

**MEETING OF THE RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE OF  
BOLTON IMPACT TRUST  
MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ON  
FRIDAY 30 JUNE 2023 AT 12.00 PM**

**Present:** J Bennett (JB) - Chair of the Committee, K Davies (KD), P Hodgkinson (PH) – Chief Executive Officer and S Hincks (SH)

**In Attendance:** K Connolly (KC) – Chief Finance Officer, D McKeon (DMc), V Gavin (VG) – Director of Business Operations, R Leonard (RL) – Director of Academy Operations, D Luczka (DL), J Paradine (JP) and E Stoddard (ES) – Governance Professional

**J BENNETT IN THE CHAIR**

**PART A – NON-CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies had been received; all Trustees were present.

**2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of pecuniary of conflicts of interest.

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

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

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

A copy of the minutes of the last meeting held on Friday 17 March 2023 had been circulated with the agenda papers and had been approved at the spring term Trust meeting.

**Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising, which were not already covered on today's agenda.

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

**Standards Committee – Friday 9 June 2023**

DMc provided an overview of the items of discussion of the Standards Committee meeting held on Friday 9 June 2023. A Trustee asked if any progress had been made with the Lever Park SEF. PH provided an update and stated that improvements were being seen in the SEF work.

**6. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER (RR) UPDATE**

A copy of the Risk Register had been uploaded to the Gateway. Changes to the register from previous discussions had been made and highlighted in yellow.

A Trustee stated that she felt several aspects needed to be added to the Risk Register including:

- Absent staff and recruitment as this was a risk for all educational establishments.
- New KCSIE requirements – The DSL should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety and work closely together with IT providers to meet the needs of the setting. It was suggested that this be added under O7 (ICT infrastructure)
- Staff injury in the workplace caused by a pupil.
- Learning Disabilities and SEND – there had been a national rise in parents taking providers to tribunal.

RL explained that a huge amount of work was taking place with regards to filtering and monitoring, and this was an on-going piece of work for the Trust. A Trustee asked whether pupils had access to mobile phones during the school day. RL explained that phones were not confiscated but added that due to the high staff pupil ratio there was very little opportunity for pupils to use their phones during the school day. RL stated that this was also an on-going piece of work and procedures were being reviewed and linked to safeguarding. A Trustee stated that there were now a number of schools that had joined the Mobile Phone Free Schools movement, and this might be something that the Trust considered; however, consideration would need to be given to the consequences for pupils if they did not adhere to this. RL stated that she felt strongly that pupils should be equip with skills to go back to mainstream or go to college and they needed to be able to manage their phone use. PH stated that he had recently visited another AP that tried to remove phones upon arrival to school but this caused huge disruption to the first lesson and concurred that pupils needed to be prepared for real life. The Chair suggested that this be added to S1 with the mitigations included. A Trustee stated that this could also impact on SF4 as Child-on-Child Abuse was likely to be more of a risk if phones were being used.

It was noted that there was already a staff sickness absence category (O2), but it was agreed that this could be expanded to include recruitment.

A Trustee stated that the risk of being taken to tribunal was probably a reputational risk so this may need adding as a new category. The Chair suggested that this be added as a strategic risk at this present time, but this could be reviewed in future.

The Chair thanked Trustees for their suggestions and proposed that the current risks included in the Risk Register be reviewed:

B1 – The poor behaviour rating at Youth Challenge due to the number of complex students being referred had been included and the mitigations already in place. In response to questions RL reported that there had been a significant improvement in behaviour now pupils had settled down.

S1 – PH stated that the risk from there being a significant reduction in permanent exclusions was very unlikely as there continued to be a significant demand. DMc concurred that this was a very unlikely risk at this current time.

S2 – A Trustee asked if the Outwood Grange project was now less of a risk due to this now being strategic, rather than operational support. PH stated that that this was no longer a risk for Outwood Grange but recommended that this stays on the RR to include other work such as the Wigan Free School bid. The Chair suggested that this could be made a more generic risk rather than specifically referring to Outwood Grange.

O3 – VG referred to the discussions at the Finance & Resources Committee regarding the power outages at Lever Park and suggested that this be added to the RR. RL reported that the Local Risk Registers were now in place at each academy so it may be more appropriate to add this at a local level with a facility to report this to the Trust Board. A Trustee suggested that the Local RRs could be divided up amongst Trustees for scrutiny. PH stated that consideration was being given to Trustee roles and responsibilities, and it had been suggested that that Trustees could be linked with an academy so this would fit well with this suggestion. The Chair requested that any areas highlighted red on the Local RRs be brought to this meeting and further thought be given as to how the Local RRs were reported back.

O7 (Site Security at Youth Challenge) – It was noted that this risk could now be downgraded as the work was now planned for the end of the summer term.

O7 (ICT Infrastructure) – The CFO stated that the reliance on Bolton Schools ICT was a risk and Trustees should consider the viability of this option and whether this was fit for purpose for AP. KC stated that the current system was dated and there needed to be a move towards a cloud-based system, that was corporate and supportive of future Trust developments. Trustees agreed that it would be prudent to investigate alternative providers. KC proposed that consideration be given to moving this service in-house.

The Chair noted that there were two O7's on the report so one would need to be renumbered.

