

Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting Held at 4.30pm on 21 October 2025

Present: Prue Amner (left at 6.30pm), Huw Chapman (Teams, left at 6.30pm), Ashley Cullen (Teams, left at 5.15pm), Shirley Nellthorpe and Pauline Tiller (chair)

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Chris Bilton	Interim VP, Information Systems (Mins 263 – 269)
Mickiela Blake	Director of People & OD (Mins 263 – 268)
Mike Cheetham	RSM (internal auditors)
Chris Mantel	Alliotts (external auditors)
Paola Schweitzer	Director of Governance
Maria Vetrone	COO

Minutes

263 Attendance and Participation

There were no apologies for absence.

264 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

265 Minutes

The minutes and confidential minutes from the meeting on 17 June 2025 and the minutes from the meeting on 29 September 2025 were **Agreed** as correct records.

266 Matters Arising

Governors **Noted** that matters arising were complete, except for the CEFFS which was likely to take place after December 2025.

267 Training: Audit Committee Role & Responsibilities, RSM

Mike gave a [presentation](#) outlining the Committee's responsibilities and what makes an effective committee.

268 Internal Audit Report: Single Central Record (paper 870/25/A)

The audit sought to determine the accuracy and robustness of the Single Central Record (SCR) and its consistency with HR records. It was an advisory review, requested by management following an independent report by PureHR consultancy, and therefore the auditors did not issue an opinion. Three of the six management actions raised were agreed.

Governors believed the audit's findings demonstrated that recommendations from the independent report by PureHR had not been implemented successfully. Maria provided assurance that changes had been implemented and that governors would be able to review progress in the outstanding recommendations follow up report. Governors believed the next audit should include newer members of staff and Shirley asked that the sample size considered at the monthly SCR meetings she attended as safeguarding lead governor was widened. Mickiela agreed, stating that ongoing internal checks of all staff files would be

added to the agenda. Governors discussed the recommendation to ensure a consistent process for evidencing DBS checks by ensuring longer-term employees' DBS checks were refreshed and evidence of the checks retained in the HR files, noting that the recommendation had not been accepted due to affordability. Mickiela confirmed the College was compliant with current requirements as renewing DBS checks for staff was not a mandated action (although it was considered good practice). She clarified that the SCR recorded the DBS number, who reviewed the certificate and what, if any, action was required. However, due to changes in who 'owned' the certificate as well as KCSIE and data protection guidance, copies of the certificate could not be held for longer than 6 months. Mike stated it was important to agree how frequently DBS checks should be carried out and that addressing the legacy issues over time was acceptable. In response to a question Mickiela stated c50% of staff would require a new DBS check and that this would be built into HR's 2026/27 budget and over the following 2-3 years to spread the costs. Governors suggested updating the checks over three years, starting with those who had been employed the longest. Mickiela confirmed that HR's operational risk register included this DBS risk and Pauline asked that this extract was circulated to governors. Governors **Noted** the SCR advisory report.

Following the meeting it was estimated that it would cost c£27k to carry out DBS checks for staff with more than three years' service and those on the Low Level Concerns register.

Minute 269 was confidential

Chris left the meeting.

270 Internal Audit: Annual Report 2024/25 (paper 873/25/A)

The report summarised internal audit activity from 01 August 2024 to 31 July 2025 in line with the 2024/25 Internal Audit Annual Plan. The report found that the College '*has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.*' 58 audit actions were raised and agreed by management, six of which were 'high' priority and related to learner number systems. Mike stated that whilst the annual report gave an unqualified opinion, it was on the cusp of a limited assurance opinion due to the final three audits. The unqualified opinion had been challenged by RSM Quality Assurance but was ultimately agreed because the College had directed RSM to audit these areas. Mike concluded that if issues were not resolved this year, the College was unlikely to receive an unqualified opinion next year. Pauline emphasised the importance of working to ensure the College secured an unqualified opinion and Maria restated her commitment to address the control weaknesses. Governors **Noted** the 2024/25 internal audit annual report.

271 Internal Audit: Progress Report 2025/26 (paper 890/25/A)

Governors **Noted** that internal audits were planned for 2025/26 in accordance with the agreed plan, but that none had taken place to date.

272 Outstanding Audit Recommendations Follow Up (paper 874/25/A)

2024/25 audits had been finalised. 43 recommendations were made (Maria to double check), all of which were accepted by management. 24 recommendations had been implemented and 19 were in progress. The five 'high' priority recommendations relating to learner number systems were being actioned immediately. Recommendations from previous audits had been closed and outstanding actions carried forward. Governors **Noted** the outstanding audit recommendations follow up.

273 Strategic Risk Register (paper 875/25/A)

There had been no updates to the strategic risk register since it was considered by Corporation and so was not discussed.

274 Whistleblowing Policy (paper 875/25/A)

The whistleblowing policy was not tabled. Mike would review the policy as previously agreed and it would be considered at a single item virtual Audit Committee meeting.

275 Committee Training & Development (paper 876/25/A)

Governors discussed the Committee's training and development plan, noting that the auditors' briefing sessions were useful and that the AoC Audit and Finance meetings would be of more interest to F&R. At the next meeting governors would review RSM's Emerging Risks document, with the following meeting exploring cyber security/NAO publication. Governors **Noted** the Committee's training and development plan.

Huw and Prue left the meeting at which point it was no longer quorate.

Pauline invited the auditors to raise any comments/concerns. Chris stated that the external audit was underway and proceeding well. Mike stated he would be retiring on 31 March 2026.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm