

**Minutes of the Audit Committee (AC) video-conference AC21.2 held on Wednesday 23 March 2022
Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge**

Present: Sebastian Rasinger (committee Chair), Alison Miles and Alex Wong

In attendance: Yolanda Botham (Principal), Charlotte Hemmins (Finance Director), Jason Dear (IT Manager, DPO), and Scott McCready (Wylie Bissett)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

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AC21.2.1	Apologies for absence Apologies were received from Hugo Macey. The Chair welcomed new Independent Governor member, Alex Wong, to the committee, and to Scott from Wylie Bissett.	
AC21.2.2	Declarations of Interest None	
AC21.2.3	Minutes of AC21.1 held on Wednesday 10 November 2021 With no comments or amendments the committee approved the minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate record.	
AC21.2.4	Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda <u>AC21.1.9 Counter Fraud Strategy</u> . The AC Chair advised that an earlier draft of this had been considered in the November 2021 meeting and that this was for committee recommendation for Board approval. The AC Chair reminded the committee that this was not intended to be an operational plan, but a high level strategy document to include awareness raising. The committee agreed that this version reflected the changes the committee asked to be effected from the earlier iteration. The committee was keen for the strategy to have as few changeable elements as possible. The committee was content to recommend the Counter Fraud Strategy for Corporation approval at the May Board meeting.	Board
	<u>Business continuity Plan (BCP) update</u> . The FD reminded the committee that the College did have a BCP in place, and it had been tested significantly throughout the pandemic and during extremes of weather, but formally the BCP was due for review. Due to changes in key management in College the FD had requested more time to review the BCP through the leadership team. The BCP would be brought to the summer meeting (AC21.3) for committee consideration.	Agenda
AC21.2.5	Annual GDPR/Data Protection report The DPO spoke to his written report. He reported that the DP/GDPR and privacy policies were being updated when key system updates are implemented. Staff training and refreshers to include Cyber Security Training were ongoing. The College had had no data breaches in the period in question. The DPO reported on the number of FoI requests, and a lower number of subject access requests. Data cleansing meant	

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that data is not held longer than the length of time legally required. He paused for questions.

As Governor who was unable to be present at the meeting was interested in attempted phishing attacks, which the DPO explained were handled by software in College that identifies and neutralises them.

Another Governor asked if the College received hacking attempts. The DPO explained that it was sometimes difficult to determine if the activity was suspicious, but the College's 'lockout' system and multi-factor authentication (MFA) provided additional security.

AC21.2.6 Update on Cyber Security

The DPO/IT Manager's report was an update taken from the point that JISC audit was undertaken. He spoke to his written report. The JISC audit had resulted in a number of recommendations and actions, some critical and urgent and others of a lower level of importance and he explained these, and some of which were very costly.

A Governor asked if the IT Manager could explain how College balanced operational continuity with shutting down systems due to hackers and the risk they propose. The IT Manager explained that the first action is to disconnect the internet, which would affect cloud-based systems. He explained this can be time intensive with firstly a major impact and then a tail of smaller knock-on effects later. The managers commented that that would continue to be picked up and considered further under the BCP.

AC21.2.7 Annual Freedom of Information Report

The IT Manager spoke to his report noting that this year all FoI requests were new categories including those regarding storing of personal information/biometrics, CCTV, LGBTQ+ etc.

A Governor asked if the College received many from media, which the IT Manager confirmed, plus pressure groups pertaining to staff or students. The DPO advised that appropriate members of staff are consulted and input to responses.

The committee thanked the DPO/IT Manager for his reports, and he left the meeting at 5.09pm.

AC21.2.8 Internal Audit Reports

Key Financial Controls. The FD handed over to Scott McCready from auditors Wylie Bissett. Scott conveyed thanks to the College for the appointment to undertake the audit. He explained that the audit referred to the financial year ending July 2021, but this audit was an annual one. He explained the purpose of the report and how the levels of assurance worked, the report's objectives, scope and benchmarking. The conclusion was outlined on page 9, it included 2 medium level recommendations, and one low, and some good practice points. The report he pointed out provided a substantial level of assurance.

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He spoke to the recommendations which were around reviewing and updating the financial regulations, methodologies and guidance (segregation of duties); to review the fixed asset register and keep it updated; and a low level recommendation on recording of BACS payments. The auditor overall reiterated that the report set out a good audit opinion, and the FD commented that that was reassuring.

A Governor who had been unable to be present had raised a question about authorisation of changes to payroll, on which the FD would go back to the Governor.

A Governor asked the auditor to suggest possible practical processes for keeping the fixed asset register up to date.

The AC Chair reminded the committee that the updated financial regulations would come to the AC in June 2022.

The FD advised that work would begin fairly soon on the next financial controls audit (to end of July 2022) that would come to the committee together with the financial statements in November 2022, with the planning information to come to AC in June where possible.

With thanks from the committee, the auditor left the meeting at 5.31pm.

AC21.2.9 Audit Assurance Mapping

The FD gave an overview and purpose of the assurance map and the various different materials linked to assurance mapping (risk register, College strategic plan, internal audit plan) all to provide the Audit committee that College is undertaking a robust risk management process and to support committees to decide what additional assurance may be required.

The FD spoke to the various updates shown on the assurance map starting at SP3, including new roles, and staff development.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the external review of governance, required during 2022/23 would provide the Corporation with a key piece of assurance going forward.

AC21.2.10 Review Risk Register/Action Plan and termly update 2021/22

The FD took the meeting through the risk register commenting that there were many updates to mitigating controls and scoring, but she drew the committee's attention to the new risks or removed risks.

There was a question from a Governor around mental health training and the FD updated the committee on the new posts related to wellbeing.

Alex Wong left the meeting at 5.57pm and the Clerk advised the meeting had become an advisory meeting (not quorate).

There was a short discussion on planning into rooming and access arrangements for examinations and the resources available for this.

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The committee thanked the managers for comprehensive updates/documents.

The committee briefly touched on training for new AC members, and the Clerk commented that she would be monitoring and feeding back on this.

AC21.2.11 Post-16 Audit Code of Practice (P16ACOP) 2020 to 2021

The Clerk advised that the P16ACOP for the current year (2021/22) had not been made yet available.

The Clerk was keen to draw the committee's attention to the version in use, the requirements of which were already inbuilt into the committee's Terms of Reference and work plan. The ESFA, auditors, and networks would continue to carefully flag up anything relevant to the Code or any new developments relevant to the work of the committee.

The AC Chair had drawn new members' attention to the scope of the audit committee included in the guidance.

AC21.2.12 Governance Improvement Plan 2021/22

The Clerk had further updated the GIP since the recent Board meeting. In relation to item 5 a Governor commented that risk was being discussed throughout all aspects of the Corporation function. It was agreed that training for new Corporation members on risk and assurance would be important.

AC21.2.13 Any other business

None. The AC Chair made a heartfelt thanks to Independent Governor Alison Miles whose last meeting this was before she retired from the Corporation. The AC Chair was keen to ensure the membership maintained a level of diversity throughout the process to recruit new members. He also commented that the committee needed to think about arrangements for meetings during 2022/23 (virtual, physical or a mixture across the year). The GSC would discuss this further on 29 March. Subsequently he suggested that a 5pm start would be helpful.

AC21.2.14 Date of next meeting

AC21.3 Wednesday 22 June 2022. The AC thanked Alison Miles for her input, as this was her last AC meeting. The meeting closed at 6.25pm.