

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON Wednesday 26 February 2025 at 8.00 on Teams

Present: Karl Banister, Sarah Ediss, Helen Smith, Dom Valente

In attendance: Members of SMT - Ian Dumbleton (FD), Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum) Item 6a only, Dan Lodge (Principal), Steve Martell (DP) Items 1-6a only

Russha Sellings (Director of Governance), Christian Garland (IT Manager) Items 1-5 only

External attendees: Scott McCready, Shaun Rhoddan (Wbg) Item 5 only

In the Chair: Dom Valente

1. Chair Introductions and Apologies for Absence

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed members including Helen Smith who was new to the Committee. Karl Banister was not present at the start of the meeting, arriving at 8.15.

Christian Garland introduced himself as IT manager and would provide an update under Item 5(ii).

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of the agenda items.

3. Minutes of the meeting 26 November 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Matters Arising

Item 7(iv) Actions following audit observations

The FD provided updates on follow up actions arising from the External Auditor's recommendations, including the procedure for items ordered by IT and the use of the College credit card for purchases. A member reiterated the importance of financial controls over the ordering process specifically to ensure orders did not exceed the agreed limit and remained in IT's remit. The FD said the risk could be considered relatively low due to limits on the credit card and invited the IT Manager to comment, however it was concluded accurate record keeping such as checking invoices was the most appropriate level of control. The FD referred to the implementation of the new finance system which would automate the purchasing processes.

[8.10 – Scott McCready was welcomed to the meeting and introduced his colleague Shaun Rhoddan]

5. Internal Audit / Board Assurance

Paper: Cyber security audit review

i) Internal audit reviews

Wbg presented key findings from their most recently published audit review and one other review had recently been concluded.

ii) Cyber Security

This review provided substantial assurance using the National Cyber Security Centre's (NCSC) guidance framework with seven recommendations. The number of audit recommendations were compared to the benchmark albeit the total number of was higher, the majority were lower level recommendations. The Internal Auditors considered it common in cyber security reviews for the

number of recommendations to be high given this to be the case due to the need for the wide-ranging nature of cyber and robust controls. There were also several areas of good practice to note.

[8.15 – Karl Banister joined the meeting]

The internal Auditors covered off the single medium rated key recommendations relating to the need to include improving the server infrastructure and low rated recommendations covering, fire suppression systems, cyber security refresher training such as phishing campaigns, supply chain security, incident management and data leakage prevention. The IT Manager was invited to comment, and he explained the server upgrade implementation. Progress had been made on all other areas and the intention was to take a student-centred approach setting Collyer's as a gold standard with a view to academisation and the development of trust level Professional Services.

Members agreed the report was very thorough and rigorous and they took comfort from the quality of the IT Manager's response plan. One member enquired about the risk scoring and the process of corroboration of the findings with that of other colleges. The Internal Auditors made reference to the grading structure in the report and explained the team approach of sharing experience and best practice. It was further questioned whether College's insurance provider covered instances of cyber attacks and the FD responded that the College was well covered by the policy.

iii) Upcoming audits

There was a brief update on the recent Performance Management audit, which had one low-level finding and a strong overall conclusion in the draft report.

[8.35 – The IT Manager and Internal Auditors were thanked for the updates and departed the meeting]

[8.35 – The VP (Curriculum) joined the meeting for the next item]

6. Risk Management Update inc:

Papers: EQR (BTEC Sport), RMG minutes 03-02-25, College-wide Risks, External Risk Register

a) EQR (BTEC Sport)

The VP (Curriculum) presented the report. It was noted that students undertaking the extended programme performed better than those taking the single subject BTEC. There was a discussion on the suitability of the extended certificate qualification and areas for improvement in questioning, homework and exam performance. Following the EQR, the Director and Assistant Director of Faculty would work with the Head of Subject to draw up a suitable action plan. However, at this stage the focus was on exam performance. Adjusting the curriculum intent was not in scope given the appropriateness of this approach with the career pathways for students. Members thanked the VP (Curriculum) for the update.

[8.44 – The VP (Curriculum) and DP departed the meeting]

b) *RMG minutes 03-02-25

Noted as a consent item.

i) College-wide risks

The Principal explained the risk scores were largely the same, at this stage there was less opportunity to impact or reduce residual risk further. Members discussed the risk by area:

- B.3 (Payroll Risk) – it was pleasing to note recent news that the pay award was settled although the Principal cautioned that it was not technically agreed by unions at this point and there would continue to be a period of negotiations in collective bargaining.
- B.4 – (Accommodation space relative to growth) Members heard applications were up again which was positive. However, the Tech Centre had not progressed beyond the design stage therefore space in the interim would be challenging. The Principal explained

some of the mitigations. For completeness, members requested it be more explicit in the Risk Register that the pressures on social and study space be made more explicit in the Risk Register. The Principal agreed to update the Risk Register. **(Action: Principal)**

- B.5 (Data breach/security risk) – Members agreed with the assessment that the residual risks should remain amber. They were satisfied with the IT Manager’s response and future plans, however it was recognised that there were always improvements to be made in relation to ongoing threats.
- C.3 (Underperforming subjects) – work in progress. The Principal referred to the recently published DfE data that put the College as a top state provider of A-Levels in the county. BTEC results were also higher than last year.
- C.4 (Adult Education/Viability/Ofsted) – a position paper would be presented to F&GP and Q&C Committees on the management of risk and the scrutiny level relative to the overall proportion of the College’s provision.
- F.5 (Finance system suitability) – the FD reported good progress in conjunction with the Forest School. Prospective primary schools had also been consulted on the final selection. Members considered whether the risk profile should adjust to focus on the actual implementation which carried more risk now that a suitable system had been identified.
- G.1 (Academy conversion) – the GD referred to a similar position on academy conversion now the approval had been secured, the risks had pivoted to converting in time for 1 September and the mitigations now being in the main internally managed.
- P.2 (Supporting students with EHCPs) – in response to the notable increase, members heard the new role of SEND Manager had been created and an internal appointment made.

[8.58 – Karl Banister departed the meeting]

ii) External Strategic Risks

The Principal explained that the Government’s policy and vision for education was becoming clearer including the future of Ofsted. Members enquired about the impact of the draft Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill in relation the College’s strategic direction. The Principal responded that press coverage had caused some confusion about the position and freedoms of the academy sector, however this was unlikely to directly impact the new trust. The current focus was progressing a strong employee value proposition with flexible working and talent management as part of the responsibility of becoming a larger employer in the town.

Recommendation: Refer to the Governing Body on key risks and mitigations at their next meeting.

iii) Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity

The Principal provided a verbal update. There were no significant changes to the plan, however the Estates team had conducted a full review.

7. AOB

None to report.

8. Meeting Assessment

Members commented that there had been a good balance between papers and input from relevant speakers. They wished the College management team all the best for the forthcoming inspection.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would next meet on Monday 16 June 2025, 16.00 in person at Collyer’s.

The meeting closed at 9.25am

Chair.....

Date.....

RRS 12-03-25