

South Bank Multi Academy Trust

Trust Board

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 18 May 2021
6.00 pm by Video Conference

Present:	Ian Wiggins	Chair of Trustees
	Pat Boyle	
	Jill Donaldson Hodges	Non-Executive Trustees
	Richard Milner	
	Edwin Thomas	
	Martyn Sibley	
	Sue Laycock	
Gemma Lowe		
In attendance:	Adam Cooper	Trust Principal
	Michael Gidley	Chief Finance Officer
	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.

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

2.1 Absence

Apologies were received and accepted for Mr Bennett.

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 PREVIOUS MEETING 16 MARCH 2021 (*PREVIOUSLY ISSUED*)

3.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and approved.

3.2 The confidential minutes were also agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and approved.

4 MATTERS ARISING AND ACTION PLAN

4.1 The action plan was updated. The website update is on the agenda and a transition update provided as part of the Trust Principal report. Mr Bennett had confirmed he would complete the Unconscious Bias training by the end of the May 2021.

5 MERGER UPDATE (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 5.1 The Trust Principal had met with the Regional School Commissioner representatives today (18/05/21) and the discussion around the merger and mixed MAT format was positive and generated some actions.
- 5.2 A Trustee had noted that if the merger progresses it was important to have a post-merger plan for success.
- 5.3 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the recommendation to approve the appointment of consultants as per the tender paper.
- 5.4 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the recommendation to appoint AVEC Partnership Ltd and First North Law for merger completion.
- 5.5 Trustees recorded thanks to the Trust Business Manager for running a thorough process.
- 5.6 It was agreed that trustees should complete the Scheme of Delegation information gathering exercise that was run with LGBs.
- 5.7 **Action:** Chair to schedule a meeting for trustees to complete the Scheme of Delegation exercise.

Mrs Donaldson Hodges joined the meeting at 6.25pm.

6 TRUST PRINCIPAL REPORT AND COVID UPDATE (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 6.1 A Trustee asked if there had been any changes in relation to Covid since the report was issued. The Trust Principal confirmed that the headlines are unchanged but noted that Knavesmire had a staff case yesterday (17.05.21).
- 6.2 The Headteacher reported that the primary Headteacher group meeting has focused on benchmarking, Covid impact, recovery planning and summer term peer reviews.

7 TRUST DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 7.1 The Trust Principal summarised the priority updates.
Priority 1 School, Standards and Wellbeing
- 7.2 A Trustee noted that the high proportion of green rated items was testament to the Trust Principal and Headteacher group and recorded thanks for all the work done.
- 7.3 A Trustee questioned if the learning gaps are biggest with those who engaged least with online learning. The Trust Principal explained that the Carr Junior analysis shows a clear discrepancy between those that were learning in the classroom and those learning at home. A Trustee asked if there is a causality that the children who could not engage with online learning struggled. The Trust Principal explained that conclusions can't be made until the analysis across all schools is complete.
- 7.4 A Trustee asked for an update on Year 6 assessment. The Trust Principal explained that there has been a city wide agreement to aid transition to secondary schools by providing scaled scores using previous year SATs test. This will also provide useful MAT wide data.

The Headteacher confirmed that parents have been notified and it has been explained that the data will be used to inform teacher assessment and not as a standalone test score.

Priority 2 Efficiency and Finance

- 7.5 A Trustee asked if the teacher networks had continued. The Trust Principal explained that a limited number of networks had continued, the recovery work this term will identify areas for focus but would want to ensure any plan formed will be sustainable.
- 7.6 A Trustee asked if the use of virtual meetings will support the operation of the networks. The Trust Principal explained that there may be circumstances where it does but they would be unlikely to have the same level of quality as in person networks.

Priority 3 Growth and Sustainability

- 7.7 A Trustee asked if there is a forecast to change the trust levy and if so the consultation process should be started. The CFO confirmed that based on current assumptions the levy will be unchanged for the next couple of years.

