

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Virtual Meeting held on Thursday 9th July 2020, 4:30pm

TRUSTEES PRESENT:	
Siraj Mayet (Chair) (SM)	Ellen Loughhead JP (Vice Chair) (EL)
Mandy Kennedy (MK)	Nailah Ahmed (NA)
Trude Feiweles (TF)	APOLOGIES:
Mandip Sahota (MS)	Jeremy Townend (JT)

IN ATTENDANCE:	
Julie Haigh (Trust CEO and Co-Head at BGHS) (JCH)	Alan Brown (Trust Finance Director) (ABr)
Samantha Vickers (Trust Vice CEO and Headteacher at UBHS) (SV)	Hilary Towers-Islam (Primary Expert and Headteacher at Field Lane) (HTI)
Laura Bland (Clerk) (LB)	

	Minutes	Action
1.	Chair's Welcome	
	The Chair thanked all for joining the second virtual meeting of the academic year.	
2.	Apologies for Absence, Consent and Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies had been received from Jeremy Townend, with consent. The Chair confirmed the meeting was quorate. There were no declarations of interests from Trustees.	
3.	Representation	
	Sub-committee representation for MS is TBC for the 2020/21 academic year. All other Trustees will continue to sit on the sub-committees as per the current setup.	
4.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting (30 April 2020)	
	It was AGREED the minutes of the previous meetings were a true and accurate record.	
5.	Matters arising from the previous minutes	
	Matters outstanding for ABr to be discussed in the finance update later in the meeting. Other items to be discussed as part of the CEO Report.	

6.	Draft budget approval (2020/21) and F&R sub-committee feedback	
	<p><u>Matters arising from the previous minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ABr confirmed that one examination body (thought to be WJEC) will provide schools with a 23% reimbursement from this year's exam fees - this is likely to be a credit note, but is TBC. No communication from other exam boards had been received. ● ABr to seek further information from BGS re: The Old Trust. BGS' School Business Manager now attends the F&R sub-committees and this will be discussed at the next meeting. <p>ABr explained the draft budget for 20/21 had been approved, in principle, by the F&R sub committee (F&RSC) and was seeking approval by the full board.</p> <p>Working through the table provided within the report, ABr summarised the key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Estimated end of year position for 2019/20 shows an overall projected surplus for the Trust - £4,253,000. ● In-year position is at a deficit as a result of capital works across each school. There were no concerns from the F&RSC on this position. ● UBHS requested approval from the full board, following F&RSC approval in principle, for improvement works to the main entrance and reception area which were not fit-for-purpose, totalling £55,000-£60,000 (quotes not all in). Trustees APPROVED this. ● ABr informed Trustees of a request for financial support from BGHS to BGS of approx £540k. The position on this had changed following the original request to the F&RSC of £300k as BGS were now unlikely to receive funding from their CIF bid (which originally would cover £240k of expenditure). ABr explained, the 'loan' was financially viable for BGHS. ABr added that this was necessary as each school currently operates from their own bank account. It is anticipated there will be a central Trust bank account by September 2021 and as a result, in future, such circumstances would not happen, as the central account would support cashflow. It was agreed, Trustees would receive the tender documents for the proposed works via email, and submit their approval for the large amount of expenditure/comment electronically. ABr to circulate. ● ABr sought confirmation from Trustees to approve the 2020/21 budget as proposed and Trustees APPROVED this. <p>ABr sought approval for the proposed 2.75% support staff pay increase which is yet to be agreed by the Unions, but unlikely to change. Trustees APPROVED this and acknowledged it was in advance of Union approval and requested only to be updated, should this figure change.</p> <p>ABr explained to all, audit committees are required for Trusts with an income over £50m. The Trust is not currently at this level (£21.9m), but noted that the Academies Financial Handbook suggests Trusts have these in place as good practice regardless of the £50m benchmark. The F&RSC had agreed to this, in principle, and had been provided with model terms of reference. LB to recirculate to the F&RSC for reference. These detail the 'setup' of the committee, which state the Chair of Trustees and Chair of the F&RSC cannot Chair the audit committee.</p> <p>The Chair requested the F&RSC read through the model terms and feedback their approval (or otherwise) to him, but did agree in principle. Trustees also discussed how the set up of the</p>	<p>ABr</p> <p>ABr</p> <p>LB</p>

