



Mission Statement: *Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures*

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 24th January 2023
Location: Via Google Meet
Time: 5pm- 5.40pm

Present: Ms Caroline Coyne (Chair)
Ms Jill Gray (Principal)
Cllr Don Clapham
Ms Debbie Taaffe
Together with: Ms Amanda Crumblehulme (Assistant Principal: Business Support)
Ms Lindsay Gates (Head of Finance)
Mrs Sue Hawitt (Governance Administrator-FCAT)

Apologies: Cllr C Baxter (observer) and Ms Sukie Woodhouse

Action

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| 01.2023 | Preliminaries
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting | |
| 02.2023 | Declaration of Interest
There were no declarations of interest | |
| 03.2023 | Consideration of any items of urgent business
There were no items of urgent business to discuss | |
| 04.2023 | Confirmation of Quoracy
It was confirmed the meeting was quorate | |
| 05.2023 | Minutes of the joint meeting of the Audit and Administration and Finance committee held on 6th December 2022
The minutes of the joint meeting held on 6 th December 2022 were approved | |
| 06.2023 | Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Internal Audit-(item 48.2022 from the previous minutes) directors were asked to consider any internal audits that may be required.b) Directors asked if it would be appropriate to carry out an internal audit testing non- financial KPIs - both these matters were discussed under the next item. | |

07.2023

Internal Audit (if appropriate)

There were no Internal audits carried out, however directors considered a list of previous internal audits undertaken dating back to 2007 which was presented by the Head of Finance. It was noted that in November 2018 following discussions with internal auditors, management and audit committee members, the college moved to an 'agreed upon procedures' approach to internal audit.

Since then, audit committee and management have been using the audit recommendation progress tracking tool to ensure internal risks are identified and monitored. It was agreed that audits should not be carried out for the sake of it, but focus on critical areas.

The Principal noted that during the academisation process the finance and HR teams will be put under additional pressure and would ask that the teams are not put under too much scrutiny and unnecessary workload in the coming months.

It was noted that academisation will change many processes, therefore directors agreed to look at audit areas at a later stage. It was noted that in the coming weeks and months the college will be carrying out rigorous due diligence which will provide the board with the necessary information to make decisions regarding academisation. It was also noted that audit committee members need to have the reassurance they need to be able to confirm that the college has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control and that it is critical to look at the right areas.

Areas considered were ALPs reporting and Key Performance Indicators around standard predicted grades/mocks, it was noted that the Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal: Vocational had been working on a new style of reporting which will be shared with directors at the next Standards Board meeting.

Other areas to consider for the future would be the bursary fund and business continuity should there be any disruption to college life.

The Audit members were assured that despite independent internal audits not taking place during the current or previous year, work is carried out throughout the year, for example the newly appointed Head of Estates has carried out an audit giving assurance that the college's compliance in H&S had been strengthened, and cyber security exercises had been carried out to identify risks and vulnerabilities.

08.2023

Risk Management

Directors received the Risk Management report and Risk Registers (papers 8.1 a/b) presented by the Head of Finance, she highlighted additional risks and necessary changes made and invited questions.

Questions from Directors

Asked if specific risks such as, teacher strikes, potential pay increases, retirement of the Principal and academisation had not been added to the risk register, it was noted that most specific risks come under a larger strand (for example, 'failure to recruit specialist staff') and the conversations that take place during the risk management discussions cover each specific risk in detail whilst trying to keep the risk register succinct. Directors were reassured that most risks above are included on the risk register except those that occurred after the report was written, i.e. teacher strikes.

**Agenda
Standards
Board**

	<p>Asked about the increase in mental health concerns for students and what progress is being made, it was noted that an Education Mental Health Practitioner from the Blackpool Nursing Team had been assigned to college on a fixed term contract until the Summer to be reviewed annually.</p> <p>08.2023 D1 Resolved: recommend the Risk Management Report and Risk Registers to the Corporation for approval</p>	
09.2023	<p>Cyber Security Report (Confidential Item)</p> <p>Directors received the Cyber Security Report (paper 8.3) presented by the Assistant Principal: Business Support, she highlighted the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) questions used to help assess cyber security posture. She also informed directors that additional resources had been put into the Network Services team to help alleviate some of the pressures, it was noted that there is lots of progress being made but there is still work to be done as it is a forever changing landscape.</p> <p>Questions from Directors</p> <p>In response to a question about accreditation, it was noted that college are working towards the 'cyber essentials' principles at present not the accreditation.</p> <p>In response to a question about training for directors, it was noted that this is something the Assistant Principal: Business Support will follow up</p> <p>A further point was noted about directors using their own email addresses as opposed to a college email account, this will also be followed up by the Assistant Principal: Business Support</p>	<p>AC</p> <p>AC</p>
10.2023	<p>Internal Audit Tracking Report</p> <p>Directors received the Internal Audit Tracking report (paper 9.1) presented by the Head of Finance, she noted that there were no recommendations from the External Audit and only one action remains which is ongoing, progress is being made and further updates will be provided at the next meeting.</p> <p>She invited directors to ask questions, there were no questions to answer.</p>	
11.2023	<p>Private meeting of the committee with Auditors without staff</p> <p>There was no External Auditor present, therefore no meeting took place. The Chair gave some feedback from a recent webinar she attended and noted that despite having the opportunity to meet at the end of every meeting, it was good practice to hold at least one meeting with auditors per year without staff. It was felt that the most appropriate meeting would be the Joint meeting in November, but that directors had the opportunity, as always, at the next meeting. It was agreed to send a reminder out to directors prior to the meeting.</p>	
12.2023	<p>Private meeting of the committee without staff or Auditors</p> <p>No meeting was required.</p>	
13.2023	<p>AOB</p> <p>There was no AoB</p>	
13.2023	<p>Identification of any new or amended risks</p> <p>There was no new or amended risks</p> <p>Directors were reminded to update their DPR for attendance at this meeting</p> <p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 15th June 2023 at 5pm (virtual meeting)</p>	

Signed _____

Date _____