Priority 4 A Smooth Functioning Machine

- 7.8 A Trustee noted that the merger management tender process was a good example of smooth functioning within the MAT.
- 7.9 It was agreed that the 20/21 plan would be evaluated and a draft of the 21/22 plan proposed at the July meeting.

8 GOVERNMENT MAT POLICY (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 8.1 A Trustee noted the need to be conscious of long term planning and possible growth if the merger goes ahead and schools with links to both MATs want to join.
- 8.2 A Trustee suggested that there would need to be more incentives to drive schools to want to convert and the Trust needs to be able to clearly define the benefits of the South Bank MAT offer.
- 8.3 A Trustee questioned the ability to offer a try before you buy offer with no financial support.
- 8.4 The Trust Principal and CFO left the meeting.
- 8.5 In reference to the confidential minute actions it was confirmed that legal advice had been obtained and trustees provided with the paper. Mr Thomas also confirmed that there would be no financial impact.
- 8.6 The Trust Principal and CFO returned to the meeting.

9 POLICIES (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

Burgundy and Green Book (previously issued)

- 9.1 The Trust Principal explained that the thought process for the initial decision not to sign up to these terms and conditions was that it would be too restrictive but that has not been the case and has in fact created additional policy work and questioning from unions. The Trust had set out to ensure that people would not be worse off as part of the South Bank Trust and this is a way to bring South Bank in line with other trusts.

- 9.2 A Trustee asked if there are any contracts that don't comply with the books. The CFO confirmed that the probationary periods and continuous service for sick pay are outside of the books.
- 9.3 A Trustee suggested that it was counter intuitive for the Trust to tie itself to terms and conditions where it has no say in the negotiation of their content and could prevent innovation and flexibility but agreed there is significant work to plug any gaps without them and not having them is out of line with other schools / trusts.
- 9.4 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the recommendation to formally adopt the Burgundy, STPC and Green books.
- Redundancy and Restructure Policy (previously issued)
- 9.5 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the recommendation to incorporate actual weekly salary payments as the basis to calculate redundancy pay.
- LGPS Discretions Policy (previously issued)
- 9.6 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the LGPS Discretions Policy.

10 FINANCE UPDATE (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 10.1 The CFO summarised the finance report.
- Finance and Audit Committee Report
- 10.2 The Committee Chair reported that the committee met with each school to discuss their finance review submission. Scarcroft discussion highlighted the need for extensive building works and Carr Junior asked for help to resolve their significant concerns with the financial position.
- 10.3 A Trustee added that the committee felt the Reserve Policy had been pushed to the limits with the Carr Junior finances. The school were hit three ways (conversion balance, capital works, Covid loss of revenue) beyond its control and the deficit plan of 1% recovery would not work as it would take 14 years to recover. The CFO and Trust Principal took an action to bring a proposal to trustees which will be discussed next on the agenda.
- Carr Junior Finance Proposal (previously issued)
- 10.4 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the three recommendations:
1. To utilise a portion of the School Condition Allocation grant allocated to the trust to fund the improvement projects.
 2. The ITP and the CFO work with the school to stabilise their budget over the next two years, taking into account the anticipated reduction in pupil numbers.
 3. To agree a moratorium on Carr Juniors deficit recovery programme to reduce pressure on the school and enable the stabilisation of their budget position.
- 10.5 **Resolution:** Trustees approved capital works of up to £50k as per the proposal paper subject to meeting tender requirements. If over £50k it will be put to approval by e mail.
- 10.6 Trustees wanted to ensure ongoing monitoring and support is provided through the CFO and Finance and Audit Committee. The Trust Principal noted caution that the financial recovery will not be a quick fix and will need a long term strategic plan.

School Condition Allocation Proposal (previously issued)

- 10.7 The Chair emphasised the need to take a strategic approach to SCA funding.
- 10.8 A Trustee asked if the way SCA funding is allocated is fully transparent so people know there is fairness in the process. The Trust Principal confirmed that there is transparent conversation with Headteachers but there may need to be a piece of work around communication to governors.
- 10.9 A Trustee noted that there is a bidding process and asked if this is an outcome of that process. The CFO explained that condition surveys have superseded the bidding process as they highlighted work so serious that can't be ignored and has become a matter of necessity. A Trustee suggested the need to feed the approval through the bidding process with reference to the conditions survey. The CFO confirmed the proposal is in line with the SCA bid process.
- 10.10 A Trustee noted that decisions need to be driven by the conditions reports.
- 10.11 A Trustee questioned the role of the Scarcroft LGB in managing the building needs over a longer period of time and the school not taking the opportunity to apply for CIF when that process was open to them.
- 10.12 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the recommendation of expenditure of approximately £550,000 of School Condition Allocation on Scarcroft Primary School, to allow the projects to take place over the summer holidays, and delegate the signing of the contracts to the Chair of Trustees following the tender process.
- 10.13 Trustees emphasised the need to ensure the policy is followed for allocation of the remaining funding.

11 SAFEGUARDING (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 11.1 In response to a Trustee the Trust Principal confirmed that at this stage he had no areas of concern that warrant further investigation.
- 11.2 Trustees confirmed that the report provided the appropriate level of information.

12 HEALTH AND SAFETY (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 12.1 A Trustee suggested that given the importance of Health and Safety this should sit at trust level. The Trust Principal reported that there had been significant progress around health and safety but self-reflection would be appropriate.

13 WEBSITE REVIEW (PREVIOUSLY ISSUED)

- 13.1 Trustees recorded thanks to the Trust Business Manager for the comprehensive piece of work.
- 13.2 The Trust Principal explained that there will be follow up with the Headteachers and there are future discussions to be had about whether there is a new Trust website and or all schools move to the same provider. .

14 TRUSTEE BUSINESS

14.1 Trustees recorded thanks to Ms Blake for her time and commitment as a Trustee.

ERG Action Plan

14.2 The Chair noted that a number of items are being picked up through the Scheme of Delegation work and the action plan will be reviewed once the process is complete.

14.3 Mr Bennett had made a trustee visit to Knavesmire.

15 LGB BUSINESS

Matters from LGB

15.1 There were no matters from LGBs.

LGB Appointments and Resignations (previously issued)

15.2 Trustees agreed the appointments and noted resignations.

16 POLICIES

Flexible Working Policy (previously issued)

16.1 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Flexible Working Policy.

Whistleblowing Policy (previously issued)

16.2 **Resolution:** Trustees approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 There were no items for discussion under AOB.

20 FUTURE MEETING DATES

20.1 Safeguarding and Safety Group – 26th May 2021
 Education and Standards Committee – 22nd June 2021
 Finance and Audit Committee – 29th June 2021
 Trust Board – 6th July 2021
 Members – 16th July 2021

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Meeting Decisions
Appointment of merger consultants AVEC Partnership Ltd and First North Law for merger completion.
Adopted the Burgundy, STPC and Green books.
Approved the recommendation to incorporate actual weekly salary payments as the basis to calculate redundancy pay.

Approved the LGPS Discretions Policy.
Approved the Carr Junior finance recovery proposal.
Approved Carr Junior capital works of up to £50k.
Approved expenditure of approximately £550,000 of School Condition Allocation on Scarcroft Primary School and delegated the signing of the contracts to the Chair of Trustees following the tender process.
Approved the Flexible Working Policy.
Approved the Whistleblowing Policy.

16th March 2021

Item	By	Action	Date
8.9	TP / CFO	Check the equal rate and equal pay element of the job evaluation system. <i>18.05.21: The Trust Principal explained that it is a significant piece of work and will be done as part of merger if this goes ahead.</i>	Oct 2021
8.11	Trustees	Have a conversation around nurturing talent, particularly with a view on diversity.	July 2021
13.3	Chair / TP	Agree where more detailed scrutiny of the Safeguarding Report will sit.	July 2021

18th May 2021

Item	By	Action	Date
5.7	Chair	Schedule a meeting for trustees to complete the Scheme of Delegation exercise.	May 2021

Approved 6th July 2021

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Chair of South Bank Multi Academy Trust