by PH noting that it was vital that Governors were adequately trained in order to best fulfil their role.

The Chair encouraged all Governors to access as much training as was possible, in particular whilst it was being offered virtually.

At this point in the meeting RL referred to the 2020 updates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education Document (KCSIE) noting that Part 1 of this document would be circulated to

all Governors together with a declaration to be signed to confirm that Governors had both read and understood the content.

Action:

- i) Newly appointed Governors to access the National Induction Training and any other Governance related courses to enhance their role.
- ii) All Governors to make the necessary arrangements to access suitable courses to widen their knowledge and enhance their Governance role.
- iii) RL to forward part 1 of the KCSiE document for Governors review together with a declaration for Governors completion and return.
- iv) Governors to read Part 1 of the KCSiE document and return a signed copy of the declaration to confirm that they had read and understood it.

5.3 Partnership Briefing

The Clerk reported that the Partnership Briefing had been arranged for Monday 12 October 2020. This would be held virtually, and the Governor attending would be required to register their place for a link to be forwarded.

5.4 Bolton Governor Conference

The Clerk reported that unfortunately due to the current pandemic the Governance Services Team's annual Governor Conference 2020 had been cancelled; however, it was hoped that the popular event would resume as usual in 2021.

5.5 Nominated Link Governor Visits

The Chair thanked Governors for making the time to undertake a monitoring visit to their link area and for the provision of the detailed reports as circulated.

5.5.1 Behaviour and Attitudes – Liam McBride and Mark Murray

LM reported that two visits had been undertaken in respect of this area:

1. To review the new online Behaviour recording system

Further to the circulated report, LM reported that he had been very impressed with the system in place. It was noted that this took account and acknowledged all behaviour issues and enabled individual targets to be set.

2. To review the Behaviour Policy

Further to the circulated report LM confirmed that a review of the Behaviour Policy had been made and amended to meet the needs of the environment. Questions had been

raised about receiving feed-back on the impact of the new policy. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

AW confirmed that the governor monitoring visit had been very positive with some very challenging but welcome questions being asked to ensure effective governor monitoring. AW referred to the review of the Behaviour policy noting that the intention was to ensure that students were comfortable with the atmosphere and felt secure within the environment and for the Centre to have evidence to support that students felt the same.

A specific student questionnaire had therefore been compiled directed at all students to ask how they felt and if they shared the same ethos in areas such as: being non-judgemental as was described in the Policy and processes that were in place. Further details and the outcome in respect of the questionnaire would be reported at the Spring term 2021 meeting.

5.2 Link Governor Roles and Responsibilities

AW reported that there were a number of vacancies for various Link Governor roles and areas of responsibility as detailed on the circulated report. These included areas such as:

- Quality of Education
- Finance

The newly appointed governors were requested to consider all areas and submit any expressions of interest to AW.

HJ expressed an interest in any curriculum related link role.

PH/AW thanked HJ for putting herself forward for this. It was noted that the Quality of Education was quite a large area which may need more than one link Governor.

AW suggested that she liaise with all newly appointed Governors and make the necessary appointments in line with their skill set and interests.

PH confirmed that the LGB was fortunate to have a wide and varied skill set and that further discussion with AW and the Governors involved would ensure that each Link Governor role was suitable allocated.

Agreed: That Governors delegate the responsibility of making the necessary link Governor appointments to AW.

Action: All newly appointed governors to review the report detailing all link Governor roles to ascertain which role was best suited to their interests and skills and liaise with AW to confirm their appointments.

6. ACADEMY LEAD REPORT TO GOVERNORS

Governors were informed that for the Autumn term 2020 Local Governing Body meetings, the Academy Leads had all been asked to write their reports with slightly different contents and in a different format. The circulated report had therefore been adapted to reflect the changes in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

AW guided Governors through the following key items:

- Summer Term 2020
- Preparing for September 2020
- Results and Destinations 2019/20
- Updates since we have re-opened fully in September 2020
- Current pupil numbers
- Safeguarding

AW noted the following key points:

Summer Term 2020

Year 11

AW reported that the focus for Year 11 over the summer term 2020 once the exam results had been submitted, had been careers based in order to continue to give those students meaningful tasks linked with their post 16 placements to keep them focused and in a routine to help with their mental health during the pandemic and to build up Students' resilience and confidence so that they feel ready for their next placement. It was planned for this to continue for future years.

