

Item 14 of these minutes are deemed to be CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of Instrument 14(4) and 16(2) as they contain business sensitive information. These minutes are not available for public circulation and are held separately by the Clerk to the Corporation.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 4TH MARCH 2024

Present

Greg Clarke	Governor
Peter Grant	Governor
Preetha Kumar	Governor (Joined at 5.24pm)
Paul Pascoe	Co-opted Member
Philippa Poland	Governor
Mark Swales	Governor
Lee Walker	Governor (Chair)

The quorum for the meeting was 40% of membership (at least 4 members). The meeting was quorate.

In attendance

Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People & Information
Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Paul Smith	Director of IT Infrastructure
Mark Hatton	Director of Business Systems & Information
Robert Knowles	RSM
Ryan Falls	Cavanagh Kelly

The meeting was held via MS Teams and commenced 5.00 pm.

Item	Minute	Action
------	--------	--------

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Lee Tillman, Governor.

2 Declarations of Interest

Members should declare any personal or financial obligation, allegiance or loyalty which would in any way affect decisions in relation to the subjects under discussion.

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 27 November 2023

The minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 27 November 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record.

Matters arising

Item 9 – Members noted the new compliance review model was on the agenda for this meeting.

Item 10 - The Clerk confirmed that the Staff Health and Wellbeing audit report was on the agenda for the 6th March 2024 People and Transformation committee meeting.

Item	Minute	Action
------	--------	--------

Members discussed the agenda for the meeting and agreed to move the reports on IT Infrastructure and Business Systems and Information to the start of the meeting.

4 IT Infrastructure and Business Systems and Information

IT Infrastructure

Members welcomed Paul Smith the newly appointed Director of IT Infrastructure (DITI) to the meeting. The DITI introduced himself and presented the IT Infrastructure report providing an update on the summary position on the following areas:

- Telephony project
- Doncaster Wi-Fi
- Jisc internet connectivity
- NLC new build
- Immersive classrooms
- Service delivery
- IT Security
- IT survey findings

Members noted and discussed the contents of the report. Members sought further detail on initial priorities and the planned programme of works. Members were reassured by the positive progress on IT infrastructure projects and the significant progress made against the programme of works. Members recorded their appreciation to the DITI and the ITI team.

Note: Preetha Kumar joined the meeting

Business Systems & Information

Members welcomed Mark Atton the newly appointed Director of Business Systems & Information (DBSI) to the meeting. The DBSI introduced himself and presented the Business Systems & Information (BSI) progress report providing an update on the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 project summary, focusing on Project 2.2 and a review of current risks aligned to the corporate risk register.

Members noted and discussed the contents of the report and the progress made in BSI projects. Members asked for more detail around the projects and where they aligned to the strategic plan, initial priorities, and timeline for planned works. Members were reassured by the update and substantial progress made. Members recorded their appreciation to the DBSI and the BSI team.

Members thanked the DITI and the DBSI for their comprehensive reports.

Note: The DITI and the DBSI left the meeting.

5 Audit Recommendations and Actions

The COOF&I presented the Audit Recommendations and Actions report. Members noted that since the last meeting of the committee in November 2023 one further recommendation has been added to the Audit Recommendations Tracker following the completion of the internal auditors Continuous Assurance Visit 1 23/24. Members noted that 85% of actions, excluding the actions that are not yet due, have been completed. Members were assured that there are no high priority actions past their implementation date and not completed. Members reviewed the detail and analysis of

