

MEETING OF THE RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

BOLTON IMPACT TRUST

THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022 AT 11.00AM

Present: Joshua Bennett (JB) – Chair of Committee, Keith Davies (KD), Sue Hincks (SH) and Paul Hodgkinson (PH) – Executive Principal

In Attendance: Victoria Gavin (VG) – Business Development Manager, David Smith (DS) – Finance Director, Emma Stoddard (ES) – Clerk to the Trust Board, D McCann and S Jewell (Internal Auditors)

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. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Agreed: That J Bennett be appointed as Chair of the Risk & Audit Committee to serve until the autumn term 2023

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. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE – BEEVER AND STRUTHERS

Stuart Jewell and Daniel McCann from Beever and Struthers had been invited to the meeting to provide a presentation on the recent internal audit.

Trustees were informed that the 2021/22 internal audit had focused on Human Resources, particularly two areas:

- i. HR systems – Data Management
- ii. Assurance around HR controls and documents i.e., starters / leavers / sickness

The previous audit had identified two medium priorities for action including:

- i. Central Record Management System – BIT did not have complete oversight of employee documents as these were kept on site at each individual academy. All files were paper based and there was no electronic platform being used to store this information. It had been recommended that the Trust consider using an electronic HR system.
- ii. Starters Checklist – A Starters checklist had only been created in 2020 and was only used at Trust level.

D McCann explained testing and checks had been undertaken. Four anomalies within the personnel records had been identified and now rectified.

D McCann advised that he had conducted checks on the electronic HR system (Every HR) that the Trust had since purchased – two low-level issues had been identified;

- i. Disciplinary and Grievance documentation had not been uploaded to the electronic system due to security concerns with the system
- ii. There had been a slight inconsistency regarding the uploading of starter and leaver documentation. In one academy documents had all been scanned at once rather than individually. The audit recommended that documents are individually scanned.

D McCann stated that overall, the implementation of Every HR had gone well, and the full audit report would be presented to Trustees in July.

Questions were invited at this point.

SH asked if the audit covered the safeguarding checks that were conducted when new starters joined the Trust. S Jewell reported that the Single Central Record (SCR) would be a separate audit. D McCann stated that he felt the starter documentation to be robust and this was checked during a separate audit focusing on starters and leavers.

DS referred to the issue regarding the uploading of Disciplinary and Grievance documents and stated that the Trust wanted an extra level of security around this. DS would speak to the company to introduce this extra level.

DS referred to the issue regarding the individual scanning of documents and explained that the Trust only had paper copies initially so when advice was received to move to electronic copies, a large scan was completed to get this done. Trustees were reassured that documents would be scanned individually moving forward and would be stored in one secure place.

The Chair thanked everyone for the work involved in this and stated that he was confident that actions would be completed.

S Jewell and D Mccann were thanked for their presentation and left the meeting at this point.

SH asked for further information of the SCR checks. RL advised that all personnel records were now stored on the Every system. Academies were responsible for the SCR at their level, and this was checked by VG and RL on a termly basis. One Education also conducted an annual review of the SCR, and this would be next completed in the Autumn term.

Action: DS (contact every HR regarding extra levels of security)

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING – FRIDAY 18 MARCH 2022

DS reported that he had emailed the Schools' ICT Team and had received a response from Sam Stonley confirming that robust security was in place for schools purchasing the ICT SLA.

It was noted that DS had made the agreed changes to the Risk Register.

Trustees were informed that PH and RL had met to discuss Lever Park. A more detailed update would be provided later in the meeting, but RL stated that she did not feel that this now needed to be added to the Risk Register due to the significant progress made.

RL provided an update on the RAG rated attendance matrix, previously requested by Trustees. RL stated that the attendance data dashboard had been developed by AW (Director of Standards) and was now in place and was providing a robust system of data monitoring for attendance. The spring term dashboard was shared on screen. Attendance data was collected on a weekly basis, and this enabled senior leaders to access the data at any point and enabled early identification of issues. Attendance was very complex in all the academies (medically ill children, school refusers) and RL stated that all academies were relentless in their efforts to improve attendance. RL stated that the raw data was based on children being expected to attend settings every week. This looked low due to many BIT children being on bespoke timetables. RL advised that there were still areas of the dashboard to work on, but overall, it helped leaders to understand attendance better and ask the right questions. A meeting was scheduled for the final week of term to make adaptations to the dashboard. In response to questions RL confirmed that the data included all children including traded children.

JB asked if the dashboard enabled the attendance of individual children to be monitored. RL explained that this was possible, and the data enabled conversations to take place regarding individual children. Youth Challenge unauthorised absence was currently a focus and the dashboard broke data down to show whether staff had had contact with the families. RL stated that BIT knew the whereabouts of 95% of the children including those refusing to come into school. PH added that staff held an incredible amount of intelligence on all children. If children did not meet their personal targets this was looked at very closely. The LA also conducted checks as most children were dual registered or on part time timetables. PH advised that there was also usually wrap around support in place for children who weren't attending.

SH stated that she was happy from the information provided today that attendance was being closely monitored. RL invited Trustees to come into the academies and look at attendance in more detail.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF RECENT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Finance & Resources Committee – Friday 10 June 2022

SH referred to the discussions around increasing energy costs and pay rises and asked if these needed to be added to Risk Register. DS confirmed that energy costs were included under Risk O7 but added that although costs were increasing for all schools, BIT did not spend huge amounts on energy. The Trust had budgeted for a 4% pay award; however, DS stated that he suspected it would be slightly more, but he expected that the government would subsidise this with a grant as done in the past.

