

Audit Committee Minutes

Meeting	Audit Committee	Date	26 th November 2024
Location	Broadstairs Executive Board Room	Time	9.30 am
Membership	Peter Cheney [Chair], Carmel Togher, Jason Howard		
In Attendance	<p>Chris Legg (CL) – Chief Financial Officer Paul Sayers (PS) – Chief Information and Strategy Officer Lucy McLeod (LM) – Deputy Chief Executive Officer Sharon Hollingworth (SH) – Group Director of Governance Jack Collinson (JC) – Group Director of Corporate Services Nicole Leader (NL) – Minutes Clerk Katherine Patel (KP) – Buzzacott, items 3-6 Barry Boden (BB) – Group Director, item 10</p> <p>Business Committee members in attendance for item 5 & 6 (9.45am) Charles Buchanan – Chair of Full Governing Body Graham Razey, CEO – Governor Gail Clarke – Governor Miranda Chapman – Governor</p>		

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jason Howard as a new committee member and Lucy McLeod, Deputy Chief Executive Officer as an Officer in attendance. Jack Collinson, Group Director of Corporate Services attended the meeting as an observer.	
2	Declaration of Interests	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	

3	Independent Meeting with the External Auditors <i>Officers not in attendance</i>	<p>KP joined the meeting and introductions were made.</p> <p>[CL, PS, LM, SH, JC, NL left the meeting at 10.00am]</p> <p>The Chair reminded members that this item gives the Committee an opportunity to meet with the external auditor's independent to the Officers in attendance.</p> <p>The independent governors met with Katherine Patel of Buzzacotts. She confirmed that the conduct of the Audit went smoothly and there was nothing she felt needed to be brought to the attention of the independent members of the committee. She confirmed that there were no developments for Audit or Accounting Standards coming forward in 2025 which we should note.</p>	
4	Audit Committee Development session to include Post-16 Audit Code of Practice	KP confirmed that there were no developments for Audit or Accounting Standards coming forward in 2025 which we should note.	
5	5.1 Group Financial Statements & Management report to 31 July 2024 5.2 Draft Letter of Representations - Group 5.3 Post Audit Report - Group	<p>Feedback on external audit process was provided. Full details can be found in Confidential Minutes Part A, item 5.</p> <p>AGREED: The Audit Committee recommend the Financial Statements and Management Reports to 31 July 2024 be approved and signed by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Accounting Officer.</p> <p>AGREED: The Audit Committee recommend that the Audit Representation Letter be signed by the Chair of the Governing Body and the Chief Accounting Officer.</p>	
6	6.1 Yarrow Hotel Limited Report Financial Statements to 31 July 2024	The Committee reviewed the Yarrow Hotel Financial Statements & Management Reports to 31 July 2024. There were no concerns raised, and governors were comfortable to present the accounts at the Full Governing Body meeting for approval and signature.	

	6.2 Draft Letter of Representations – Yarrow Hotel Limited	AGREED: The Yarrow Hotel Financial Statements & Management Reports to 31 July 2024 to be reviewed and signed.	
7	Minutes of the meeting held 25 June 2024.	<p>The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 25 June 2024 were reviewed by Committee members.</p> <p>Confidential minutes – it was confirmed that the Education and Skills Funding Agency has completed the Eastchurch investigation, and the matter has been resolved.</p> <p>The Committee approved the minutes as a true and fair account of the meeting. The minutes and confidential minutes will be signed by the Chair following the meeting.</p>	
8	Matters Arising not covered by this agenda:	<p><u>Item 14, follow-up from VAT Partial Reclaim</u></p> <p>Claim submitted and the Group await response from the HMRC.</p>	
9	Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee	<p>The Committee reviewed the Audit Committee Terms of Reference, the following updates were noted</p> <p>2.1 Membership to include Deputy Chief Executive as an Officer in attendance</p> <p>8.2 papers and minutes stored within Board intelligence.</p> <p>It was clarified that the meeting papers and minutes will be stored in Board Intelligence. The intention is to move away from the Governors intranet site to Board Intelligence. Currently using both while transferring.</p> <p>AGREED: Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee.</p>	
10	Cyber Essentials Accreditation Report	This item was considered confidential and will form Confidential Minutes PART A.	

