



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting: BASG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date & Time: Monday 17 January 2022 at 5.00pm

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Present: Paul Randall (PR) (Chair), Anne Sheddick (AS) (Vice Chair), Maggi Bull (MBL), Bernadette Allison (BA), Andrew Brown (AB), Gwyneth Langley (GL) (Secretary), Martin Baxter (MBR), Peter Lerner (PL)

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	Apologies for Absence	
	<p>Jo Pearce (JP) had sent apologies for absence.</p> <p>Andrew Brown (AB) advised that he would need to leave the meeting at 5.30pm</p>	
5	Communication with Bucks Council	
	<p>Following a number of e-mails between committee members expressing concerns about communications with Bucks Council, and following the Executive Directors Briefings on 12 and 13 January 2022, it was agreed to discuss item 5 first.</p> <p>PR explained that had had not had sight of the presentation deck in advance of the Executive Directors briefings. There was an existing awareness within the group that BC were developing a traded services offer. This had been discussed at the School Governance Consultative Board. There was considerable drive within the LA to do this. There appeared to be some confusion around BASG's role in this and the relationship between BASG and BC. It was hoped that the Memorandum of Understanding being developed would help clarify this.</p> <p>The phraseology used by Simon James at the Executive Directors Briefing was discussed. There had been a number of different</p>	

interpretations of his assertion that BC had worked closely with BASG to develop the traded services offer. This had caused concern. Not all members of the group felt that this had been the case and that this misrepresented BASG's role and / or awareness. There had been no specific reference to BASG endorsing the LA's traded offer.

The importance of BASG having a strong relationship with the LA was acknowledged.

GL shared feedback from a number of Chairs / Governors and Clerks, not involved in BASG, who had been in touch to express frustration at BC's traded services proposals and expressing concern about BASG's involvement. BEP had received a number of calls and emails from the governance community in Bucks following the briefings. Concern was being expressed that BC were not listening to governors, had not used feedback provided within surveys / focus groups and were mis-directing their efforts. It had been suggested that their priority should be improving services they already provide rather than seek to duplicate local services already in place. The potential negative impact on schools and Governing Boards of their proposals was discussed.

The issues were summarised as follows:

1. The nature of the proposal from BC and whether they should be pursuing this initiative
2. How BASG was being perceived as a result of being linked to this

AS expressed a view that the LA should focus on delivering training that is specific to them or they can add specific value to, for example exclusions, finance and safeguarding. It was clear that BC had taken a decision to widen their governor services offer. It was thought this was driven by concern over school improvement funding going forwards and a view that traded services income could replace this.

It was thought that BC had taken a strategic decision not to outsource services as result of the history with BLT.

Scepticism was expressed about the potential income stream BC would have from traded services and concern was expressed about sustainability and the future impact on schools. This was an LA decision that BASG could have little influence over however.

Andrew Brown left the meeting

MBL explained that there would be a Children's and Education Select Committee meeting on 20 January 2022 and there was an expectation that the traded services proposals would be discussed there. The details of what BC was planning to put in place were unclear at this point, including funding arrangements, and it would be helpful to further understand plans.

	<p>Following discussion it was agreed that PR would contact Simon James and Gareth Drawmer to request that they meet with / speak to BEP directly regarding existing services and the potential to work with or alongside these services. GL confirmed that BEP would be open to this conversation, that BEP were committed to supporting governance in Bucks and that BEP believed that collaboration / joint working was the most constructive way to support governance rather than reinventing the wheel and fragmenting local offers. PR would communicate to Simon James that there was already confusion and concern being generated in the governance community and this was being fed back through BEP.</p> <p>PR emphasised the importance of BASG continuing to challenge BC. The whole committee was working to improve and support governance in Bucks.</p>	PR
2	Notification of Any Other Business	
	<p>It was agreed that the following item would be discussed under Any Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BASG AGM 	
3	Declarations of Interest	
	Gwyneth Langley – BEP	
4	Approval of Minutes from the Meeting Held on 13 December 2021 and Review of Actions	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 were confirmed as an accurate record and approved.	
6	Local Networking Groups	
	<p>The following dates were planned for the Spring Term 2022</p> <p>Aylesbury Group – Monday 24 January 2022 Chesham, Amersham, Wendover and Great Missenden Group – Monday 14 February 2022. Wycombe and South Bucks (formerly Jordans) Group – Saturday 5 March 2022</p> <p>All groups were currently meeting remotely. It was acknowledged that this made the geographical nature of the groups less relevant and Chairs / governors were welcome to attend any group that they were available for.</p> <p>It was noted that BC had included involvement in the Chairs Networking Groups as part of the job description for the newly appointed Governor Support Officer. Some concern was expressed</p>	

