

**MEETING OF THE RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**BOLTON IMPACT TRUST**

**FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021 AT 11.00AM**

**Present:** Joshua Bennett (JB) – Chair of Committee, Sue Hincks (SH), Mike Sidebottom (MS) and Paul Hodgkinson (PH) – Executive Principal

**In Attendance:** Victoria Gavin (VG), Rebecca Leonard (RL) - Vice-Principal, David Smith (DS) – Finance Director and Emma Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to the Trust Board

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR TO THE COMMITTEE**

DS advised that as KD was now Chair of the Trust Board it considered good practice to elect another Trustee to the position of Chair of the Risk & Audit Committee.

**Agreed:** That Joshua Bennett be appointed as Chair of the Risk & Audit Committee

**JOSHUA BENNETT IN THE CHAIR**

**2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

JB welcomed Trustees to the meeting. An apology for absence had been received from Keith Davies (KD). Mike Sidebottom had been nominated to attend the meeting to ensure quoracy throughout.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

**4. NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

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

**5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**

JB stated that he would like an update on the safeguarding concerns, which were discussed at the last meeting but acknowledged that this was likely to be covered within today's agenda.

There were no further matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 27 November 2020, which were not covered on today's agenda.

## 6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF RECENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### **Standards Committee – Friday 12 March 2021**

RL provided an update on the discussions around English and reported that she had discussed this with the School Improvement Partner, Tony Purcell. It was felt that the quality of English across the Trust was strong, and the issue was more around the presentation of data, as this did not correctly reflect the progress being made. RL stated that she did not feel that English presented a risk to the Trust but instead more focus was needed in presenting the data to Trustees therefore it was felt that a full review of English was not needed at this time, but she would work with the Academy Leads to celebrate the work in English via the data presented.

### **Finance & Resources Committee – Friday 12 March 2021**

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. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE

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

### **Business Critical Risks**

#### B2 – Financial Sustainability

DS stated that the cashflow support received from the ESFA and the implementation of the savings programme now meant that the Trust was in a more stable financial position and proposed that the likelihood score for financial sustainability be reduced from 5 to 3. Trustees agreed that the Trust had met the significant challenges faced during the pandemic head on and the Trust was now more financially stable.

**Agreed:** That the Financial Sustainability likelihood score be reduced from 5 to 3

### **Strategic Risks**

#### S1 – Unfunded Changes to Pay and Conditions

DS advised that the Government had confirmed the Public Sector pay freeze, therefore it was proposed that this risk be removed from the register as pay awards would not be implemented.

**Agreed:** To remove S1 – Unfunded Changes to Pay and Conditions from the Risk Register

### **Operational Risks**

#### O2 – Safeguarding Risks

PH provided an update on recent knife incidents in Bolton, some of which had involved BIT pupils and stated that this posed an increased risk. JB stated that this needed to be added to the Risk Register and asked if this would fit into O2 – Safeguarding Risks or if a new risk needed to be created for this. RL stated that this was a safeguarding risk, but she did not feel that it fit within the current terminology on the register and suggested that this could be included under safeguarding but as a separate risk to enable this to be monitored closely. PH reported that work was currently underway on a knife strategy and this would be presented to Trustees when completed. RL added that discussions were taking place with the Local Authority (LA) to categorise knife related referrals including whether they have been carried for protection, carried to commit harm or if the pupil had been caught carrying a knife previously. RL stated that the more information that could be received at the referral stage would mean a more robust risk assessment for these pupils. SH asked who oversaw the risk assessments and how these were shared. RL stated that there was a very clear process in place and the risk assessments were reviewed on a half termly basis, this was done collectively as a team and overseen by the Academy Lead or a member of SLT. This was also built into the Quality Assurance cycle.

PH informed Trustees that the Academies now had a profile of every child based on categories of behaviour i.e. anti-social behaviour, involvement in domestic violence, known to police etc. This was not an exact science but there was a pattern of the pupils within these categories becoming involved in street crime and violence so this would be monitored closely. RL added that this information would be included in future safeguarding reports to Trustees.

JB asked if the Trust was engaged with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit (VRU). PH stated that he was aware of the work of the VRUs, which had been particularly successful in the Midlands and although the Trust was not involved in this, RL and MS were sitting on the Bolton LA focus group. JB stated that it would be worthwhile for the Trust to establish links with the Greater Manchester VRU and explore opportunities in terms of funding and opportunities.

