

South Bank Multi Academy Trust

Trust Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 28th April 2020

6.00 pm by Video Conference

Present:	Edwin Thomas	Chair of Trustees
	Rob Bennett	
	Michelle Blake	Non-Executive Trustees
	Pat Boyle	
	Jill Hodges	
	Andrea Preston	
	Richard Milner	
Ian Wiggins		
In attendance:	Jo Edwards	Trust Principal
	Michael Gidley	Chief Finance Officer
	Adam Cooper	Executive Headteacher
	Sophie Triffitt	Clerk to the Board of Trustees

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 1.1 For the record of the minutes the meeting took place virtually.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed attendees, new Trustees and introductions were made.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CHANGES TO BUSINESS INTEREST FORMS

- 2.1 Absence
There were no apologies.
- 2.2 Declarations of Interest (previously issued)
Trustees were asked to inform the clerk of any updates to their Business Interest Forms.

3 MINUTES OF TRUST BOARD MEETING HELD 17 MARCH 2020

- 3.1 The minutes and confidential minutes were approved.

4 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION PLAN

- 4.1 All actions were complete, on the meeting agenda or agreed to be carried forward and the action plan updated.

Matters Arising

- 4.2 It was confirmed that the cleaning action was superseded by school closures.
- 4.3 The CFO had reported the net impact of school closures at the Finance and Audit Committee of an estimated £14k per week. Staff members associated with additional income have been furloughed and a claim submitted against the government scheme for £19k up to the end of April 2020. If the furlough continues to the end of the academic year this will equate to £60k of reclaimed furlough payments and an estimate of energy savings is £40k. Overall £100k of lost income will be recovered.
- 4.4 A Trustee asked if there is DfE funding to support schools to bridge the gap of lost income. The CFO confirmed that lost income will not be funded but there is a capped process in place to reimburse additional costs to support Free School Meal vouchers and additional premises costs.
- 4.5 The CFO assured Trustees that the budget monitoring process continues.

5 COVID-19 – SITUATION UPDATE (PAPER PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 5.1 The Trust Principal explained that the response to this emergency has meant that operations are outside of the usual Trust practice and the report summarises the Covid-19 response.
- 5.2 Trustees recorded appreciation to the Trust Principal and Headteachers for managing the challenging situation, the priority of safeguarding and recognition of the contribution of staff in schools.
- 5.3 The Trust Principal attended a Safeguarding webinar which provided useful guidance on safeguarding, a Safeguarding Policy addendum had been produced and vulnerable children are a priority. There is a concern that there will be a future wave of referrals to social services. There has been a national question of how many vulnerable children are in school and each Headteacher has looked at their children and made decisions tailored to individual needs/circumstances, with guidance of social workers where they are involved.
- 5.4 A Trustee asked if a majority of the vulnerable children are coming in to school, or the Headteacher is comfortable with circumstances, or are there children that are not being reached. The Trust Principal explained that the Headteacher Group focus was on safety of children whether they are in school or not and there is a valuable link with social services for difficult cases. The Executive Headteacher reported that there is continuous monitoring, communication with parents is maintained and the risk and safety of the child is considered. Schools are engaging with greater numbers of children than those that sit within the definition of the government vulnerable category where school has assessed them as vulnerable.
- 5.5 A Trustee suggested including the overall number of children in school within the report to provide a comparison of vulnerable children in school.
- 5.6 The Executive Headteacher explained that there are circumstances where it is not right for the child to be in school giving the example of children with an Education and Health Care Plan who are significantly benefiting from quality time with parents when they aren't working.
- 5.7 **Resolution:** Trustees had electronically approved the Safeguarding Policy addendum 'COVID-19 school closure arrangements for Safeguarding and Child Protection'.

- 5.8 A Trustee noted the reference to the responsibility sitting with each school and its governing body and questioned if this is the overall responsibility with the Trust. The Trust Principal explained that the every day opening of schools sits with LGB, but there is responsibility with the Accounting Officer and Trustees to be reassured what LGBs are deciding is safe and reasonable.
- 5.9 Trustees recognised the difficulties for staff and formally thanked staff for their hard work and commitment.
- 5.10 **Action:** Chair to feedback Trustee thanks to staff.