Newsletter

Governors were informed that the compilation and circulation of the PLC newsletter had been very well received and it was planned for this to continue.

Impact of 'Lockdown'

AW confirmed that whilst the 'lockdown' period had been challenging in some ways, there had also been some positive outcomes including:

- The ability for staff to access training

AW noted that the benefits of staff accessing online training could be seen in areas such as: SEN Testing/Screening

- Increased levels of Student/family engagement

Student engagement was well above average with links into Google Classrooms for sharing lessons and completing work.

AW confirmed that the staff team had kept regular daily contact with the Students. The feedback from Parents/carers had been very positive and were engaging well with the online response facility.

Preparation for September 2020

AW confirmed that the Leadership Team had worked hard in preparing for September 2020 including:

- The completion of the full school re-opening risk assessments.
- Effective use of the two full inset days with staff undertaking group work and completing set tasks.

Results and Destinations

Further to her circulated report AW reported a huge improvement in the results and destinations compared to the same period last year. It was noted that this year had been unique in that students had not experienced the challenge of an examination situation. It was further noted that whilst the teacher assessment grades had been very conservative, the PLC were very proud of the Students achievements. All students had made at least one level of progress and the number of 'passes' achieved being 45, which was a huge increase on last year.

AW referred to a number of individual pupil success stories with pupils achieving 6 GCSE's during their time at the PLC and had since secured some very positive destinations.

PH commended the hard work undertaken by the students and the excellent support provided by the staff at the PLC. PH discussed one major success story regarding a student with 44 days exclusion whilst in a mainstream setting and having been described as 'un-teachable'. However, with the time and support provided to the student in question, some very positive results and outcomes had been achieved. The Students Parents had commended the staff at the PLC on the Phase 1 support provided noting how well their child had developed since joining the PLC to achieve the results that they had.

PH further commended the remarkable work of AW and her staff team noting that such positive outcomes reflected the excellent support and input provided to these students.

Safeguarding

AW reported that an addendum to the Safeguarding Policy had been compiled in line with the new guidance. Staff training would be repeated to ensure that all were fully conversant and fully understood the detail.

Arrangements had been put in place in the event of a further 'full lockdown' including:

- Staff members would continue to ensure daily contact was maintained with all students
- The provision of stationery packs having been provided to all Students
- The provision of work to Students via Google Classrooms had been prepared
- 'Bubble' Closure arrangements

Governors were informed that the staff and pupils at the PLC were all in one 'bubble' therefore if a Covid Case were reported the full staff team and students at the PLC would need to self-isolate.

AW explained that staff members across the Trust would support each other in the event of a lock down/bubble closure by undertaking 'eyes on' visits to help support the Social Workers in place.

DL confirmed that it was evident from the progress made and the positive destinations reported that the online working arrangement via Google Classrooms was working effectively. AW and the staff team were to be commended for their commitment.

DL thanked AW for her very comprehensive report. It was noted that the information provided had provided a very clear picture of what had been happening the PLC.

DL asked that thanks on behalf of the LGB be conveyed to the staff team for their hard work and dedication, it was very much appreciated.

PH informed Governors that sections of information from the Academy Leads report would be shared with the Trust at the Standards Meeting and the Trust Board meeting along with the headlines of the discussions held at LGB level and the details shared within the local Governor visit reports. This ensured that the Committee and Trust Board members were fully aware of the workings of each of the five academies across the Trust.

Agreed: That Governors receive and note the contents of the Academy Leads report with thanks.

7. **FINANCE PRESENTATION**

Governors had received a financial presentation compiled by DS detailing the financial position of The Personal Learning Centre (PLC).

DS shared an on-screen copy of the presentation noting that this report was in a slightly different format than on previous occasions.

MM guided Governors through each of the following sections:

- Anticipated Outturn 2019/20
- Variances between budget and outturn
- Budgeted surplus 2020/2021
- Pupil numbers September 2020 (including financial impact)
- Mitigation in place

Governors were reminded that the financial year for Academies was from September to August.

