

Kirklees College Corporation

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held at 1500 on Wednesday 12 March 2025 in B05009, Waterfront, Huddersfield Centre

Present:	J Clement Walters A Conn J Firth A Fell	Independent Member (Chair) Independent Member Independent Member Co-opted Member There
Attendance:	4/4 = 75%	KPI 80%
In attendance:	P Doherty J Arechiga P Lucarz J Riley D Lenton	Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (Items 1 – 12) Deputy Principal Curriculum & Innovation (Items 1 – 12) Executive Director People & Culture (Items 1 - 5) Payroll Compensation & HR Systems Manager (Item 5) Audit & Compliance Manager (Item 8)
In virtual attendance:	R Lewis S Pringle P Sugden R Harwood	RSM (external audit) representative (Items 01 – 12) WBG (internal audit) representative (Items 01 – 12) Executive Director of Estates & Facilities (Item 9) Head of Health & Safety (Item 9)

Item	Item	Action
01	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS The Chair opened the meeting and introductions were made.	
(i)	NOTICE AND QUORUM Due notice of the meeting had been given and the meeting was quorate.	
(ii)	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies for absence.	
(iii)	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No declarations of interest were received.	
02	CLOSED SESSION WITH AUDITORS TO DISCUSS MATTERS RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S REMIT & ANY ISSUES ARISING FROM AUDITS Action: R Lewis, RSM external audit representative, to report back on the treatment of accounting accruals in previous financial statements.	
1510	<i>P Singh, J Arechiga, P Doherty and P Lucarz joined the meeting.</i>	

Item	Item	Action
1	<p>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the management team to the meeting and introductions were made.</p>	
2	<p>APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>RESOLVED: the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2024 were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising that were not on the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that the confidential annex to the minutes would be discussed under Item 12.</p>	
2.1	<p>UPDATE ON AGREED ACTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completed internal audit reports to be scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee. Actioned (Agenda Items 5 & 6) 2. A 'deep dive' into the People and Culture risk be scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee. Actioned (Agenda Item 3) 3. The work of the Internal Audit and Compliance Team in providing an additional layer of funding assurance to be referenced in the Committee's annual report. Actioned 4. CARRY FORWARD The assignment of the Data Protection Officer role to be reviewed by ELT. Update at Item 10 5. The investigation process outlined in Section 2 of the Whistleblowing Policy be reviewed to provide greater clarity. Update at Item 13 	
3	<p>STRATEGIC RISK REVIEW</p> <p>3.1 P Doherty (PD), Deputy Principal Finance & Resources, presented a report in relation to the People & Culture strategic risk: <i>Failure to ensure the necessary resources, workforce skills, culture and regulatory compliance to support the college's transition to excellence.</i></p> <p>3.2 The report included a schematic diagram detailing the risk causes, controls and assurances as recorded in the strategic risk register.</p> <p>3.3 P Lucarz (PL), Executive Director, People & Culture was also present and opened the discussion by emphasizing that the risk register was a dynamic and evolving document actively used by the team on an operational basis.</p> <p>3.4 It was agreed that the identified causes were robust and there was a solid understanding of controls. However, control assurance remained a work in progress and it was agreed that focus should now be placed on the identification and monitoring of key control assurances to ensure that they were correct and working effectively to mitigate risk.</p> <p>3.5 It was agreed that this targeted approach would be beneficial for other</p>	Synopsis 1

Item	Item	Action
3.6	committees, who might not be as familiar with risk monitoring at this level, to focus on their areas of responsibility. The outcomes of their work would be reported to the Audit Committee, which would maintain an overarching focus on risk management and report to the Corporation, providing triangulation and an additional level of confidence. Action: Future strategic risk reviews to focus on the identification and monitoring of key control assurances.	PD
3.7	RESOLVED: Following a review of the People & Culture strategic risk, the Committee are satisfied by the assurances provided.	
4	STRATEGIC RISK REPORT	Synopsis 1
4.1	P Doherty, Deputy Principal Finance & Resources, presented a report on the College's strategic risk management.	
4.2	The committee reviewed the ongoing strategic risk management, considered the strategic risk appetite, considered the initial audit plan for 2024/25, along with the draft Risk Management Policy and Procedures.	
4.3	Members were assured of the ongoing strategic risk management and were satisfied with the target scores. Funding remained the highest risk, and it was agreed not to lower the residual risk score at this stage.	
4.4	As with the previous risk discussion, the committee believed that the identified controls were strong and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the control measures and assurances were in place and functioning effectively to avoid complacency.	
4.5	Regarding the college's strategic risk appetite, it was agreed that it was crucial not to stifle growth by being overly risk averse. The committee highlighted the risk register as a useful tool and suggested that the Corporation may wish to review its approach to risk to ensure that growth and innovation is not stifled by an overly risk averse approach.	
4.6	The committee was satisfied with the internal audit plan and agreed that it should include a review of funding, given its risk profile per the strategic risk register.	
4.7	Following the committee's discussions, it was proposed that a review of the control assurances included in the risk register should be part of the plan, replacing the governance review, as governance was already undergoing an external review.	
4.8	In concluding consideration of the report, the committee noted the revised Risk Management Policy and Procedures and recommended to Corporation for approval.	
4.9	Action: A review of the college's strategic risk register's control assurances to be considered for inclusion on the internal audit plan 2025/26 in place of the governance review.	PD

