Minutes of the Audit Committee (AC) video-conference AC22.2 held on Wednesday 22 March 2023 Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge

Present: Sebastian Rasinger (committee Chair), David Evans, Hugo Macey and Alex Wong

In attendance: Yolanda Botham (Principal), Charlotte Hemmins (Finance Director), Jason Dear (DP Officer/IT and Estates Manager, up to the end of agenda item 8)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

Ref		Actions:

AC22.2.1   Apologies for absence
None. The meeting was quorate. David Evans had informed the Clerk that he would be late joining the meeting.

AC22.2.2   Declarations of Interest
None.

AC22.2.3   Minutes of AC22.1 Wednesday 9 November 2022
With no comments or amendments, the committee approved the minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate record.

AC22.2.4   Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda
None.

David Evans joined the meeting at 5.10pm

AC22.2.5   Annual GDPR/Data Protection report
The Data Protection Officer (DPO) spoke to his written paper which included updates on management/policy, staff training, SARs and third-party access requests, and audits.

The report included a note of a data breach that had occurred at the College, that was not reportable. A Governor asked about the nature of the data breach and the committee went onto talk about measures for preventing such breaches, including automation/software in place.

The report included information on subject access requests and the DPO went onto say how these had been handled.

A Governor asked how the College monitors staff GDPR training compliance, and the DPO explained the procedures in place and the support for staff when it is needed.

AC22.2.6   Update on Cyber security *verbal*
The IT Manager/DPO gave a verbal update on cyber security matters at the College, explaining that it remained a key topic for the sector, including in terms of cost. There had been many incidents in Colleges, some which had been widely publicised. The College was undergoing cyber essentials accreditation.

He explained that phishing simulation training was in place, and it had been effective. He reported that the College had uprated antivirus and anti-malware software which actively monitored servers for random behaviour, with an upgraded firewall that isolated infected devices.

A Governor asked how the College was learning from incidents that had occurred elsewhere in the sector. He explained what steps had recently been taken and the meeting discussed individual examples, with this discussion led by the Chair.

A Governor was keen to know when the next audit was due. The formal cyber security audit was due every 3 years, but the meeting agreed that it would be useful to have a further discussion on assurance in the summer **Agenda** including on frequency of audit and by whom through the internal audit plan discussions, if appropriate.

The AC thanked the managers for the report.

AC22.2.7   **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)**
The IT/Estates Manager presented this paper. The BCP had been updated and presented to the AC at the last meeting. This was the further updated edition. He drew the committee's attention to pages 2 and 4 and having considered the scenarios included, the committee asked about other incidents not referred to. Accepting that not all risks and threats needed to be explicitly listed, the leadership team would **Finance** consider the BCP again with greater links to the College risk register. **Director**

A Governor asked about staff and student access to systems when they are no longer studying/employed at College, and loss of key people at the same time, and the provision for this. Governors felt the team structures seemed sensible.

The meeting touched on storage, accessibility and revisions of the BCP.

The committee thanked the senior leaders for bringing the report.

AC22.2.8   **Annual Freedom of Information report**
The DPO presented his report setting out details of the FoI requests received in-year, including exemptions. Governors asked if the College had received any vexatious requests, and the DPO responded, also giving details of one which linked to a SAR/DP matter.

The DPO asked if it was possible to combine the FoI report with the GDPR report next time. The committee was keen to keep reports succinct and would be prepared to trial this at the next iteration. Document labelling would be important so that it was clear when looking back in the official records that the AC received the right reports at the right time.

The IT Manager/DPO left the meeting at 6.03pm

AC22.2.9   **Audit assurance mapping**
The FD reminded the committee of the purpose of the assurance map, explaining that the internal audit plan offered to the committee in June

would set out the areas on which further assurance may be sought. All updates to the assurance map were visible in red typeface and the meeting discussed references where additional assurance might be added; SP1 and SP4 were specifically touched upon.

A Governor asked about the ESFA 'strategic conversation' visit, and the Principal explained that the discussion was formally recorded and then followed up with a letter from the ESFA. The Principal went on to detail preparations for the visit, the visit itself, who attended, and what it was used for (to benefit both the College and the ESFA).

The resulting letter following the visit was in the purpose of being reviewed and it would be shared with the Board.

AC22.2.10   Risk
The FD highlighted key changes to the risk register and risk action plan. Risk 1.3 (Governance & Search committee risk) was touched upon and the Clerk contributed to the discussion at this point.

A Governor was keen to understand more about new risk 4.22 and how and when College was preparing. The Principal advised that this was a key risk, and timing and impact were key. Sector representative bodies were engaging and lobbying on a national level, offering webinars and training.

Another Governor referred to rising costs and inflation and the FD referred to its impact on the College and prudent budgeting to manage College funds carefully.

AC22.2.11   Post-16 Audit Code of Practice 2021 to 2022 (revised September 2022)
The Clerk advised the AC that the current version of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice 2021/22 (April 2022) was further updated in September 2022 on impropriety/malpractice. The report detailed the changes from the previous version, and those included in the September 2022 update. She referred to the next agenda item on Whistleblowing being the procedural method of handling impropriety.

The meeting pondered whether the ONS reclassification of Colleges would impact on the release of the 2022/23 version, which was not yet available. The FD advised it was expected that there would be greater emphasis on regularity and financial reporting under 'Managing Public Money' (MPM).

AC22.2.12   Committee review of key policies
Whistleblowing (public interest disclosure) policy. The Clerk advised that this was a policy undergoing periodic review, for committee approval, with minor changes included shown by track changes.

With no further questions, the committee approved the updated Whistleblowing (public interest disclosure) policy.

AC22.2.13   Governance and Governor development

The Clerk had updated the governance improvement plan in a number of sections. She touched on some of the updates and referred to AC membership, and recruitment, and touched on gender, race and committee membership/rotation to ensure quoracy. The statutory nature of the AC and its holistic focus on governance was mentioned. There was a balance to be struck between rotating Governors so that they didn't become too cosy on committees but enough so that stability and knowledge was maximised.

A Governor induction had occurred earlier in the year and a further one would run in the summer or autumn term, picking up new Corporation members. The Clerk highlighted a useful 45 minute SFCA webinar on 'Audit 2023' that ran on 12 December. A recording was available.

Governor visits to the College were in the process of being organised, and it would be likely that these would run in the summer term.

AC22.2.14   AC meetings during 2023/24
The AC Chair was keen to discuss 2023/24 meeting dates slightly earlier than the usual summer, as a number of Corporation members had suggested an 'in person' meeting of this committee. Draft dates had been presented to the March Board meeting. The committee was reminded of the suggested dates.

Whilst few Governors wished to overall increase the number of physical meetings, were the Board to hold one virtual meeting (perhaps March or May Board) then the AC meeting in-person in November may work. The external auditor would now be asked if he could attend in person in   **Clerk**
November 2023.

AC22.2.15   Any other business
None.

AC22.2.16   Date of next meeting
AC22.3 Wednesday 21 June 2023, 5pm. The meeting closed at 7.03pm.