	that this was not how the groups had evolved and, whilst it might be helpful to have some BC involvement, the groups should remain within the control of the Chairs / governors attending. It was suggested that LA representatives could potentially attend to part of the meetings.	
7	BEP Update	
	<p>GL updated the group that BEP were currently planning their briefings this term. These included the Chairs Briefing on Friday 11 March 2022 which would be open, as usual, to all Chairs or their representatives regardless of whether they purchase from BEP. An agenda for the briefing would be circulated to Governing Boards shortly.</p> <p>The BEP conference date this year would be Friday 20 May 2022.</p> <p>It was a busy term from training and patterns of bookings did indicate what the priorities and concerns were for governors this term.</p>	
8	BASG Newsletter	
	There was no update on this occasion.	
9	Buckinghamshire Challenge Group	
	The Challenge Group had not met since the last BASG meeting. The next meeting was schedule for Monday 24 January 2022.	
10	Side by Side Board	
	<p>The Side by Side Board had not met since the last BASG meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting had not yet been circulated.</p> <p>MBL expressed concern that not all schools understood the Side by Side programme. She was currently working with a school where understanding had been very limited and reports had not been circulated to governors. It was thought this was not uncommon.</p> <p>Concern was expressed that BC strategic plans were not being communicated effectively or at all. Communication was thought to be lacking at every level. It was difficult for the LA to be held to account in these circumstances.</p> <p>PR would contact the LA to request a future meeting date for the Side by Side Board.</p>	PR
11	Schools Forum	
	There was no update on this occasion.	
12	Governance Consultative Board	

	<p>PL expressed concern about the postponement of the December meeting of the Consultative Board. The next planned meeting was now in March (8 March 2022 1.30pm)</p> <p>PL expressed concern about the role of the Chair of the Consultative Board between meetings. PL did have pre-meeting briefings with Simon James.</p> <p>It was suggested that PL be included as part of the induction process for the newly Governor Support Officer. It was understood that they would start at the beginning of February 2022. PL would contact BC to suggest this.</p>	PL
13	Children's and Education Select Committee	
	<p>MBL gave an update on the meeting of the Select Committee that had taken place in November 2021.</p> <p>The meeting had not been as challenging as MBL had expected it to be. Half of the Councillors that were due to attend had not attended. This was concerning. Of those that did attend, approximately 50% had been or were currently governors. MBL had been advised that the attendance was average for Select Committee meetings. A number of questions were raised in the meeting but a number of these were about specific situations.</p> <p>MBL felt that much of the information presented was what attendees wanted to hear and that there was little challenge. The meeting had closed abruptly without the agenda being concluded. Richard Nash, Simon James, Hero Slinn, Anita Cramner and a Representative from the SEND Parent Group had been in attendance. The SEND consultation had not been raised in the meeting and this was a concern.</p> <p>The next meeting of the Children's and Education Select Committee would take place on Thursday 20 January 2022. The focus would be standards. MBL would forward the agenda to the group.</p> <p>It was understood that the Inspection Report for Bucks Children's Services would be published on 11 February 2022.</p>	
14	AOB	
14.1	BASG AGM	
	<p>It was noted that the BASG AGM would need to be scheduled this term in line with the Committee's Terms of Reference.</p> <p>It was agreed that this would be planned for the end of the Spring Term 2022. A number of suggestions were made for potential speakers. It was proposed that Mental Health and Wellbeing may be a strong focus given its current priority.</p>	

15	Dates / Times of Future Meetings	
	A date / time for the next meeting was agreed as follows: Tuesday 15 February 2022 5pm	

The meeting closed at 6.30pm