Item	Item	Action
4.10	<p>RESOLVED: The Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is assured of the College's ongoing strategic risk management; 2. Proposes that the current target risk scores be recommended to Corporation for approval, but suggests that the Corporation may wish to review its' approach to risk to avoid stifling innovation; 3. Notes the initial audit plan for 2025/26 but proposes replacing the governance review with a review of the risk register's control assurances; and 4. Notes the annual review of the College's Risk Management Policy and Procedures and recommends to Corporation for approval. 	
1630	<i>J Riley, Payroll Compensation & HR Systems Manager, joined the meeting</i>	
5	<p>INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – PAYROLL</p> <p>5.1 S Pringle, WBG, presented a report which set out the findings of the review of the college's payroll system to ensure that appropriate controls were in place for the administration of part-time hourly paid staff.</p> <p>5.2 WBG were able to provide a substantial level of assurance surrounding the college's usage of part-time paid staff. One medium grade and one low grade recommendations for improvement had been raised and accepted by the college.</p> <p>5.3 The Committee were assured that the People & Culture team had undertaken a thorough audit to ensure that all contracts were signed prior to people starting in post and a live recruitment tracker had been introduced to build in further discipline.</p> <p>5.4 RESOLVED: The Committee welcomes the findings of the review.</p>	Synopsis 2
6	<p>INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - SKILLS RESPONSIVENESS & BUSINESS GROWTH</p> <p>6.1 S Pringle, WBG, presented a report which set out the findings of the review which evaluated the College's ability to adapt and respond to evolving skill requirements and market demands. This included assessing the effectiveness of training and development programs,</p> <p>6.2 WBG were able to provide the College with a strong level of assurance surrounding the response to local skills needs and business development in support of the College's strategic objectives. They had raised several good practice points and no recommendations for improvement.</p> <p>6.3 RESOLVED: The Committee welcomes the finding of the review and congratulates the External Relations team on their efforts.</p>	Synopsis 2
1637	<i>P Lucarz & J Riley left the meeting.</i>	

Item	Item	Action
7	PLANNED AUDIT ACTIONS REVIEW	Synopsis 3
7.1	P Doherty presented a paper which provided an update on the College's progress in implementing audit recommendations.	
7.2	The Committee acknowledged the excellent progress made, with only one outstanding recommendation arising from a Payroll internal audit report in December 2024.	
7.3	RESOLVED: The Committee noted the update on the implementation of audit recommendations and welcomed the progress made.	
1640	<i>D Lenton, Director of MIS & Exams joined the meeting</i>	
8	FUNDING ASSURANCE REPORT	Synopsis 4
8.1	D Lenton (DL) Director of MIS & Exams presented a report which provided an update on the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) funding assurance and audit compliance.	
8.2	Members welcomed the progress made and RL (RSM) commented on the quality of information provided and the level of assurance that it provided.	
8.3	RESOLVED: The Committee welcomed the funding assurance report and the quality of reporting provided.	
1650	<i>D Lenton left the meeting.</i> <i>P Sugden, Executive Director of Estates & Facilities and R Harwood, Head of Health and Safety joined the meeting via video link</i>	
9	HEALTH & SAFETY COMPLIANCE REPORT	Synopsis 5
9.1	R Harwood (RH), Head of Health and Safety, presented a report which set out the health and safety compliance performance during the period 1 November 2024 to 14 February 2025.	
9.2	In introducing the report, RH thanked the Executive Leadership Team and the Committee for their support in advancing health and safety reporting and culture. Key headlines were highlighted and members were advised of measures to ensure compliance with the wearing of personal protective equipment.	
9.3	The Committee noted that suppliers with outstanding certification were not being paid and that service level agreements which stipulated the requirement for timely certification were being put in place as contracts were re-tendered.	
9.4	It was noted that this was RH's last meeting as he was leaving the college for a new employment opportunity. The Committee thanked RH for their work in transforming the health and safety culture of the college.	
9.5	RESOLVED: The Committee noted the health and safety compliance update and had no concerns of note.	