	<p>committee could coincide with Trustee expansion and be Chaired by the Accountant/Finance link the board is seeking.</p> <p>The Chair of the F&RSC confirmed she, along with the Chair of Trustees had received a first draft of a reviewed Reserves Policy and added, it was important to ensure the policy is set at the correct amount to trigger discussion when funds are over and/or under the agreed reserves amount.</p> <p>ABr added audit advice had been sought throughout the review process and it had been advised to set a level of reserves as an amount within a range, rather than a fixed figure. Trustees commented on a similar setup within the Charity Sector and felt this was the right approach for the Trust. Trustees therefore APPROVED the policy in its proposed format.</p> <p>The CEO thanked ABr and team for their continued hard work over the academic year, particularly their efforts over recent months.</p> <p>ABr left the meeting at 5:10pm.</p>	
7.	Outcomes sub-committee feedback	
	<p>The Chair of the sub-committee explained to the board that, as a result of the pandemic, students did not have the opportunity to sit their May exams and grades will be awarded by teacher assessment, mock grades (where relevant) and the consideration of attitudes to learning.</p> <p>The sub-committee therefore reviewed the quality of the processes in place that had been followed in order to reach a final grade for students. The sub-committee were happy with the approach each school had taken and agreed they were fair, standardised and very robust.</p> <p>Data from KS5 highlighted some anomalies, but these were justified as a result of a lack of a clear 3-year data trend, as well as the high impact of awarding grades for subjects with very few students (for e.g. 10 or less).</p> <p>The sub-committee had discussed the knock-on effect the pandemic may have on students' onward journey to FE (or otherwise).</p> <p>Trustees questioned the level of engagement with families in relation to the pandemic (overall). The CEO explained communication with families had been clear and regular throughout and took many forms for e.g. face-to-face, surveys, emails and many phone calls home to students and families. Communicating with families had been a regular agenda item at Trust Heads' meeting and each school reported positive feedback from their families, as a whole.</p>	
8.	Trustee reflections on Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter - key messages for our Trust	
	<p>Trust Leaders felt it was important to allow time for discussion given events over recent months. The Chair reiterated how important the role of a Trustee is at this time, and how they can affect positive change for the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees shared their views on Covid-19 and Black Lives Matter, in regards to the key messages for the Trust. These were, as follows:</p>	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental health and wellbeing of the students and school workforce, with particular discussion around openness, flexibility and communication. 2. Adapting to a new way of working - virtually and addressing the digital accessibility for students. How have we and do we continue to meet the needs of the workforce and students in relation to technology? 3. Be prepared for difficult questions and conversations amongst staff and students. 4. Parental engagements/the role of the parents - Trustees appreciated the vast changes parents have faced in relation to 'becoming the teacher' whilst balancing new day-to-day challenges. 5. The knock on effect of changes to potential career opportunities for students - how this makes our students feel. 6. Trust wide approach to emerging gaps for disadvantaged and vulnerable students. 7. The wider impact of inequalities on education attainment and working with families/community. 8. Student wellbeing support services responding to differing impact of COVID-19 on communities. <p>Trustees also discussed how these challenges lend themselves to a further Trust-wide approach to finding solutions to build on the current excellent work taking place (as detailed in the CEO report), and agreed it would be prudent to meet again over the next month (with JCH and SV), to discuss how Trustees can support School Leaders implementing potential changes as a result of the above. LB to coordinate.</p>	LB
9.	CEO Report	
	<p>The CEO summarised the key points from the report, with a particular focus on COVID-19, promoting equality and reference to Performance Management.</p> <p><u>COVID-19</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There have been positive and consistent messages from the Trust, following weekly Trust's Heads' network meetings. Schools having autonomy has worked very well in order for each school to meet the needs of their students. - All schools have submitted teacher assessed grades, supported by robust checking, monitoring and moderation procedures (as referenced by the Chair of the Outcomes SC). - All schools have offered a full range of remote learning packages to all students, including: Google Classroom lessons, paper based resources, virtual resources and programmes and additional support through online platforms such as Purple Mash (primary) and Hegarty Maths and (secondary). - Schools also received laptops (from the Government) for disadvantaged and some vulnerable students. - Schools have remained open to vulnerable children and children of key workers and are recording good, quality data on this. - From 8th June, primary schools in the Trust opened to Year 6 children and where possible, EYFS and Year 1. - From 15th June, the three secondary schools opened their doors to Year 10 students. Each school had planned, in relation to their context and capacity, for approximately 25% of students to be in school at any one point. - At BGHS, Year 12 students also returned from the 15th June. - Significant work is already underway to support disadvantaged students in all year groups across the Trust. Evidence based strategies endorsed by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will continue to be utilised. The CEO recommended 	

