

MEETING OF THE RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER 2021 AT 9.00AM

Present: Joshua Bennett (JB) – Chair of Committee, Keith Davies (KD), 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 to the Trust Board

JOSHUA BENNETT IN THE CHAIR

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

JB welcomed Trustees to the meeting. No apologies for absence had been received as all Trustees were present.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

One item of Any Other Urgent Business was notified at this point relating to a recent complaint at Lever Park school.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING – FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2021

Minutes of the last Risk & Audit Committee meeting (Minute Number 4)

Further to the discussions about the increase in violent crime and knife crime, PH reported that BIT was working in partnership with the Local Authority (LA) Quality Assessment Team regarding the increase in violent crime in the borough. RL added that Youth Challenge, Lever Park, Youth Challenge Primary and the Forwards Centre had been selected to work with the Bolton Violence Reduction Unit. The unit worked closely with external agencies including the police and this was so far going very well.

SH asked regarding the local response to the recent fatal knife incident at a school within the borough. RL explained that BIT had been invited to sit on a group involved in initial discussions and there were now improved systems across Bolton. The LA now met once a month to discuss any individual children of concern and any new intelligence received from external sources.

The Chair stated that he was satisfied with the Trust's response to the increase in knife crime and the recent incident.

Standards Committee minutes – Friday 11 June 2021 (Minute Number 5)

SH stated that during the meeting on Friday 11 June she had suggested that the issues regarding progress in English and attendance data be added to the Risk Register, but

this had not been actioned. RL reported that a lot of work had taken place in English, deep dive information was being collected and a ragged matrix for each subject was available. RL added that attendance overall had improved, and data was now being collected on a weekly basis and patterns of attendance data could now be identified more easily. PH suggested that, rather than adding English and attendance to the Risk Register, the ragged matrix could be presented to Trustees, which included English, but also other subjects. An attendance report could also be presented.

Agreed: That the deep dive matrix and attendance data be presented to the committee

Action: RL (provide ragged matrix and attendance report)

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF RECENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Finance & Resources Committee – Friday 12 November 2021

SH asked for an update on the email sent by PH to the LA regarding Lever Park. PH reported that he had met with G Whitehead and the commissioned number at Lever Park would remain at 69. The LA had asked if they could pay the out of borough rate for pupils above the commissioned number. PH stated that this was an option, but the LA would need to follow the referrals process as the Trust did not want this to impact on out of borough high yield business. SH asked if the LA could take the 69 places elsewhere. PH stated that the LA received excellent value for money from BIT; there were other providers available, but these were very expensive. It was very unlikely that they would look to place the whole business elsewhere and if the LA decided to reduce numbers this would not be a concern for the Trust as it would have been in the past. This was not considered to be an imminent risk for the Trust. SH asked if the LA could build their own resource. DS stated that this was unlikely as this would not be cost effective for the LA.

Standards Committee – Friday 11 June 2021

RL reported that she had provided monitoring dates to Trustees on the Standards Committee and M Sidebottom had conducted a monitoring visit at Lever Park earlier this week. PH shared a document on screen to explain the process and it was noted that dates would be provided to Trustees on a termly basis moving forward.

6. **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE**

A copy of the Risk Register had been uploaded to the Gateway.

B4 – Coronavirus

Trustees agreed that it would be sensible to leave Coronavirus as Amber given the new variant.

O2 – Safeguarding Risks

The Chair stated that he had cross referenced the Risk Register with the Safeguarding Report. He had noted the number of safeguarding incidents in the report and asked if this was usual for the Trust. RL confirmed that this was usual as the Trust had a considerable number of very vulnerable children. RL reported that she would be happy

to meet with JB to discuss this in more detail, so he was familiar with the norm within the Trust.

JB stated that he had recently attended Safeguarding training and asked if there was a nominated Trustee for Safeguarding. RL reported that each Local Governing Board (LGB) had a nominated Safeguarding Governor, but further thought could be given as to how this information was filtered through to the Trust Board. KD had previously suggested that he host a Chairs' Forum with the Chairs of the LGBs to create stronger links between the Trust Board and LGBs. The Clerk reminded Trustees that they were able to access all LGB meeting minutes and documents via the Governance Gateway.

O4 – Building Loss

KD reported that Building Loss was included on the Risk Register but suggested that a category be included relating to Estates to ensure that the Trust's buildings were fit for purpose. KD stated that this would be important for future growth of the Trust.

KD added that the Finance Committee had discussed rising Energy Costs and suggested that this be added to members of the committee could monitor any associated risks and create a long-term plan.

SH stated that felt that IT infrastructure could pose a risk to the Trust and asked if this should be included. DS explained that the ICT was managed by Bolton Schools ICT via a SLA, and they would have the necessary systems in place for IT system failures / hacking etc. However, that said, DS stated that he was happy to include this as an on-going check. SH stated that the LA may have their own risk register that the Trust could provide a link to. PH stated that this would also link with GDPR and DPO breaches.

PH stated that although the Trust's Risk Register was comprehensive and tailored to BIT this might benefit from a full review. SH stated that she would be happy to provide a generic template.

Agreed: i) That the following items be added to the Risk Register:

Trust Estates

Energy Costs

IT infrastructure

ii) That the Risk Register be approved subject to the above changes

Action: DS (update Risk Register)

DS and PH (Conduct a review of the Risk Register)

SH (provide template)

7. TRUST SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

A written Safeguarding update had been provided and included the following areas:

- Action from June meeting
- Academy safeguarding numbers
- Trust Safeguarding visit

- Training
- Policy Update
- Next Steps

RL reported that she would be happy to accept Trustees views on how safeguarding should be presented to the committee and what information they felt was needed. PH suggested that the report could be RAG rated to highlight any specific areas of concern for Trustees.