11	Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee Report	<p>CL presented the minutes of the Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee (RAC) meeting for transparency and to offer assurance that matters are discussed by management.</p> <p>The committee noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal audit plan updated to include an audit of the exams process. - Ownership of the items within the Risk register reviewed at Group Leadership Board. - It was agreed at the RAC Committee to share the Cyber-Essentials report with Audit Committee (item 10). <p>NOTED: Risk, Audit and Compliance Committee Report</p>	
12	<p>12.1 Annual Audit Report by Chair including agreement to signoff Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire by Accounting Officer and Chair of Governors</p> <p>12.2 Appendix 1 – Audit Committee Self-Assessment Evaluation</p> <p>12.3 Appendix 2 - Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire</p>	<p>The Group Director of Governance presented the Annual Audit Report which summarises the work of the Audit Committee and offers assurance to the Full Governing Body that the Committee is meeting its responsibilities.</p> <p>The Chair explained to new members of the committee the purpose and framework which informs and gives assurances to the Full Governing Body that audit committee are carrying out the work to advise Governors to sign off the financial statements and regularity statement.</p> <p>AGREED: The Annual Audit Committee Report 2023-24, to be presented to the Full Governing Body on 10 December 2024</p> <p>APPROVED: Governors approved the Regularity Self-Assessment questionnaire for signature by the Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the Governing Body.</p>	

13	Financial Regulations update	<p>CL provided a verbal update regarding the Financial Regulations.</p> <p>This is an annual update with no changes to report on the regulations but assured the committee that they have been thoroughly reviewed.</p> <p>The committee was informed that a full review will be warranted early in the new year when the internal changes within the Group have taken place.</p> <p>NOTED: Financial Regulations update</p>	
14	<p>14.1 Risk Management Report</p> <p>14.2 Risk Register</p> <p>14.3 Residual Risk Movement map</p>	<p>PS presented the Risk Management Report and asked the committee to note the following:</p> <p>The ownership of the items within the Risk Register were reviewed at GLB and responsibility allocated to relevant members of GLB. GLB agreed that leads would be involved in a termly review moving forward.</p> <p>Assurance controls have been updated in risk 4 to include reference to energy brokers pro-actively buying energy to ensure best value</p> <p>Risk 8 updated to reference the annual cyber assurance health check.</p> <p>Risk 10 strategic priority risk updated to include the finding of data issues and potential claw back and the investment in the Management Information and Funding team to improve student data. The committee was assured that the termly compliance panels are now in place to support the improvement of the accuracy of student data.</p> <p>Risk register to be reviewed again at the December RAC Committee meeting.</p> <p>NOTED: Governors noted the Risk Management Report.</p>	
15	Policy Update:	PS presented the Treasury Management Policy:	

	Treasury Management Policy	<p>The Committee noted that the Treasury Management policy had been updated to include the impact of the ONS re-classification and to reflect that the Group are not able to commercially borrow. The policy has also been updated with job titles and the amendment of the Group name to East Kent Colleges Group.</p> <p>APPROVED: Governors approved the Treasury Management Policy.</p>	
16	Governing Body Audit Plan 2024/2025	<p>A recent meeting was held between the Committee Chair and the Group's Finance Team without the Chief Financial Officer being present. This was deemed a positive meeting by those in attendance.</p> <p>Block one agreed as financial management and controls, scope of the audit has been agreed with internal auditors.</p> <p>Block two will include an Exams Process Assurance Audit. Azets, the Groups Internal auditors are currently reviewing the scope for this work, the fees for this audit are still to be confirmed.</p> <p>It was reported that the Procurement Act is to change early in the next year, the financial regulations will be updated to reflect the forthcoming changes.</p> <p>Audit Budget confirmed as £21,000 Inc VAT.</p> <p>The committee was asked if they have any thoughts on areas to include in the Audit Plan to please share with PC and CL.</p> <p>Audit plan to be updated for the next RAC Committee meeting and FGB meeting.</p> <p>NOTED – Governors noted the updated Governing Body Audit Plan for 2024-2025</p>	
17	Any Other Business	No other business raised.	
18	Matters Considered Confidential	Items 5 (part) and 10 were considered confidential and will form the confidential minutes PART A.	

19	Date and time of next meeting	Tuesday, 4 th March 2025 at 9.30am, at Folkestone College Boardroom.	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.10am.

Signed:



Print:

F. P. CHEVEY

Date:

4/3/2025