6 EDUCATION (PAPER PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 6.1 **Action:** The Trust Principal will circulate a paper from the Children's Commissioner.
- 6.2 A Trustee asked if the home learning summary is still accurate. The Trust Principal explained that it depends on the school and year group and the approach has been tailored. A Trustee questioned if this approach is consistent across the Trust and it was agreed to address this later in the agenda.
- 6.3 A Trustee noted that the York High School access and submission of work level was high and demonstrates strong engagement from the pupils and there had been a proactive approach to improve based on feedback from parents.
- 6.4 A Trustee noted that the priority of wellbeing was a positive approach particularly in the early stages.
- 6.5 A Trustee questioned if Scarcroft teachers have access to IT equipment. The Executive Headteacher reported that Knavesmire Year 5 Chromebooks were loaned to Knavesmire teachers without equipment at home.
- 6.6 **Action:** Trust Principal to clarify the 'teachers require access to IT equipment' comment with the Scarcroft Headteacher.

7 FINANCE (PAPERS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 7.1 The CFO reported that the financial position against approved budget has an adverse variance of £325k. The revised budget outturn is £190k worse than the approved budget and a summary of major movements is included in the report. Woodthorpe have been impacted by long term staff absence and the Nursery income being lower than projected. Millthorpe have been impacted by a long term absence, staff backfill costs and maintenance projects. Each school budget was fully discussed at the Finance and Audit Committee and the Millthorpe budget position will be challenged.
- 7.2 The CFO reported that the School Condition Capital allocation funding of £430k is likely to be carried over as planned projects will be delayed.
- 7.3 The Finance and Audit Committee Chair reported that the reserves position for each school was discussed in detail at committee level to ensure equity across the Trust and challenge schools whose reserve position has worsened.
- 7.4 The Committee raised concerns on the York High School pupil numbers and budget viability.

- 7.5 It was confirmed that the Risk Register includes Covid-19 and school closures.
- 7.6 The CFO reported that the cash flow position is healthy.
- 7.7 A Trustee noted that the Millthorpe budget is a concern.
- 7.8 A Trustee suggested consideration be given to whether secondary schools could share staff to make financial efficiencies. The Trust Principal and CFO reported that they are working with the secondary schools to manage budgets.

Central Services Contribution

- 7.9 The Trust Principal explained that the proposed increase of the Central Services contribution is now 2.99% and supports the appointment of a Deputy Trust Principal and intern roles for marketing. A reduction in the proposed increase is a result of a two year deficit recovery period, removal of the data assistant post and reduction to the allowance for Trust training.
- 7.10 A Trustee noted disappointment at the removal of the data assistant post and suggested reviewing the overall central services remit and whether the data role could be incorporated in the current team or be recruited to later in the year. The Trust Principal explained that this was not only a financial decision as a review of the MIS system should be completed first.
- 7.11 A Trustee asked if there is a parallel exercise to consider efficiencies across all the schools collaboratively as opposed to independently. The CFO confirmed that schools are preparing the budgets for next year and efficiencies investigated at an individual school level. The Headteacher Group could facilitate a collaborative route for this approach.
- 7.12 A Trustee suggested that this crisis could be an opportunity for innovation.
- 7.13 A Trustee asked if there had been modelling on breakfast and after school club income to identify any vulnerabilities if parents start working more flexibly.
- 7.14 **Action:** CFO to include potential reduction in need to wrap around care in the budget sensitivities.
- 7.15 Trustees agreed they were keen for the budget setting process to reflect deep thinking in terms of savings across the Trust, efficiency and maximising opportunities.
- 7.16 A Trustee questioned if the proposed 2.99% gives capacity for the central team to drive success across the Trust. The Trust Principal felt it was an appropriate level to meet the needs with a sharpening of priorities and clear timeline.
- 7.17 Trustees noted that there is a need for a demonstrable benefit of what schools receive for the contribution and to manage expectations of future increase.
- 7.18 **Resolution:** Trustees agreed the central services contribution at 2.99%.

8 SAFEGUARDING

- 8.1 Discussed as part of the Covid-19 update.

9 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT (PAPERS PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 9.1 Trustees discussed the need for education at home and education in school plans that can be adapted based on changing government advice. It was suggested that there could be a blend of home and school education and differences across primary and secondary settings.

In-school learning plans should include schools reopening, testing of strategies, practicalities of operating, effective hygiene, social distancing and duty of care to staff.