Anticipated out-turn for 2019/20

The Trust had anticipated a deficit budget of £121,000, however the closing figure had been slightly more at £146,000. It was noted that there had been an increase in employee expenditure with one member of Agency Staff being appointed to the PLC on a full time and permanent basis.

Due to the need to close the Centre for the duration of the Covid 'lockdown' the number of commissioned places had decreased which had impacted negatively on the income usually received by the PLC.

2020/21 Budget (confidential section)

The Local Governing Board having designated the details of discussion of this matter as Confidential under the Academies Articles of Association, this information is excluded from these minutes.

Agreed:

- i) That the details of the 2020/21 budget report for the PLC remain highly confidential.
- ii) That the details within the financial report be received with thanks.

8. GOVERNOR QUESTIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Agreed: That Governors had no further questions of the Leadership Team than had already been raised.

At this point in the meeting JP commended the new Behaviour reporting system and asked that be conveyed to AW, JG and members of the PLC Leadership Team for enabling this.

9. POLICY APPROVALS AND REVIEW OF PROCESS

RL referred to the number of policies that were required to be reviewed and approved across the Academy. Some at Trust level and some at LGB level. It was proposed that as discussed with other LGB's many of the non-statutory policies would be reviewed as part of the policy review cycle and amended by the Academy Lead in liaison with the Link Governor for that specific area. The policy would then be recommended for overall approval by the LGB at the next meeting.

Agreed: That the review and amendment of the Non-Statutory Policies be delegated to the Academy Lead in liaison with the link governor for that area, subject to final approval being recorded within the minutes of the next LGB meeting.

9.1 Behaviour Policy

AW noted that LM and MM had been very instrumental in respect of the review and updates that had been required to the Behaviour Policy. It was now recommended that this be approved by the LGB.

Governors confirmed that they had read the updated policy and that this be approved.

Agreed: That Governors approve the updated Behaviour Policy.

9.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection (Model) Policy

RL noted that the model Safeguarding, and Child Protection Policy had been updated by the LA in line with the 2020 updates that had been made to the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Document. The updated Policy had been circulated to schools for their review and to be personalised to their school. RL confirmed that this had now been completed for Governors approval.

RL reminded Governors as discussed earlier, once all LGB meetings had been completed for this term she would circulate Part 1 of the KCSiE Document 2020 to all Governors for their review together with a declaration form to sign and confirm their understanding.

Agreed: That the updates made to the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2020 be approved.

Action: RL to circulate Part 1 of the KCSiE document 2020 to all Governors to read and return the signed declaration to confirm their understanding.

10. GOVERNANCE SERVICES UPDATE

Governors had received a briefing note detailing the recent updates and virtual events planned from by the Governance Services Team including:

- Clerking and Support – Continued virtual arrangements
- Governor Training and Development - Virtual arrangements
- The appointment of a new team member.

11. IMPACT STATEMENT

Governors discussed the impact made at this meeting from the discussions and agreements that had been made as follows:

- Appointment of new Governors to ensure a broad skill set is maintained across the LGB

- Review and appointment of the Link Governor roles to ensure effective challenge and monitoring is maintained
- Revision of the Policy review process to utilise Link Governors skills more effectively in the review and compilation of robust policies resulting in better time management and efficiency at LGB meetings.

12. DATES OF NEXT LGB MEETINGS

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

Spring Term: Tuesday February 2021 at 4.00pm
Summer Term: Tuesday 15 June 2021 at 4.00pm

All meetings to continue to be held virtually unless otherwise informed.

13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

Agreed: To consent to the absence from this meeting of Alison Bottomley, Nikola More and Leanne Waring.

Action: PH/ AW to contact LW regarding the protocol required if unable to attend meeting

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of 'Any Other Business' reported.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the following matter(s) be designated as confidential, thereby excluding the information from that which is to be made available to any interested persons: -

- the matter covered in respect of the budget 2020/21 as detailed within Minute Number 7 above.

The Chair thanked Governors for their contribution to the meeting and for their on-going commitment as Governors of the PLC LGB. It was recognised that Governors time was limited due to their own individual work commitments and the dedication shown was very much appreciated.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm

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

Date: _____