**Agreed:** That incidents involving knives be added to the Risk Register to enable this to be closely monitored

#### O4- Exam Process Risks

MS stated that he had arranged for an external consultant to look at the process in place for the teacher assessments within his own school and asked if the Trust had considered doing the same. RL reported that the Trust had not arranged for any external support but was utilising staff within the Trust to provide quality assurance. RL stated that there were many layers in the process, starting at individual academy level and then moving to Trust collaboration. Some academies were also undertaking

some moderation with mainstream schools. RL added that she would consider external support and would liaise with Tony Purcell about this.

**Agreed:** That the Risk Register be approved subject to the above changes

**Action:** DS (update Risk Register)

## **8. POLICY UPDATE**

RL reported that a significant amount of work had been undertaken with regards to policy development and a document regarding policy approval recommendations had been provided. This was based on the DfE guidelines regarding statutory policies.

RL advised that whilst individual Academy Leads may be responsible for reviewing the policies these would then be brought to the Local Governing Board or appropriate Trust meeting for approval. This would not be a laborious task as the policies have already been reviewed in detail before being brought for ratification. DS stated that a lot of thought had gone into how the SLT could reduce the workload for Trustees whilst also ensuring that a robust process was in place. RL added that the many of the statutory policies were One Education model policies.

**Agreed:** That the policy approval recommendations included in the report be approved

## **9. POLICY APPROVAL**

RL advised that the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy had been uploaded to the Gateway for approval at today's meeting. In future these policies would follow the policy approval recommendations and be reviewed by the Academy Lead.

**Agreed:** That the Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Policy be approved and adopted

## **10. TRUST SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

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

- Update from November report
- Current safeguarding numbers
- Wellbeing of Designated Safeguarding Leads
- Safeguarding and the impact of Covid
- Training
- Actions / Next Steps

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.

RL had reported at the last meeting that the Academy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) had reported an increase in the number of Safeguarding concerns and numbers of meetings and this impact was now starting to be seen and was likely to increase further when pupil numbers increased. RL reported that she was working closely with the DSLs to ensure they were supported, and their workload was manageable. She was also working with the LA Strategic Lead for Early Help, Nicola Murphy, on the current early help review taking place across Bolton, which would hopefully support the DSLs with the increase in the number of EHA's.

RL stated that as previously discussed during the meeting there had been an increase in serious crime, which was being closely monitored and increased levels of staff training were being provided.

The Chair acknowledged the increased risk posed to staff and the increase in workload and thanked all staff for their great work around safeguarding.

#### **11. MANAGEMENT VISITS**

VG directed Trustees to the report on Academy Management Visits, which she reported to be very positive. The areas checked during the visit had been rag rated into red, amber, or green. VG stated that Health & Safety at Lever Park and Youth Challenge had been highlighted in red; however, Lever Park were now making rapid progress in this area and the Health & Safety challenges facing Youth Challenge mainly related to the nature of the building and site. These areas would be closely monitored, and a full Health & Safety Audit by the LA had been arranged for after Easter and a Health & Safety Specialist had visited both academies earlier today.

There were no major issues regarding Finance, Safeguarding or HR. Areas highlighted tended to relate to missing paperwork, but this could be easily rectified. VG stated that she would continue to work alongside the School Business Managers to make sure each action point was addressed. PH stated that the Academy Management Visits were a great addition to the checks already being made by the Trust. JB stated that it will be interesting to monitor the progress as it was being made.

#### **12. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME 2020/21**

DS reported that he had undertaken discussions with Beever & Struthers regarding the Internal Audit, and this would take place on w/c 19 April and w/c 10 May 2021. DS stated that he was confident that this would be a supportive internal audit process, whilst also providing challenge.

#### **13. DATES OF NEXT RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Summer Term: Friday 25 June 2021 at 11.00am

#### **14. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

Agreed: To consent to the absence of KD

**15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Urgent Business.

**16. 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 6 (Finance & Resources Committee)

Minute Number 10 (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph – Lever Park)

The Executive Principal stated that he was aware that JB had been unable to visit the academies since his appointment due to the Covid restrictions but stated that he looked forward to him visiting the academies as soon as the situation allowed.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am.

**SUMMATIVE ACTIONS:**

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Action</b>
7	DS	Update Risk Register

Signed as a correct record: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chair of Risk & Audit Committee)