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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 16TH JUNE 2025

Present

Greg Clarke	Governor
Peter Grant	Governor
Preetha Kumar	Governor
Mark Swales	Governor
Lee Walker	Governor (Chair)

The quorum for the meeting was 40% of membership to include at least 3 External Governors. The meeting was quorate.

In attendance

Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
Terry Hutchinson	Director, Student Information Services
Rachel Maguire	Chief Operating Officer, People & Information
Nikki Mell	Head of Health & Safety
Barrie Shipley	Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure
Paul Smith	Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information
Ryan Falls	Cavanagh Kelly
Lisa Smith	RSM

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

Item	Minute	Action
1	Apologies	
	Apologies for absence were received from Philippa Poland (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.	
3	Data Compliance Monitoring	
	The Director of Student Information Services (DSIS) presented a Data Compliance Monitoring update report outlining the numerous checks and data quality assurance tools currently in use across the Group to ensure rigorous data compliance monitoring. Members noted the contents of the report providing an update on ILR validation results and reports, PDSATs, funding and monitoring reports, internal data quality reporting and monitoring, and progress with data compliance monitoring visits.	

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Members noted that internal auditors undertook a review of the data compliance monitoring visits process, as part of the annual cycle of assurance testing. This review was undertaken in April/May 2025. The internal auditor provided an overview of the outcomes of the review. Members noted the review involved comparing the Institution's Data Compliance Monitoring Framework to the ESFA methodology, and reporting any areas of concern and possible solutions within the Institution's PDSAT reports that would be flagged at a funding audit. The internal auditor reported four advisory actions for the College to consider in order to further strength the Data Compliance Monitoring review framework. Members noted the advisory points and were assured that all recommendations are to be implemented for the start of the 2025-2026 data compliance monitoring cycle. Members were assured overall error rates are very low and advisory recommendations are on a downward trajectory.

Members thanked the DSIS for the report and agreed the enhanced model of data compliance monitoring provides a high level of assurance that a rigorous system of data compliance monitoring is in place.

4 Delayed Withdrawals and Funding Clawback

The Director of Student Information Services (DSIS) presented an update report outlining the position in relation to FRM27 withdrawal reporting. The DSIS explained how fundings overclaims resulting from delayed withdrawals are calculated and recorded. Members reviewed the withdrawal and overclaim data for the previous 3 academic years.

Members were assured that there has been a very significant reduction in the number of late withdrawals and overclaims in the last 2 academic years. Members recognised the work of the staff in Student Information Services (SIS) in rigorously reviewing all enrolments crossing into future academic years, liaising with the relevant curriculum areas, for the purposes of keeping the volume of data issues contained within report FRM27 as low as possible. Members noted the small projected overclaim for the 2024/25 academic year. Members were further assured by a recently received communication from DFE recognising the Group's improving performance in this regard.

Members were advised that the DFE conducted a targeted survey of providers during March and April 2025 requesting feedback on how the Group had made these improvements. The Team provided feedback to the DFE highlighting the Group's improved data quality monitoring processes. Members noted that a subsequent communication was received from the DFE expressing gratitude for the Group's support and advising that this has helped contribute to a report for wider consideration by DFE.

Members were assured by the update report and the data quality activities undertaken by Student Information Services staff, to reduce and minimise the funding overclaims related to these activities.

Members thanked the DSIS and the Student Information Services team for their great work.

Note: The Director of Student Information Services left the meeting.

5 Support Areas Term 2 Reports

Health & Safety

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The Head of Health & Safety presented a Health & Safety progress update report and the Health & Safety Management Profile Audit Report. Members considered the contents of the reports outlining the health and safety audit and inspection activity carried out during term 2 2025 and providing an overview on actions required and progress made.

Members considered the reports noting assurance levels against each audit area and the summary of outcomes and actions following audit visits. Members noted the overview of remaining actions required for all assurance levels for areas undergoing a review visit to monitor progress. Members considered the HASMAP report. Members were assured by the progress made and the rigorous process in place for auditing and monitoring health and safety across the Group.