O8 – PH reported that there were now five Members on the Members Board, three of whom were non-Trustees, so this now met the requirements of the Academy Handbook. A Trustee stated that although the required numbers were in place there still needed to be consideration given to the diversity of Members, Trustees and Local Governors. RL stated that this was an on-going piece of work as part of the Equality Objectives, and this would be discussed further at the full Trust Board meeting. Trustees discussed whether this risk should be removed as there were now five Members in place. It was agreed that this should stay on the RR, but the emphasis be on diversity to show the Trust's commitment to this.

SF6 – A Trustee referred to SF6, which currently had an impact score and likelihood score of 4 and asked if this was still the case. RL explained that the LA admission threshold had increased and the level at which pupils were now entering was very high. Trustees were informed however that one child who was classed as very high risk was now off roll. A Trustee asked if mental health support available to staff at Park School. RL explained that there was on-going mental health training, and many staff were ex-practitioners. The Academy worked closely with CAHMS and the Trust Therapist. The Chair suggested that this information could be added to the mitigation in place.

- Agreed:**
- i) That Filtering & Monitoring be added to O7 (ICT infrastructure)
  - ii) That pupil use of mobile phones be added to S1 (Safeguarding Risks) and SF4 (Child on Child Abuse)
  - iii) That O2 (Staff Sickness Absence) be expanded to include recruitment
  - iv) That Learning Disabilities and SEND be added as a Strategic Risk
  - v) That incidents between pupils and staff be added as a separate risk within the Safeguarding category
  - vi) That S2 (Growth project work) be changed to a generic risk for any growth
  - vii) That the O7 category (Site Security at YC) be downgraded
  - viii) That the O7 category be renumbered due to duplication
  - ix) That O8 be kept on the RR but amended to focus on diversity
  - x) That the SF6 mitigation be updated
  - xi) That any areas highlighted red on the Local RRs be brought to the Risk & Audit Committee

## **7. INTERNAL AUDIT**

A copy of the Single Central Record Internal Audit Report had been uploaded to the Gateway. KC reported that there were no major concerns regarding the report and the response from the Trust needed to be proportionate to the risk. It was noted that the Trust response would be presented to the full Trust Board.

RL reported that One Education had also completed reviews of the SCR, there were some recommendations to improve systems but no major concerns.

**Agreed:** That the Single Central Record Internal Audit Report be received and noted

SH offered her apologies and left the meeting at this point.

## **8. AUDIT ACTIONS TRACKER**

KC reported that the Audit Actions Tracker was a new report, which would be presented to the Risk & Audit Committee.

**Agreed:** That the Audit Actions Tracker be received and noted

## **9. ESFA FINANCIAL INVESTIGATIONS REPORT**

A copy of the ESFA Investigation Reports and Notices to Improve published during the period September 2022 to May 2023 had been uploaded to the Gateway.

KC stated that considerations of actions for the Trust were:

6.1 The Committee needs to consider whether there are issues arising from any of these reports that it may wish to look at the Trust's position.

6.2 The Trust has undertaken an external review of governance through the NGA and any findings should be prioritised for implementation.

6.3 The change in CFO will naturally bring about a review of financial processes, policies, and procedures. The prioritisation of this is presented separately in the CFO Report.

KC stated that there needed to be clear lines of accountability and Trustees needed to be alert to Related Party Transactions.

**Agreed:** That the ESFA Financial Investigations Report be received and noted

PH offered his apologies and left the meeting at this point.

#### **10. GDPR / DPO UPDATE**

Gill Smith, external DPO, had visited on 1 June 2023 and a copy of the report had been uploaded to the Gateway. It was noted that the DPO report would be presented to Trustees on a termly basis.

#### **11. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL**

The Staff Code of Conduct Policy had been uploaded to the Gateway. RL advised that there were no major changes to the content but there had been changes to the format that Trustees needed to note. In response to questions RL reported that this was a One Education Model Policy.

**Agreed:** To approve and adopt the Staff Code of Conduct Policy

#### **12. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

Friday 24 November 2023 at 11.00 am.

Friday 15 March 2024 at 11.00 am.

Friday 28 June 2024 at 11.00 am.

#### **13. CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

All Trustees were present at today's meeting.

#### **14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

One item of Any Other Urgent Business was notified at this point:

##### Lever Park Governing Board

Trustees were notified that Nick Hockenhull had been appointed as Chair of the Lever Park Local Governing Board with effect from 1 September 2023. Mr Hockenhull was currently providing consultancy work for the Trust and had been carrying out work as an English Specialist at Lever Park. KC stated that Trustees needed to be aware of the Related Party Transaction, but this would not exceed the £20,000 limit. In response to questions RL reported that the work at Lever Park would come to an end but Mr Hockenhull would continue to provide school to school support.

The Chair of Trustees stated that he was reassured that the work was time limited and proposed that Trustees note the declaration of interest.

**Agreed:** That the declaration of interest relating to Mr Hockenull be noted

15. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Agreed:** That none of the matters discussed at this meeting be designated as confidential in accordance with the Academy's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

With no further business the meeting closed at 1.00 pm

**SUMMATIVE ACTIONS**

<b>Minute Number</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Action</b>
6	RL / PH	Update Risk Register

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

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

(Chair of Risk & Audit Committee)