SH referred to the LAC pupils and asked if the Trust worked with the Virtual Head. RL advised that the academies did work with the Virtual Head, this was working well but added that there was a significant amount of responsibility on Designated Safeguarding Leads. Many pupils sat at Early Help level, and this placed a significant amount of responsibility on the school. RL added that the Trust might need to look at offering Teaching & Learning Responsibilities (TLRs) for teachers in the bigger academies to support the DSLs with their workload. Alternatively, a Trust-wide person could be appointed to provide support across the Trust.

RL advised that the number of pupils at Child Protection level was fluid and could change on a weekly basis. SH suggested that dates could be added to the report to show this fluidity.

SH referred to the LADO referrals and suggested that a separate category for low-level concerns be included in the report. RL reported that most LADO referrals were for advice rather than very serious referrals, but she would be happy to include a separate column for this moving forward.

SH referred to the recent case in Solihull and stated that there were lessons to be learned from this and asked what safeguards the Trust could put in place. RL reported that the Trust used the Integrated Front Door service and provided an overview of this. RL stated that the Integrated Front Door provided more security for the Trust and a robust paper trail; however, it was the schools responsibility to chase if a response had not been received within 24 hours.

SH reported that she had completed EDUCARE training and recommended this for staff to complete. RL stated that she had completed some EDUCARE courses, but the Trust currently used the Safeguarding Network for all staff training as this covered every aspect of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

JB welcomed the suggestion that future reports are RAG rated to indicate where there are concerns but commented that the number of incidents at some provisions seemed quite high. Whilst it would be beneficial to see more data on trends to know what was the "norm", further consideration should be paid to how we can further reduce these figures – ideally these should be zero. RL stated that the Trust always reported honestly on the numbers of cases. The aim was to get this to zero; however, staff were dealing with some very challenging behaviours across the Trust

It was noted that PH, RL and JB would meet in January to discuss safeguarding in more detail. KD stated that safeguarding was a huge area and would always present a risk due to the number of vulnerable children and suggested that another meeting be convened to discuss this in more detail, or, if needed, a separate Safeguarding Committee be formed to look at safeguarding on a termly basis. PH concurred with

KD's comments and suggested that this could be discussed in more detail at the meeting in January.

- Agreed:**
- i) That a separate Safeguarding Committee be given further consideration
 - ii) That the Safeguarding Report be amended as per the discussions above

Action: RL (amend report with the above suggestions for future meetings)

8. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME 2021/22

DS advised that the autumn term Internal Audit Programme focused on accounting. DS would be meeting the auditors in January, recommendations from the last visit had been around HR systems and documentation and the Trust had since procured a HR system so this would be a big focus of the visit.

Agreed: That the Internal Audit update be received and noted

9. GDPR / DPO UPDATE

DS reported that GDPR was included in the Risk Register under O5. There was ongoing staff training in data security and enhanced ICT security measures in place to mitigate this risk. There had been no reported data breaches.

10. ACADEMY HANDBOOK ACTION PLAN

It had been recommended by the Chair of Trustees that the Academy Handbook Action Plan be added to this Risk & Audit Committee agenda to enable the actions in the plan to be monitored and any associated risks be discussed.

DS provided a verbal update on the points discussed at the last meeting:

- It was proposed that D Luczka be appointed as a Member and this would be presented to Members for approval in December. This would mean there were two members who weren't also Trustees. Work continued on appointing another non-Trustee Member.
- Discussions had taken place regarding an independent external review of governance, and this would likely take place next term
- DS stated that he had used the DfE framework to re-tender for the external audit contract. Beevers & Struthers had been first on the list but were unable to be used due to them providing the internal audit service for the Trust. Haines Watts, the current provider, was third on the list and DS proposed that this service be re-tendered for.

Agreed: That the Trust re-tender for the external audit contract via Haines Watts

11. POLICY UPDATE

A copy of the Equality Policy had been provided to Trustees. A Trustee asked if this was a One Education model policy. RL confirmed that it was, and the policy was fully compliant. SH recommended that consideration be given to representing diversity on the Board when recruiting to vacant Trust vacancies and this be done by looking at the make-up of the pupils across the Trust. PH stated that the majority of pupils across the

Trust were White British boys. In response to questions PH reported that there were very few pupils from BAME backgrounds. SH stated that consideration may need to be given to include representation from the LGBT community, rather than BAME. PH agreed that further thought needed to be given to this.

Agreed: To approve and adopt the Equality Policy including equality objectives

12. DATES OF NEXT RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Autumn Term: Friday 26 November 2021 at 11.00am

13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

All governors were present.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

PH provided a brief update on a complaint at Lever Park school and stated that, if necessary, he would liaise with the Chair of the Committee regarding this.

15. CONFIDENTIALITY

Agreed: That no matters discussed at this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association

The meeting closed at 10.00 am.

SUMMATIVE ACTIONS:

Minute No.	Responsible	Action
4	RL	Provide ragged matrix and attendance report
6	DS	Update Risk Register
	DS and PH	Conduct a review of the Risk Register
	SH	Provide template
7	RL	Amend Safeguarding report

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Risk & Audit Committee)