



Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 at 4pm

Present: George Graham (Chair & Governor)
Emma Dawson (Co-opted member)
Jo Mallows (Governor)
Matt Mills (Governor) (by Teams)
Carly Speechley (Governor) (by Teams)
Ethan Sumner (Co-opted member)

In attendance: Hayley Allsopp (Vice Principal Students)
Jason Barnard (Executive Director of MIS)
Gavin Batty (Deputy CEO)
Shaun Cook (Vice Principal Curriculum)
Heather Jackson (Clerk) (by Teams)
Tony Johnson (Vice Principal Corporate Services)
Laila Lawton (Chief Financial Officer)
Lisa Smith (RSM) (by Teams)

PART I – For Publication

Minute	
PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
A25/001	Agenda Item No. 1: Quorum The meeting was quorate.
A25/002	Agenda Item No. 2: Apologies for Absence There were no apologies.
A25/003	Agenda Item No. 3: Declarations of interest There were no declarations of interest.



Minute	
A25/004	Agenda Item No. 4: Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 were approved.
A25/005	Agenda Item No. 5: Matters arising. There were no matters arising.
A25/006	Agenda Item No. 6: Rolling Action List It was RESOLVED to note the Rolling Action List.
A25/007	Agenda Item No. 7: Notification of items of any other business There were no other items of business.
A25/008	Agenda Item No. 8.1: Progress Report Lisa Smith presented the Progress Report. Two reports had been finalised since the last meeting. All audit dates had been agreed and would be completed by the end of the academic year. It was RESOLVED to note the Progress Report.
A25/009	Agenda Item No. 8.2: Safeguarding & Prevent Lisa Smith presented the Safeguarding & Prevent Audit. It was noted that the College had a robust control framework in place which is consistently complied with in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent. There is an up to date safeguarding policy and procedures incorporating the College Child Protection Policy and Prevent Policy in place. There is a systematic approach undertaken for sharing lessons learned and the central Safeguarding Team regularly engage with social workers and attend multi agency meetings.



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	<p>One low priority action relating to the terms of reference of the safeguarding strategy group was identified relating to the frequency of meetings.</p> <p>The committee discussed the methodology and expertise used by the auditors and noted that this type of audit was regularly carried out in other clients and there was a benchmark of what good looked like.</p> <p>It was agreed that the board could take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Safeguarding & Prevent Audit.</p>
A25/010	<p>Agenda Item No. 8.3: Project Management</p> <p>Lisa Smith presented the Project Management Audit which had reviewed the IoT Capital Project.</p> <p>The committee noted that the project is being managed effectively and is being monitored in line with the major capital projects management framework. The framework clearly sets out roles and responsibilities and steps to follow to effectively manage projects such as financial transparency, regular stakeholder engagement and collaborative oversight.</p> <p>The committee noted that the report only looked at projects started since the project management framework had been implemented. The framework was used for anything deemed a major project and would include works at Eastgate and the sports centre.</p> <p>It was noted that the College had been keen to undertake a review to see distance travelled on project management and it was agreed that this had been significant. The teams were congratulated for their work and the assurance that it provided and it was agreed that projects were well managed and risks were mitigated and managed effectively.</p> <p>There were two low priority actions relating to ensuring the framework is up to date with job titles, version control and evidence of review and ensuring that the project risk register is completed in full.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Project Management Audit.</p>



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A25/011	<p>Agenda Item No. 9: OfS & ITS SYMCA Audit Update</p> <p>The Executive Director of MIS presented the OfS and ITS SYMCA audit report.</p> <p>The committee noted that the College had undergone two external audits neither of which had resulted in any funding clawback.</p> <p>Some changes to procedures had been recommended and implemented to document the exit process.</p> <p>The College continues to monitor funding compliance for all funding bodies and to implement and revise procedures to minimise potential clawbacks, seeking specialist advice when necessary.</p> <p>The committee noted the assurance that these two positive audit provided to the board.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the OfS and ITS SYMCA Audit.</p>
A25/012	<p>Agenda Item No. 10: Board Assurance Framework Q2</p> <p>The Vice Principal Corporate Services presented the Board Assurance Framework for quarter two.</p> <p>The committee noted that work would always be ongoing on IT disaster recovery and alongside a recovery solution procurement exercise, a desktop cyber security exercise was planned to identify further areas for improvement.</p> <p>The committee commended the work undertaken to improve results in English and Maths following a significant investment.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback was positive for apprenticeships and work continued to reduce those past their end point assessment date.</p> <p>The committee discussed the 14-16 provision and noted that the college was putting more robust systems in place to support students.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Board Assurance Framework and the assurance that it provides.</p>



A25/013	<p>Agenda Item No 11: Interim Health and Safety Report</p> <p>The Vice Principal Corporate Services presented the Interim Health and Safety Report.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been an increase in accidents but that there was no pattern year on year. Near miss reporting had increased following changes to procedures and this was viewed positively.</p> <p>The committee discussed lockdown training and noted the training had been linked with Crime and Justice week helping students put it into context. It was noted that many colleges don't have any processes for lockdown and although the college did not consider it to be a significant risk there had been three lockdowns in the last few years and they felt it was important to practice on a regular basis, as the College was relatively open.</p> <p>The committee noted the proactive use of stress risk assessments and took comfort from the good practice.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Interim Health and Safety Report.</p>
A25/014	<p>Agenda Item No 12: New Risk</p> <p>There were no new risks identified.</p>
A25/015	<p>Agenda Item No. 13: Clerks Monitoring of Audit Recommendations</p> <p>The Clerk presented the Monitoring of Audit Recommendations report. It was noted that a new column of not due had been added.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Clerks Monitoring of Audit Recommendations report.</p>
A25/016	<p>Agenda Item No. 14: Updates</p> <p>Governors noted the updates.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the Updates.</p> <p>The internal auditors left the meeting at 16:48</p>



PART II	
A25/017	<p>Agenda Item No 15: Appointment of External Auditors</p> <p>The Chief Financial Officer updated the Committee on the External Audit tender and presentations which had taken place earlier that day.</p> <p>Two companies had been invited to present to a small panel made up of members of the finance team, the Chief Financial Officer, Deputy Chief Executive and two members of the Audit & Risk Committee.</p> <p>Both had been appointable but Beever and Struthers had been recommended as it was felt they had more expertise, particularly around funding and working relationships. The committee noted that the costs were broadly the same.</p> <p>It was recommended by the panel that Beever and Struthers be appointed for an initial two year period with an option to extend this to a maximum of five years.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to note the proposal and recommend its approval to the Board.</p>
A25/018	<p>Agenda Item No 17: Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024.</p>
A24/019	<p>Agenda Item No. 18: Any other business</p> <p>There were no other items of business.</p>
A24/020	<p>Agenda Item No. 18: Date and time of next meeting</p> <p>Monday 10 June 2024</p>

The meeting ended at 17:04