Item	Minute	Action
	<p>the outstanding recommendations tracked as at 26 February 2024. Members were assured that any outstanding actions were underway. Members agreed that good progress is being made against audit recommendations and actions.</p>	
6	<p>Group Risk Register</p>	
	<p>Members received the Group Risk Register. Members noted that the A&R Committee has responsibility for seeking assurance on the robustness and adequacy of the Group’s risk management framework and has specific oversight of three risks on the Group Risk Register relating to legal, digital and data. Members confirmed that all other subcommittees of the Corporation Board monitor and report on the risks for which they have responsibility for oversight.</p>	
	<p>Members reviewed a trend analysis of residual risk scores noting how the assessed scores have changed and comparing the latest residual risk scores assessment against the target risk. Members sought further assurance regarding the funding audit and clawback position. Members were assured by the updates provided and agreed the framework was working well.</p>	
7	<p>Internal Audit Reports</p>	
	<p>The Internal Auditor provided the committee with an update on progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 including a summary of the results of work to date.</p>	
	<p>Members received and considered the findings report for the Internal Audit Continuous Assurance Visit 1 completed in November 2023. Members noted that Internal Audit test a suite of key controls (which are considered key risk areas that management require assurance throughout the year), for functionality and effectiveness. Members were assured that of the controls tested that all documented controls have been complied with during the period under review. One control resulted in a low priority management action being agreed. Members were assured this action had been added to the audit tracker for completion. Members agreed the audit findings report provided a high level of assurance.</p>	
	<p>Members considered and discussed the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24. Members agreed to defer the Performance Monitoring audit scheduled to commence in April 2024 to the next academic year and to replace it with a GDPR compliance audit to commence in April.</p>	
8	<p>Whistleblowing Policy</p>	
	<p>The Committee received the Group’s Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for consideration. Members noted the policy was due for review under the Group’s policy review cycle. Members considered and agreed the updates to the policy pending two additional amendments, firstly to include reference to the Group’s Fraud and Anti Bribery Policy, and secondly to confirm the titles of the designated assessors set out in the policy.</p>	
	<p>Resolution: The Audit and Risk Committee approved the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval pending the agreed amendments.</p>	
9	<p>Compliance Review Model</p>	
	<p>The COOPI provided the committee with an update report on data compliance. The COOPI explained that there are numerous checks and data quality tools currently in use, including ILR validation results and reports, PDSATs, and funding and monitoring</p>	

Item	Minute	Action
------	--------	--------

reports. The COOPI advised that in addition to these, the team are developing a new set of 'compliance monitoring audits. Members noted that these will follow a formal procedure and include sample testing, focussed checks, and feedback to curriculum areas and senior managers. The committee was provided with detail on the process and an audit template. The COOPI confirmed that rollout of the process and the results of these audits will be reported to the A&R committee.

Members thanked the COOPI for the update report, noted the current position and the planned actions and agreed the compliance review model was well thought out.

10 Audits by External Bodies

Advanced Learner Loans

Members received the Student Loans Company (SLC) Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) meeting outcome report. Members were assured by the finding set out in the report which concludes that the Group has made significant improvement and the outcome of the follow up audit is that the SLC is satisfied with the College's progression over the past months and is confident of continuous performance standards.

Annual Safeguarding Audit Report

Members received the North Lincolnshire Council Safeguarding Children in Education Annual Safeguarding Audit Report 2023. Members noted that this Audit is carried out annually by North Lincolnshire Council and covers all aspects of the College's safeguarding practise and procedures.

Members welcomed the outcomes and the high level of assurance provided by the audit report and the feedback from North Lincolnshire Council.

Members noted that the Doncaster City Council will be conducting a Safeguarding audit this month and the audit report will be shared with committee.

11 Support Area Autumn Term Reports

Health & Safety Report

Members received the Health & Safety update report outlining background, current position and key priorities as the Group shift towards a 'safety first culture' and strive for 'zero accidents'. Members noted the focus will be on enhancing auditing processes, improving general compliance, and bolstering training initiatives, all while increasing visibility and awareness surrounding health and safety practices.

Members considered the report and discussed and sought further detail on the various safeguards in place across the Group.

Procurement Report

The COOPI presented the Procurement Summary Report for the Autumn Term 2023/24. Members considered the contents of the report and noted the achievements and annual savings on awarded contracts in the period covered and over the life of the contracts.

Members agreed the report provides a high level of assurance that procurement regulations have been effective and value for money has been achieved.

Item	Minute	Action
-------------	---------------	---------------

12 Governor Development Plan

Members reviewed the spring term update to the Governance Development Plan noting progress against targets for which the committee has oversight. Members were assured progress against targets was on track.

13 Committee Chair’s Report to Corporation Board

Members considered the business of the meeting and recorded key items and any changes to strategic risks identified for feedback to the Corporation Board in the Committee Chair’s Report. The following items were highlighted for inclusion:

- High level of assurance received from Internal Audit Continuous Assurance Visit 1 findings report.
- Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure recommended for approval.
- New Data Compliance Review Model.

14 Any Other Business

A confidential item of any other business was raised. The minutes of this item are recorded in confidential minutes held by the Clerk.

15 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 12th June 2024, 5.00 pm, MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 7.04 pm

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: (Chair)

Date:

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Due Date