

MEETING OF THE RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

MONDAY 29 JUNE 2020 AT 11.00AM

Present: Keith Davies (KD) – Chair of Committee, Kristian Halliwell (KH), Sue Hincks (SH) and Paul Hodgkinson (PH) – Executive Principal

In Attendance: Rebecca Leonard (RL) - Vice-Principal, David Smith (DS) – Finance Director and Emma Stoddard (ES) – Clerk

KEITH DAVIES IN THE CHAIR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Trustees were welcomed to the meeting. KH had indicated that he may join the meeting slightly late due to work commitments.

PH stated that the purpose of this meeting was to provide Trustees with an update following the Risk & Audit meeting held on 29 May 2020.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were notified.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

No items of Any Other Urgent Business were notified at this point.

4. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

A copy of the Strategic Risk Register was shared on screen. DS reported that he had excluded the risks imposed by COVID-19 from the Risk Register as this had been discussed separately.

DS directed Trustees to risks which he felt Trustees may need to review:

Business Critical Risks

B1 - Poor judgements resulting from an Ofsted Inspection

DS stated that all the Ofsted inspections had been completed and the Trust were no longer within the inspection window. This was no longer seen as a risk to the Trust.

B2 – Financial Sustainability

DS reported that the Trust was in a more stable financial position and the cash flow position was positive. Although this would be carefully monitored moving forward it was proposed that this now be reduced from 3 to 2 (yellow to green).

Agreed: That the Financial Sustainability likelihood score be reduced from 3 to 2

Operational Risks

O3 – Staff Unavailability

Staff unavailability had remained as yellow due to the uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 crisis. However, DS stated that he felt this could be reduced now as lockdown measures were being eased. Individual Staff Risk Assessments had been completed in preparation for a return to school. SH asked if the Risk Assessments had been completed pre or post the updated shielding advice. DS explained that this was done pre the new shielding advice but from the 1 August members of staff would no longer need to shield and can access the school sites and buildings if they are COVID safe. PH stated that he was due to conduct site visits to each Academy this week and except for 2-3 members of staff, he expected all would be able to access the school sites.

Agreed: That the Staff Unavailability likelihood score be reduced from 3 to 2

O6 – Pupils unsuccessfully transitioning from the Forwards Centre into Lever Park

DS asked whether pupils unsuccessfully transitioning from the Forwards Centre to Lever Park was still considered to be a risk as both the impact score and likelihood score remained at 3. PH reported that a significant amount of transition work had been undertaken and the curriculum would now be continuous from Year 6 to Year 7. PH stated that he felt this no longer presented a risk and proposed that this be removed completely from the register.

Agreed: i) That the risk of pupils unsuccessfully transitioning from the Forwards Centre to Lever Park be removed from the Risk Register
ii) That the Strategic Risk Register be approved

Action: DS (update Strategic Risk Register)

Risk Management Policy

DS reported that the next round of Internal Audit was due to start on Wednesday and the Risk Management Policy would need to be shared with the auditors. DS stated that the ESFA guidance on risk management did not state that such a policy was needed; however, the BIT policy mirrored the ESFA guidance, so it was proposed that this be adopted. DS provided an overview of the requirements of the policy and it was noted that the Trust currently met all the requirements.

Agreed: To approve and adopt the Risk Management Policy

5. **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

The Executive Principal reported that the necessary checklist and risk assessments had been completed and following this the Primary Bubbles had returned on 1 June with the Secondary Bubbles returning on the 15 June. Lever Park had since increased to two bubbles each day. Staff had worked intensively with those children in the Priority 1 category but there was continuous movement of children between the Priority 1, 2 and 3 categories. The Trust had worked closely with the Local Authority and external agencies to support pupils.

In response to questions PH reported that there was around 55% take-up, which could present challenges for a full return in September. The Government had announced today that fines would be issued to parents if pupils did not attend in September. Academy Leads were currently assessing options for providing support during the summer holidays.

Pupils who had returned to school had behaved very positively and staff had worked incredibly hard to prepare the sites for the phased return. There were some anxious members of staff so these concerns would need to be managed and staff had been invited back into school to walk around the sites. A Bolton Learning Alliance (BLA) meeting had been held on 23 June and Head Teachers shared ideas for re-opening in September although no standard template was agreed. It was instead agreed that each School/Trust would design their own return activities. A Trustee asked what this might look like within the Trust. PH explained that any plans would need to be fluid, but pupils could possibly be integrated back into school in stages during the first week. PH reported that he was meeting with all the Academy Leads this week to discuss this and plans would be shared with Trustees on 14th July.