Members thanked the Head of Health & Safety for the comprehensive update report and the work of the H&S Team.

Note: *The Head of Health & Safety left the meeting.*

Digital Strategy Update

The Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information presented a Digital Strategy update report providing an update on delivery against the Group's Digital Strategy Plan.

Members noted the significant progress made on IT infrastructure including the enhanced network/Wi-Fi in Doncaster College, enhanced IT Security, standard telephony platform across the group, data centre consolidation and the delivery of device strategy to provide universal offer for standardisation. Members noted infrastructure next steps and planned actions. Members considered the Business System roadmap and key strategic decisions made for systems relating to Teaching and Learning such as the move to a single virtual learning environment and a single library management system.

Members sought assurance that progress was on track to meet significant milestones. Members discussed the move to the new build at North Lindsey College. Members were assured that progress was on track to meet critical milestones and that contingency plans are in place to ensure business continuity.

Members discussed consolidating the digital Infrastructure as a key deliverable of the strategic plan and agreed the report provides assurance against key projects to enable delivery of this strategic pillar.

Members thanked the Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information for the comprehensive update report and the significant progress made in delivering the Digital Strategy Plan.

Note: *The Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information left the meeting.*

Procurement

The Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure (COOF&I) presented the Procurement Summary Report for the Spring Term 2024/25. Members considered the contents of the report and noted the contracts activity in the period covered.

Item	Minute	Action
	Members agreed the report provides a high level of assurance that the Group's procurement regulations are effective and value for money continues to be achieved.	
6	Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 10th March 2025 and any matters arising The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 10th March 2025 were agreed as a true and correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.	
7	Audit Recommendations and Actions The COOF&I presented the Audit Recommendations and Actions report. Members noted recommendations added to the Audit Recommendations Tracker following the completion of the internal auditors reports for IT Security, Funding Compliance and Staff Recruitment/Talent Acquisition. Members considered the report and noted that, excluding the actions that are not yet due, 90% of actions have been completed or closed as superseded by subsequent audits. Members were assured that there are no high priority actions past their implementation date or not completed. Members reviewed the detail and analysis of the summary of recommendations tracked. Members noted progress notes and revised implementation dates have been updated for all actions that remain outstanding for completion. Members were assured that any outstanding actions were underway. Members agreed that good progress is being maintained in implementing audit recommendations.	
8	Group Risk Register Members received the Group Risk Register and Risk Management report. Members noted that the Audit and Risk committee has responsibility for seeking assurance on the robustness and adequacy of the Group's risk management framework and has specific oversight of four risks on the Group Risk Register relating to legal, digital, data and business systems and MIS. Members reviewed and discussed updates to the risk profiles and were assured by progress against planned actions. Members noted there are currently three risks sitting above target risk scores on the Risk Register. Members discussed the increased risk profile, the reasons for the increased risk scores and were assured by progress against planned actions. Members were satisfied the risk scores remain appropriate. Members discussed the risk management framework and the setting of risk appetite. Members agreed that given the number of new governors joining the Board, it would be helpful to refresh governors' risk management training. The Clerk agreed to schedule the risk training in consultation with the COOF&I and the Chair of the committee in the first term of the next academic year. Members agreed to conduct a review of the Group Risk Register following the updated risk management training. Action: The Clerk to schedule risk management training and a review of the strategic risk register for the Corporation Board in consultation with the COOF&I and Chair of the A&R committee.	
9	Internal Audit Reports	