- 9.2 **Action:** Headteacher Group to consider the education at home and education in school plans.
- 9.3 A Trustee suggested being clear in any communications that the message or decision is 'in line with government guidance'.
- 9.4 Trustees discussed the role of the LGB and the consensus was that LGBs should implement plans within a consistent MAT wide approach / principle.
- 9.5 A Trustee noted that there may be a need to operate collaboratively and support be offered across schools. The Trust Principal reported that there has been a high level of collaboration across the schools. The Executive Headteacher explained that the delivery of curriculum and approaches to home learning are individual to schools and their communities but where collaboration is appropriate this can be optimised.
- 9.6 A Trustee questioned the approach of having different home learning systems in use across the Trust.
- 9.7 Trustees discussed if the Trust should have a consistent approach to home education. The Executive Headteacher explained that schools are delivering on platforms that the school (staff and children) are familiar with and felt that now is not the time for schools to change systems. A Trustee suggested that children will adapt well to a change in platform and there should be a commitment to staff professional development of digital skills if required.
- 9.8 The Trust Principal explained that part of the Trust principles was to have independent schools and this level of discussion is linked with changing the ethos of the Trust which is a longer term more detailed discussion that should include consultation. The Trust Principal emphasised that her role is not that of a CEO and does not have the authority to implement these changes.
- 9.9 Trustees clarified that there should be consistency across the Trust for safeguarding and Trustees requested a plan and proposal for online learning. It was noted that the role of Trustees is to challenge and ask the difficult questions.
- 9.10 A Trustee suggested that the values and overriding principles may need reviewing in light of the changing world. A Trustee highlighted that autonomy and collaboration are both values and if there is a tension between the two this may need thought and discussion.
- 9.11 A Trustee added that collaboration should not undermine the autonomy of the Headteacher Group and Trustees are suggesting areas that may require Headteacher focus. It was agreed that the Board are right to make a suggestion of a direction that the Trust should be moving in.
- 9.12 A Trustee suggested that the Chair should communicate with LGBs to:
 - highlight the Trust principles with emphasis on the priority of safeguarding and wellbeing of staff and pupils.
 - Inform LGBs that normal operating will not be in place for some time and plans should be developed for home learning and classroom learning and Heads and LGBs should be thinking about how that will work.

- Explain that finances and resources will be under pressure and there is a Trust Board dilemma between collaboration and autonomy that needs to be discussed with LGBs and Headteachers.
- The current times present a unique challenge that will require the MAT to collaborate more than ever before and the Trust are looking for solutions for collaboration to ease pressures on staff and finances.

- 9.13 **Action:** Trust Principal to discuss how to enhance collaboration at the Headteacher Group.
- 9.14 **Action:** Trustees to review Trust strategy on collaboration and autonomy at the 19th May meeting.
- 9.15 **Action:** LGBs to be asked for thinking, feedback and challenges for online learning, medium term and back to school planning.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CHAIR'S DELEGATED AUTHORITY

- 10.1 **Resolution:** It was recorded that Trustees had approved the Chair's Delegated Authority electronically.

COMMITTEE ALIGNMENT

- 10.2 Rob Bennett and Michelle Blake were aligned to the Finance and Audit Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

Meeting Decisions
Minutes & confidential minutes approved.
Safeguarding addendum approved.
Central services contribution agreed at 2.99%.
Chair's Delegated Authority approved.

ACTIONS

22nd October 2019

Item	By	Action	Date
6.11	TP	Review website efficiency / commonality across the trust.	Sep 2020
8.2	JH	Schedule a Pupil Premium Link Governor meeting to understand strategies and best practice. Was scheduled for 31 st March but is now postponed	Jul 2020
14.7	Chair	Develop Collaboration Guidance.	May 2020
14.8	TP	Communication Plan to address the high power high impact quadrant to be included in the Strategy Plan. The Trust Principal has applied to the University of York for a suitable intern.	Jul 2020

10th December 2019

Item	By	Action	Date
8.6	Trustees	Revisit the growth strategy at the July meeting, in the context of the Trust's priorities for next year	Jul 2020

4th February 2020

Item	By	Action	Date
6.7	TP	Provide a timetable for a consistent MIS System at the May meeting.	May 2020
8.7	Chair	Discussion of the ethos of autonomy to be part of the next away day.	May 2020
8.15	Chair	Source training on how to be a good director and asking the right questions.	May 2020

17th March 2020

Item	By	Action	Date
18.2	TP	Review what is in place for personal development as part of the performance management process and discuss with the Headteacher Group if changes are needed.	May 2020

28th April 2020

Item	By	Action	Date
5.10	Chair	Chair to feedback Trustee thanks to staff.	May 2020
6.1	TP	Circulate a paper from the Children's Commissioner.	May 2020
6.6	TP	Clarify the 'teachers require access to IT equipment' comment with the Scarcroft Headteacher.	May 2020
7.14	CFO	Include potential reduction in need to wrap around care in the sensitivities on budget.	May 2020
9.2	TP	Headteacher Group to consider the education at home and education in school plans.	April 2020
9.13	TP	Discuss how to enhance collaboration at the Headteacher Group.	April 2020
9.14	Trustees	Review Trust strategy of autonomy / collaboration at the 19 th May meeting.	May 2020
9.15	Chair	LGBs to be asked for thinking, feedback and challenges for online learning, medium term and back to school planning.	May 2020

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Chair of South Bank Multi Academy Trust