Item	Item	Action
1700	<i>P Sugden and R Harwood left the meeting</i>	
10	DATA PROTECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT	Synopsis 6
10.1	C Tague (CT), Director of Governance and Compliance and Data Protection Officer (DPO), presented an overview of data protection compliance since the previous report to the Committee on 27 November 2024.	
10.2	In response to a question as to the Committee's recommendation from October 2024 to review of the assignment of the DPO role, PD confirmed that the Vice Principal - Business Systems Information and Technology was leading on this.	
10.3	Upon reviewing the report, the increase in reported data breaches was seen as a positive development as was the increase in data management enquiries. The significant rise in freedom of information requests was also noted.	
10.4	When considering proposals to require governors to use college email addresses, the committee felt that this could undermine the efficiency of the governance function, particularly as the introduction of the Team Engine board portal with 2-factor authentication had added greater security to governor communications.	
10.5	RESOLVED: The Committee noted the information presented.	
11	FRAUD REGISTER REPORT No items were reported.	
12	PUBLICATION OF AGENDA PAPERS It was agreed that all documents marked confidential on the meeting agenda should remain confidential.	
1715	<i>P Singh, P Doherty, J Arechiga, S Pringle, R Lewis & H Cross left the meeting.</i>	
13	APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING The meeting moved into closed session for Committee Members to discuss the confidential annex to the minutes of the meeting on 27 November 2025. <i>The details of the discussion are considered confidential and therefore the discussion is recorded in a confidential and restricted annex marked Annex 1, 12/03/2025.</i>	
	MEETING CLOSED There being no further business, the Chair thanked the Committee and declared the meeting closed at 1730.	

Agreed Actions				
	Who	Action	Min	By
1	RL	R Lewis, RSM external audit representative, to report back on the treatment of accounting accruals in previous financial statements.	02	Next meeting
2	PD	Future strategic risk review exercises to focus on the identification and monitoring of key control assurances	3.6	Ongoing
3	PD	A review of the college's strategic risk register control assurances to be considered for inclusion on the internal audit plan 2025/26 in place of the governance review.	4.9	Next meeting

Items of report for Corporation		Min
1	<p>It is the responsibility of the Committee to assess and provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Corporation's assurance arrangements, which includes its' risk management and control processes.</p> <p>A key component of the College's risk management framework is the College's strategic risk register, through which strategic risks are owned and monitored by the Risk Management Group (RMG) (the Executive Leadership Team plus the Director of Governance & Compliance).</p> <p>The Committee reviewed a summary of inherent, residual and target risk scores for each of the 13 strategic risks contained within the register and carried out an in-depth review of the People & Culture strategic risk.</p> <p>The Committee is satisfied that the identified risks and risk causes are robust and suggests that an in-depth focus should now be given to the identification and monitoring of controls and assurances to ensure that they have been correctly identified and are working effectively.</p> <p>This more targeted approach should be of assistance to other committees, who may not be as familiar with risk monitoring at this level, in carrying out strategic risk reviews on their areas of responsibility.</p> <p>In order to provide further assurance in this respect, the Committee has recommended that a review of the college's strategic risk register control assurances be considered for inclusion in the internal audit plan 2025/26 in place of a governance review, as this is an area which is already undergoing an external review.</p> <p>The Committee can provide assurance as to the rigour of the risk management process and recommends the current target risk scores to Corporation for approval, with the suggestion that the Corporation may wish to review its' approach to risk to ensure that it does not stifle growth and innovation by being overly risk averse.</p> <p>The Committee also recommends the College's Risk Management Policy and Procedures to Corporation for approval, following its' annual review.</p>	Items 3 & 4

Items of report for Corporation		Min
2	<p>The Committee received the findings of the internal auditor's review of the college's (i) administration of the payroll system for part-time hourly paid staff; (ii) and ability to adapt and respond to evolving skill requirements and market demands.</p> <p>WBG were able to provide a substantial level of assurance surrounding the college's usage of part-time paid staff. One medium grade and one low grade recommendations for improvement had been raised and accepted by the college. The Committee has no concerns to report and will monitor the implementation of the agreed actions.</p> <p>WBG were able to provide the College with a strong level of assurance surrounding the response to local skills needs and business development in support of the College's strategic objectives. They raised several good practice points and no recommendations for improvement. The Committee congratulates the External Relations team on their efforts.</p>	Items 5 & 6
3	A progress report was received on the implementation of previous internal audit recommendations and acknowledged the excellent progress made, with only one outstanding recommendation arising from a Payroll internal audit report in December 2024.	Item 7
4	<p>The Committee welcomed the funding assurance report which provided an update on the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) funding assurance and audit compliance.</p> <p>The Committee were pleased to receive a comment from the external auditor's representative as to the quality of information provided and the level of assurance therein.</p>	Item 8
5	The Committee received the health and safety compliance report and has no concerns to report. The Committee noted that this was the Head of Health & Safety's last meeting and thanked them for their work in transforming the health and safety culture of the college.	Item 9
6	<p>The Committee received the data protection compliance report and sought progress on a previous action to review the assignment of the Data Protection Officer role.</p> <p>The Committee considered that a proposal to require governors to use college email addresses could undermine the efficiency of the governance function, particularly as the introduction of the Team Engine board portal with 2-factor authentication had added greater security to governor communications.</p>	Item 10