PH stated that many staff worked all year round and because of this had not had any break during the lockdown. The pandemic had presented many challenges, which would inevitably continue into the autumn term and beyond. PH therefore proposed that all academies close completely during the first two weeks of the summer holidays (w/c 20 and 27 July), with sites reopening on 3 August for the most vulnerable pupils. An on-call service would be available during this time and there would also be methods to support the most vulnerable pupils whilst the sites were closed.

KH joined the meeting.

Trustees agreed that all staff had worked incredibly hard and needed a break before the new academic year. KD suggested that all Trustees be informed of this proposal so this agreement could be re-affirmed by the Trust Board at their meeting on 14 July.

SH stated that involvement in County Lines had increased during the pandemic and there had also been a general increase in unsafe behaviour and asked if this had been

a concern for the Trust during the lockdown. RL stated that there had been an increase in reports of unsafe behaviour, but this could also be due to staff having more contact with pupils and therefore this being highlighted. Trustees were assured that any concerns were referred to Social Services. There had also been an increase in the number of Encompass referrals, but again, this would be partly due to better reporting systems.

SH asked if any members of staff were concerned that pupils had not been social distancing during the lockdown. RL stated that some members of staff had raised concerns about this but RL had reassured staff that strict rules would be in place whilst on the school site. One pupil had not complied with the social distancing guidelines upon their return to school so had needed to revert to remote learning again. SH asked if social distancing had been included in the Behaviour Policy. RL stated that this had not been included as it would be very difficult to impose this when pupils were not on site; however, staff would be reassured that action would be taken if any pupil was seen to be presenting a risk to themselves or others whilst in school.

RL stated that a detailed Safeguarding update had been provided at the last meeting and confirmed that all academies had now updated their Behaviour Policies and Staff Handbooks. RL reported that she had led a two-hour supervision session for Academy Designated Safeguarding Leads, and she was also undertaking a 6-week Safeguarding course to develop and re-affirm her own skills further. RL reported that she would be looking at the Safeguarding Policies and the staff training schedule from September onwards.

The Board of Trustees, having designated details of the discussion that followed as confidential in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association, this information is excluded from these minutes.

Agreed: That all academies close completely during the first two weeks of the summer holidays (w/c 20 and 27 July), with sites reopening on 3 August for the most vulnerable pupils

Action: PH (inform Trustees of the proposal), ES (Trust agenda)

6. LEVER PARK - CONFIDENTIAL

The Board of Trustees, having designated details of the discussion that followed as confidential in accordance with Article 125 of the Articles of Association, this information is excluded from these minutes.

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

7.1 Financial Procedures Manual

DS reported that the Financial Procedures Manual had been updated to reflect the recommendations from the first visit from Internal Audit. Trustees were

informed that the second visit had needed to be postponed due to COVID-19 and would now be conducted at the same time as the third audit, which would take place this week. KD asked when the report would be available for Trustees. DS stated that he would present the report at the full Trust Board meeting if this was available otherwise it would be presented to the Risk & Audit Committee in the autumn term. KD stated that he was happy for DS to contact him to discuss any areas should the report not be ready for the Trust meeting.

PH thanked members of the committee for their hard work, commitment and challenge presented. KH stated that he was happy to provide further support outside of the termly meetings as and when needed.

On behalf of Trustees, KD thanked the Executive Principal and all staff for their incredible work during this unprecedented time.

8. DATES OF NEXT RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

It was noted that PH and RL would liaise with ES to produce the meeting schedule for 2020/21 and this would be shared with Trustees at the Trust meeting to be held on Tuesday 14 July 2020.

9. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

All Trustees were present.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That the following matters discussed at this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association:

Minute Number 5 – last paragraph

Minute Number 6 – Lever Park

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

SUMMATIVE ACTIONS:

Minute No.	Responsible	Action
4	DS	Update Risk Register
5	PH	Inform Trustees of the proposal to close w/c 20 and w/c 27 July

5

ES

Trust agenda for ratification

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Risk & Audit Committee)