PH advised Trustees that he and DS were currently negotiating a price increase with LA. The LA agreed had agreed a 3% price increase based on inflation, the Trust then also proposed a further 7% as the DPS price had not been increased in last 3 years. As expected, this had been rejected by the LA, so the Trust was now proposing an

increase of just over 5%. SH expressed concern around the Trust was incurring additional costs for children with additional needs and stated that the financial model should be flexible to accommodate this. PH advised that conversations had also taken place with the LA regarding an increased price for KS3 pupils and more money to provide additional support with pupils with extreme needs. This was currently paid at an extra £146 per day. DS stated that the bar for this additional payment was very high, and BIT currently had 3 children who met the threshold. DS stated that he wanted more dialogue on additional funding when it is needed. Most children had very complex behaviours, whilst some could not be on site with other pupils, so this was a very expensive model. DS stated that the Trust was trying to be creative for the commissioner and negotiations seemed to be going well so far.

Standards Committee – Friday 10 June 2022

SH asked for an update on work with external partners. PH stated that the OGAT discussions were going well, and the Trust had now received go ahead on their preferred building. This was now likely to be January rather than September. Trustees were informed that KD been scrutinising the contract. PH reported that a lot of research had been conducted on WAVE 15 and he felt that there would interest from potential partners such as Nottingham Council. There may also be possibilities in Haydock and Hindley as there were big AP gaps in these areas. Research was also taking place in other areas. SH stated that this this would take up a lot of time and effort and cautioned that this could risk diluting other work and senior leaders needed to be alert to this. PH acknowledged this and reported that that he and RL had been analysing the roles and responsibilities of the Central Team in response to the potential work with new partners.

SH stated that Encompass and domestic violence were very prominent in Keeping Children Safe in Education and asked if the Trust should be considering this as a risk if they were not being informed of referrals. RL stated that she did not feel that this was currently enough of a risk to be added to the Risk Register as the Trust tended to already know about these issues as staff worked very closely with families and had built strong relationships. The issue was predominately with Youth Challenge and Park school as the referrals were very sporadic, but this was also an issue in other schools across the borough. SH stated that the Trust also needed to consider curriculum development to educate children about domestic violence. RL stated that this had been on the radar for a long time and the Phase 1 approach was very strong. The academies worked closely with Fort Alice and the PSHE curriculum had a heavy focus on relationships.

PH gave details of the Who's in Charge programme, which had a focus on parents regaining control. PH had recently observed one of the sessions and felt that the impact was remarkable. SH stated that she felt this would be attractive to mainstream schools. RL stated that capacity issues were preventing this being marketed to schools. The Trainer's role was changing, and she would now train staff across the Trust so this could be considered once completed. However, the Trust needed to prioritise their own parents first as some had very significant needs.

8. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE

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

Safeguarding Risks

SF5 (new risk)

PH explained that the increase in the number of KS3 pupils and the challenges this presented had been discussed at the Finance & Resource Committee meeting and the Chair had requested that this be brought to the Risk & Audit Committee for further scrutiny. Trustees agreed that this presented a significant risk to the Trust and should be added as a separate risk under SF5. Trustees discussed the appropriate impact score and the likelihood score. In response to questions PH explained that the Trust would still safeguard a child even if additional funding was not received. JB acknowledged this but questioned whether the stretch on resources and time would impact on the safeguarding of all pupils. Trustees agreed that whilst the impact was high there was mitigation in place so proposed an impact score of 2 and a likelihood score of 3. Trustees agreed that this risk should also be added to B2 – Financial Sustainability – due to the increased financial demands that these children were creating. SH stated that the Trust should inform the LA that Trustees were concerned enough about the increase in KS3 pupils to warrant adding this to the Risk Register as a significant risk.

SF3 – Allegations against staff members of appropriate conduct

SH stated that the new requirement to conduct social media checks on staff could be added as a mitigation on SF3.

SF4 – Peer on peer abuse occurs with Trust academies

SH stated that this now needed to be updated to read child on child abuse.

Operational Risks

O2 – Staff unavailability

SH stated that O2 should specifically mention what back up plans were in place should the Executive Principal or Finance Director be on long term absence or leave the Trust. SH stated that she was more confident that cover could be provided for the Executive Principal via the Vice-Principal, but Trustees should consider succession planning for both posts, particularly for the Finance Director. PH stated that he had discussed succession planning with the Chair of Trustees and it was agreed that this be added to the register.

Trustees agreed that the time now being spent by members of the Central Team on other projects, including WAVE 15, needed to be acknowledged as this could impact detrimentally on the core work of the Trust and agreed that this should be included as a risk under S2.

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

Action: DS (update Risk Register)

9. KS3 PUPILS

This item had been covered under minute number 8.

10. LEVER PARK UPDATE

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.

11. DATES OF RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING 2022/23

Agreed: That the meeting dates for 2022/23 be as follows:

Friday 25 November 2022 at 11.00am

Friday 17 March 2023 at 11.00am

Friday 30 June 2023 at 11.00am

12. CONSENT TO ABSENCE

All Trustees were present.

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business.

14. 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:

Lever Park Update (Minute Number 10)

The meeting closed at 12. 15 pm.

SUMMATIVE ACTIONS:

Minute No.	Responsible	Action
5	DS	Contact Every HR regarding extra levels of security
8 & 9	DS	Update Risk Register

Signed as a correct record: _____

Date: _____

(Chair of Risk & Audit Committee)