Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee

held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 15 March 2023
Virtually by Microsoft Teams.

Present:	Mr J Bryant (JB)	Chair
	Mr A Barke (AB)	
	Ms C Ajit Singh (CAS)	
Apologies:	Mr A Alimohamed (AA)	
	Mr S Pringle (SP)	Director of Internal Audit, Wylie & Bisset LLP
In Attendance:	Mr M Cooper (MC)	Executive Director Finance, HR and Development
	Ms T Aust (TA)	Principal
	Ms K Frost (KF)	Head of Governance

1/23 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.   Apologies for absence were received and accepted from AA and SP.

2/23 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest relating to the items on the agenda.

3/23 Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes from the meeting of the Committee held on 30 November 2022 had been received in advance (Paper 1). IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

4/23 Matters Arising

A 'Summary Action Point List' (Paper 2) was received and noted.   The Committee received an update on progress towards actions agreed at the last meeting.

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date	Status Update
18/22 b	Governance, Search and Strategy Committee to review curriculum risks with scores of 5 for 'likelihood' to ensure these are appropriate.	GSSC	Feb 23	A full review of the risk register was started at the Corporation Strategy Day. The scores for risk 6 and risk 11 have been reduced since the last meeting of the committee.
20/22 a	Check and confirm the committee membership	KF	Dec 22	The committee membership in the table of Members of the

	attributed to CAS in the table of Members of the Corporation in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control			Corporation in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control was checked and was accurate, covering the period academic year 2021-22 up to the date of signing.
23/22 b	Reporting of policies relating to Fraud, Bribery and Whistleblowing for Audit Committee oversight at the spring committee meeting.	MC	Feb 23	On the agenda for discussion.
23/22 b	Reporting of cyber security for Audit Committee oversight and DPO annual report on compliance with data protection regulation at the summer committee meeting.	Exec / MC	Jun 23	Cyber security and an annual report from the DPO had been added to the committee schedule of business for the summer term.
24/22	Provide a progress update at next committee meeting on areas of Post-16 Audit Code of Practice compliance check rated amber.	MC	Feb 23	Received as a paper for the meeting. (Paper 3)
24/22	Include reference to additional services provided by internal auditor in Audit Committee Annual Report to Corporation.	KF	Dec 22	Completed.
24/22	Correct item numbering in Post-16 Audit Code of Practice compliance check table.	KF	Dec 22	The numbering has been checked and matches the numbering in the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice.

The following matters arising were discussed:

23/22b: The committee discussed the approach to be taken with oversight of cyber security and whether to arrange an internal audit. It was agreed to discuss the best approach with the Chair of the Corporation.

24/22: An update on progress towards the areas highlighted as amber in the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice compliance check was received in advance of the meeting. (Paper 3). Governors said it was good to see the actions moving forward.

5/23 **Risk Management**

a) **Strategic Risk Register**
A Cover Sheet and the 'Strategic Risk Register – Updated March 23' were received in advance of the meeting. (Paper 4).

Since the last committee meeting, the following changes had been made:

- A risk had been added in respect of the ONS reclassification of FE colleges as public sector bodies. (Risk 27)
- The net likelihood score for the inability to control expenditure (Risk 12) had been reduced as higher levels of control/mitigation were in place.

After feedback from the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee, the following changes were made:

- Risks 1 and 2: The controls and mitigation for curriculum design and development have been reviewed and updated.
- Risk 6: The controls and mitigation for attendance have been reviewed and revised and the net score reduced to 16 (from 20).
- Risk 1: Specific reference to the risks relating to transition to T Levels and defunding of Level 3 qualifications had been added under Risk 1.
- Risk 11 – There has been a review to reflect the risk of a pandemic but without a specific focus on COVID-19. The gross and net scores for likelihood have been reduced.

A wider governance review of risk management was ongoing.

Governors asked why there was no link to the Strategic Plan for Risk 27.   It was agreed to add a link to Goal 3 in the Strategic Plan.

Action: MC

Governors said Risk 27 wasn't appearing as a big risk. MC explained that the College was aware of the implications of the ONS reclassification and were making necessary changes such as updating the financial scheme of delegation. At the moment, there was no significant impact or risk for the College.

6/23   Internal Audit

A 'Progress Update on Outstanding Audit Recommendations' (Paper 5) was received in advance of the meeting. The Committee reviewed progress towards the recommendations from previous audits. There were no concerns raised.

7/23   Policies

a) **Whistleblowing Policy**
The 'Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure – March 2023' (Paper 6) was received in advance of the meeting.

After making a minor amendment, IT WAS DECIDED to recommend approval of the Whistleblowing Policy to the Corporation.

b) **Fraud Policy and Procedure**
The 'Fraud Policy and Procedures – Revised March 2023' (Paper 7) was received in advance of the meeting.

IT WAS DECIDED to recommend approval of the Fraud Policy and Procedure to the Corporation.

c) **Anti-Bribery Policy**
The 'Anti-Bribery Policy and Procedures – Revised March 2023' (Paper 8) had been received in advance of the meeting.

IT WAS DECIDED to recommend approval of the Anti-Bribery Policy and Procedure to the Corporation.

Governors asked how contractors were made aware of the policy. MC said contractors were subject to an induction process. It was agreed that MC would check whether it was written into the contract rules.

Governors suggested creating a standard format for policies that would include the date they had been approved, date due for review and College lead.

8/23   **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the committee was Wednesday 28 June 2023 at 6.00pm.

Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date
5/23	Add a link to Goal 3 in the Strategic Plan to Risk 27.	MC	June 23
7/23	Check whether adhering to the Anti Bribery policy is written into contract rules.	MC	June 23