

Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting held on 25th March 2020

VIA TELECONFERENCE 3.30pm – 4.30pm

Members Present: Eddie Weiss (Chair), Nick Bevan

In Attendance: John McGrath (Vice Principal, Corporate Services) (VPCS), Karen Mitchell (Principal), Anna Smith (Clerk)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were **Noted** from Andrew King.

There were no new declarations of interest relevant to the business of the Committee.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chair welcomed Nick Bevan as a new member of the Committee. Rabia Bhatti's second term of office as an Independent Member of the Corporation (and Audit Committee member) had ended on 20th March 2020.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2019 AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were **Approved** as a correct record.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT

For the benefit of the new Committee member, the VPCS explained the standard risk register usually reviewed by the Committee and informed members that the current focus of risk management to consider is the potential financial impact Covid-19 may have on the College as detailed in the report. The remote working environment seems to be running well with positive feedback from staff and good attendance from students to online learning sessions. In consideration of the report, the following queries were raised:

Q. How do we know learners are online and attending lessons?

A. Moodle tracks when learners have logged on and off so we can keep track of attendance. In terms of exams, awarding bodies are considering events and developing plans to inform colleges.

Q. Is the system (for remote working/online learning) expensive?

A. It is an extension of what the College already uses so only a small amount of expenditure has been required to allow for more usage.

Q. Is Moodle managed internally and are all staff used to using Moodle?

A. The College has used the VLE for many years and it is managed by a strong Learning Technology team. The majority of teachers use Moodle on a regular basis and the Learning Technology team are running webinars to provide tutorials for those less experienced with the software.

Q. What is happening for courses which have to be delivered in College such as Motor Vehicle?

A. There is a large amount of theory work with all courses and students are working through this with the practical work being planned for the end of the year. If lessons are still not possible by then, staff are considering options such as learners coming in in small groups to do the practical sessions.

Staff working remotely has been a big change for many and there is lots of support available including guides for remote working; TechSupport online; and HR keeping in touch. The main focus is on ensuring continuous communication.

The College is open for learning but all campuses buildings are closed. The nursery and life skills centres at Aylesbury and Wycombe remain open for key workers children and vulnerable learners.

Q. Are there any potential savings by being closed which could offset spending?

A. Yes, for example agency numbers have reduced significantly and there are savings in staff travel claims.

Q. I presume this will have a knock on effect on the 2020/21 budget?

A. Recruitment for Autumn will have an impact on 2021/22 budget due to lagged funding.

The effect on student recruitment and impact this would have on funding was discussed and the Principal confirmed that to date applications are ahead of the same time last year. Virtual open evenings are scheduled and all applicants are being contacted to provide reassurance of their September starting dates.

The Committee **Noted** the report and thanked the VPCS for the work being carried out to minimise risks to the College's finances.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME

The VPCS explained the background of the internal audit process and directed members to the internal audit programme which had largely been scheduled to accommodate the internal auditors availability. Given the current circumstances the Committee were asked to consider the importance of each audit and agree their prioritisation. Members entered into discussion including the following points:

- The feasibility of audits being conducted offsite was discussed. Safeguarding needs to be done in College; some of the Payroll audit can be done remotely.
- The MIS Funding audit will allow the MIS team to have a view of apprenticeship funding and how the College is dealing with the changes to framework rules so the VPCS will be guided by the Executive Director of MIS on when she would like this to be carried out.
- Query was raised over the risks of delaying audits until next academic year and the VPCS explained that the Committee needs to provide reassurance of the College's internal controls in its annual report and such reassurance is gained through the internal audits.

After lengthy discussion and consideration of priorities, the Committee agreed the following:

- Subcontracting audit to be carried out (must be completed by 31/7/20).
- MIS Funding audit to remain as timetabled or as directed by the Executive Director of MIS (July 2020).
- Safeguarding and Payroll audits to be deferred to the earliest opportunity in 2020/21.

6. EXTERNAL AUDITORS TENDER

This item is recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

7. LENNARTZ VAT

This item is recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

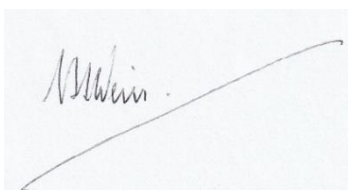
One item of discussion is recorded in the Confidential Minutes.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17th June 2020 at 5.30pm (subject to change)

Approved as an accurate record of discussions.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Min', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Date: 24th June 2020