Item	Minute	Action
	The Internal Auditor provided the committee with an update on progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 including a summary of the results of work to date. Members received and considered the audit findings report for the Internal Audit Continuous Assurance Visit 2 completed in March and April 2025. 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 noted that testing of the controls resulted in one non-high priority management action. Members were assured that the resulting action had been added to the audit tracker for completion. Members were assured by the audit findings report Members received and considered the audit findings report for the IT Security review focused on engagement and training, data security and supply chain security. The audit was completed in June 2025. Members noted that the audit finding report provided a partial level of assurance and noted recommendation and management actions. Members were assured that the audit identified well-designed controls in place however some weaknesses were identified in relation to engagement and training, Members were assured that all management actions have been added to the audit action tracker and an action plan is in place were required. Members received and considered the audit findings report for the Staff Recruitment (Talent Acquisition) audit completed in June 2025. Members noted that the audit finding report provided a reasonable level of assurance and there were no high-level management actions. Members received and considered the audit findings report for the Funding Compliance audit completed in June 2025. Members were assured by the findings of the final report and noted the discussion and assurances received under items 3 and 4. Members received and discussed the progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 update report. Members discussed planning for the next academic year. The Internal Auditor presented an Internal Audit Strategy for 2025/26. Members considered and agreed areas of focus.	

Noted: Mark Swales left the meeting.

10 External Audit Plan for year ending 31 July 2025

The External Auditors presented the DN Colleges Group Audit Plan for the year ended 31 July 2025. Members noted the contents of the report.

Members considered the plan taking account of the following points:

- Whether the assessment of the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements is complete;
- proposed audit response to address these risks and whether this is sufficient to meet the needs of the College;
- Whether they have knowledge of:
 - Any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
 - Instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
 - Actual, suspected, or alleged irregularity;
- Are there any additional matters to be brought to the auditors attention;
- The proposed timetable and schedule of fees.

Item	Minute	Action
	Members noted the approach and scope set out in the Audit Plan and agreed they were satisfied with the plan.	
	Resolution: The Audit and Risk Committee approved the External Audit Plan for year ended 31 July 25.	
11	Cycle of Business 2025/26	
	Members considered the committee's proposed cycle of business for 2025/26. Members agreed the cycle of business for the four meetings in the academic year 2025/26. Members noted the Chair of the Finance and Resources committee is to be invited to the November 2025 meeting of the A&R Committee where the external audit of the financial statements will be on the agenda. Members noted that the Subcontractor Standards Audit Control Report should be added to the June 26 meeting agenda.	
	Action: The Clerk to invite the Chair of the Finance and Resources committee to the November 2025 meeting of the A&R committee. The Clerk to update the committee Cycle of Business to included Subcontractor Standards Audit Control Report in June 2026.	
	The Committee agreed the A&R Committee Cycle of Business for 2025/26 for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval.	
12	Governor Development Plan	
	Members reviewed the term 3 2025 update to the Governance Development Plan noting progress against the target relating to the monitoring of risk management and reporting for which the committee has oversight. Members agreed the system of reviewing and reporting risk is well embedded and is working well.	
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:	
	• Digital Strategy update report and assurance received on progress made. • Assurance received from Internal Audit Reports. • Assurance received on data compliance and DfE recognition on funding clawbacks.	
14	Any Other Business	
	Note: The External Auditors and Internal Auditors left the meeting.	
	Members discussed a confidential item. The minutes of this item 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.	
	Members noted this would be Greg Clarke's last meeting as a member of the A&R committee and thanked Greg for his valued contribution to the committee.	

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15 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the date and time of the next meeting of the A&R Committee is to be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

Signed: (Chair) **Date:**

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Due Date
16/06/2025	8	The Clerk to schedule risk management training and a review of the strategic risk register for the Corporation Board in consultation with the COOF&I and Chair of the A&R committee. The COOF&I to schedule a review of Risk Appetite.	Clerk / COOF&I / Chair of the A&R Committee	Sept 2025
16/06/2025	11	The Clerk to invite the Chair of the Finance and Resources committee to the November 2025 meeting of the A&R committee.	Clerk	Sept 2025
16/06/2025	11	The Clerk to update the committee Cycle of Business to included Subcontractor Standards Audit Control Report in June 2026.	Clerk	July 2025