	<p>Trustees visit and read relevant materials published by the EEF to gain a better understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hampers and/or e-vouchers for those in need have been in place from the beginning of lockdown and will continue over the summer break. - The Trust has a robust Risk Assessment in place for colleagues working in school and there is additional guidance for remote working - this is in line with national guidance. Developed by the Health and Safety Lead; Trade Unions have fully endorsed this. Throughout the pandemic, the CEO was pleased to report relationships with the Unions have been very positive and all parties have worked collaboratively throughout. - Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable or in a vulnerable group, including BAME colleagues, have been offered the opportunity to undertake a personal risk assessment (following BAMEed guidance). - The HR team have worked closely with schools to support staff who have anxieties about a return to school and provide reassurance. - Plans for the return to work for those shielding others are arranged on a case-by-case basis, and in line with government guidance. - Mental health and wellbeing (staff and students) will continue to be at the forefront of the Trust's agenda. - All schools have utilised a wide range of on-line CPLD opportunities to up-skill teachers, relative to their context and school development plans. - Trust Headteachers attended a CPLD session designed to guide colleagues who may need to support students with bereavement. <p><u>Promoting Equality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unconscious bias training will be rolled out to all Trust employees - (with thanks to MK for support). - The recruitment process has been re-modelled to better represent and attract a more diverse workforce. - The E&D Policy will be reviewed over the coming months and tabled at the October board meeting - this will include a proposal to implement Equality Impact Assessments. - The Trust will consider setting a 3-5 year recruitment target for BAME representation within teaching and leadership roles. - Begin to report annually to the board on recruitment, progression and staff survey analysis broken down by protected characteristics. - Continue to unpick and explicitly teach knowledge that explores alternative narratives, for example: Black History, the impact of Empire, contributions made to the development of British society by BAME and under-represented communities. - Continue to ensure that young people are empowered to critically engage with the equalities agenda within both the formal and informal curriculum. - Continue to ensure that community initiatives such as East Meets West and More in Common have a high profile with students, staff and families. <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CEO confirmed (in light of COVID-19), the PM cycle would be extended for a further year. Interim reviews that had not yet taken place, will replace the formal scheduled review. Where interim reviews had taken place, there will be a touch-base meeting in the Autumn term. - Targets may be amended and adjusted to reflect new Trust, school, departmental, individual priorities during the interim review. - Student/learner progress targets will be removed in this cycle. 	Trustees
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	<p>All Trustees agreed with this approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Chair confirmed PM for Heads will also take a different approach this year. Consultation with the Unions for this has taken place and they are supportive of a change to the format. <p><u>Scheduled Trust Monitoring Visits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planned Summer monitoring visits for all schools will not run this term. - Autumn monitoring visits will be supportive and help Trustees to gain insight into the good practices across the Trust. - Visits will also ensure support can be signposted and where appropriate focus on how schools are re-modelling curriculum implementation to address gaps that have emerged during the remote and blended learning period. <p><u>Planning for September and Transition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust leaders will plan for this and follow the latest Government guidance as this develops during the weeks ahead. - In line with the Local Authority, Trust leaders have agreed that during week one the focus will be on Transition. - Trust Leaders have been highly innovative in their plans to ensure that children who are in key transition points have been able to experience a variety of virtual transition activities, including; videos (with virtual Drone tours of schools and school grounds), delivered resource packs, stationery gifts, organised parental Q & A sessions, and shared presentations. - SEND teams have been in close contact with SEND children to ensure their needs are fully met. <p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Improvement activities have been temporarily suspended nationally. However, the LA has continued to plan, with the executive, for a resumption of improvement work in September. - Work will commence in September to support a further LA secondary school utilising two SLE colleagues, at Deputy level. They will support the school one day a week each. - Executive leaders have continued to represent the Trust at local and national forums and consultations. This has included a briefing with an Ofsted team about informal planning for next steps for inspection teams. <p><u>Challenges for the Trust</u></p> <p>The CEO listed the 6 key challenges the Trust faces (enclosed with the report) as result of COVID-19. Trustees offered to support all schools to address and where possible, overcome these challenges and discuss further at the interim meeting to be scheduled over the next two weeks.</p> <p>Trustees thanked the CEO for a very thorough and detailed report and agreed to use the document as an audit to guide the discussions over the coming weeks.</p> <p>Trustees also placed on record their thanks to all staff for their incredible efforts and commitment over recent months.</p>	
10.	Policy Update	

	<p>The Chair confirmed all policies had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for review and feedback. Suggestions for the Whistleblowing and Conflicts of Interest and Register of Business Interests policies had been submitted and accepted. These were not significant changes.</p> <p>a) DBS Policy</p> <p>Trustees agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p> <p>b) Data Protection policy</p> <p>Trustees agreed to APPROVE this policy.</p> <p>c) Whistleblowing Policy</p> <p>Trustees agreed to APPROVE this policy - including the Chair's amendment to the preamble.</p> <p>d) Conflicts of Interest Policy and; e) Register of Business Interests Policy (to merge as one)</p> <p>Trustees agreed to APPROVE this policy - including the Chair's addition to the proposed form, which will replace the current declaration form.</p> <p>f) Reserves Policy</p> <p>Trustees agreed to APPROVE this policy as per the discussion earlier in the meeting.</p>	
11.	Safeguarding Update	
	<p>The SG Trustee link summarised the key point from the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DSLs across the Trust will meet on the 23rd September to discuss the implications of the latest KCSIE 2020 guidance. - Trustees and LGBs must understand their obligations in relation to SG. They are made very clear within KCSIE. - The Trust's SG and CP policy is under review and will be updated in line with KCSIE. - Support for SEND students features heavily within the guidance. 	
12.	AOB	
	<p>a) LB to circulate 20/21 Trust and LGB meeting dates.</p> <p>b) The Chair of Trustees referred to the information sent prior to the meeting in relation to the Connection Coalition. Trustees discussed the important work of the More in Common initiative and unanimously agreed to sign up to the Connection Coalition as a Trust. SV to coordinate. SV confirmed the Trust's logo and branding will be used. There is also no financial commitment for the Trust in supporting this initiative.</p>	<p>LB</p> <p>SV</p>

	Meeting closed at 6:45pm	
13.	Next meeting: extra meeting date TBC	