

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2025

Present

Peter Grant	Governor
Helena Nyanzu	Governor
Segun Odumoye	Governor
Philippa Poland	Governor
Lee Walker	Governor (Chair)

The quorum for the meeting was least 3 external members. The meeting was quorate.

In attendance

Sharon Harmon	Clerk to the Corporation
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	Cooper Parry
Lisa Smith	RSM

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

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1 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Preetha Kumar, 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 Support Area Reports

Health & Safety Update

The Head of Health & Safety presented the Health & Safety Annual Report 2024/25 providing an overview and summary of key health and safety activities for the 2024/25 academic year. Members noted the contents of the report including key data in relation to supporting activities and a detailed breakdown of accident statistics for both staff and students. Members noted updates on work completed since last report to the committee.

Members considered the update on the Health and Safety Management Profile (HASMAPP) Audit carried out during May 2025 by the Head of Health and Safety and the Director of HR. Members were assured by the action plan implemented to ensure continual improvement and progress. Members were assured by the

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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.*

Technology, Systems & Information Update

The Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information presented an IT Services update report. Members noted and discussed the contents of the report.

Members were assured by the significant work completed in upgrading and improving IT infrastructure, systems and equipment across the Group. Members noted and discussed next steps and planned works for the coming year.

Members sought assurance that relevant protections and procedures were in place to mitigate against cyber-attacks. Members were provided with an outline of the protections and procedures in place including contingency plans to ensure business continuity. Members were assured that robust protections and procedures were in place to mitigate against cyber-attacks.

Members thanked the Vice Principal Technology, Systems & Information for the comprehensive update report and the significant progress achieved.

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

Procurement Annual Report

The Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure (COOFI) presented the Procurement Services Annual Report for 2024-25 which sets out achievements in the period and outline plans for the coming year.

Members noted it has been another busy year for the procurement function, with challenges achieving savings due to rising inflationary pressures on the economy driving upward pressures on costs. Members were assured that in spite of economic challenges significant savings had been achieved, as well as ensuring compliance with public contract regulations and maximising available grant funding.

Members discussed the savings achieved looking at the breakdown over the course of the year and the length of the contracts. Members requested for future reports to include further information on where expenditure is increasing to provide a comprehensive view. The COOFI agreed to highlight increases in expenditure in future reports as discussed.

Members agreed the report provided assurance that the Group has an adequate system of internal control in ensuring value for money when procuring goods and services.

4 Election of the Committee Chair

The Clerk informed members that the Chair of the committee's two-year term of office had passed. Members were advised that L Walker was nominated for a further two-year term of office as Chair of the committee. Members were asked to vote on L Walker's reappointment.

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	<p>L Walker left the meeting for the voting on the appointment of the Chair.</p> <p>Resolution: The Audit and Risk Committee elected L Walker Chair of the committee for a further two-year term office.</p> <p>L Walker rejoined the meeting, and the Clerk confirmed his reappointment as Chair of the committee.</p>	
5	<p>Minutes of a meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 16 June 2025 and any matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 16 June 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting with two agreed corrections.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p>The Clerk advised members that the risk management training for the Board would be schedule in the spring term 2026. The COOFI confirmed that a review of risk appetite will be scheduled.</p> <p>The Clerk confirmed that the Chair of the Finance and Resources committee has been invited to join the November 2025 meeting of the Audit and Risk committee.</p>	
6	<p>Audit Recommendations and Actions Report</p> <p>The COOFI presented the Audit Recommendations and Actions report. Members noted recommendations added to the Audit Recommendations Tracker following the completion of the internal audit Continuous Assurance Visit 3 report and internal audit Follow Up report.</p> <p>Members considered the report and noted that, excluding the actions that are not yet due, 88% 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 were assured that 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.</p>	
7	<p>Group Risk Register</p> <p>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 strategic risks that exceed the target risk set by the Board. Members discussed the factors informing the increased risk scores and were assured by progress against planned actions. Members were satisfied the risk scores remain appropriate.</p> <p>Members discussed the risk management framework and the setting of risk appetite. Members agreed the previously discussed Board risk management</p>	

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	<p>training be scheduled for the start of the spring term 2026. Members further agreed to schedule of review of risk appetite.</p> <p>Action: The Clerk to schedule risk management training and a review of the strategic risk appetite for the Corporation Board in consultation with the COOFI and Chair of the A&R committee.</p>	
8	<p>Draft Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024-25</p> <p>The COOFI presented the draft Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024/25 for DN Colleges Group. Members noted the regularity self-assessment questionnaire (RSAQ) is designed by the DfE to provide clarity of the accountability framework, key requirements and the type of evidence to provide and it supports corporations in drafting their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance. Members were advised that Corporations must provide a copy of their completed RSAQ to the reporting accountant, signed by the accounting officer and the Chair of the Corporation Board.</p> <p>Members noted corporations must publish a statement of regularity, propriety and compliance within their annual accounts. Corporations must also appoint a reporting accountant to provide an assurance report on regularity each financial year. The reporting accountant must be the same as the external auditor.</p> <p>Members noted the RSAQ will be reviewed by the Group's external auditors in line with their reporting accountant's responsibilities for reporting on regularity, whereby they will look to obtain limited assurance and to report to the Corporation and to the DfE in accordance with the requirements of the College Accounts direction 2024/25.</p> <p>Members considered and were assured by the contents of the draft Regulatory Self-Assessment Questionnaire 2024/25.</p>	
9	<p>Draft Audit Committee Annual Report 2024-25</p> <p>The COOFI presented the draft Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report 2024-25 for the committee's consideration. Members were advised that the Audit & Risk Committee's Annual Report is a requirement of the College Accounts Direction 2024-25 and the College Financial Handbook and is designed to assist the Chief Executive Officer and the Board with their respective responsibilities for the College's systems, controls, and risk management, which underpin the strategic objectives.</p> <p>Members considered the draft report and agreed the contents. Members agreed the report provided an accurate summary of the work undertaken by the committee during the year. Members agreed with the view on the committee's effectiveness and how it has fulfilled its remit. Members agreed the opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Corporation's assurance arrangements, framework of governance, risk management and control processes for the effective and efficient use of resources, solvency, and the safeguarding of assets was correct. Members agreed transparency of disclosers and any further updates. Members noted the final report would be considered by the A&R Committee meeting on 25th November 2026.</p> <p>Note: The Chief Operating Officer, Finance & Infrastructure left the meeting.</p>	

10 Internal Audit Reports

The Internal Auditors presented a progress update report providing an update on works completed against the internal audit plan 2024/25. Members noted that since the last meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee two further reports had been finalised which were the Continuous Assurance Visit 3 report and Follow Up report. Members noted that all fieldwork for 2024/25 has now been completed. Members noted that fieldwork dates have been agreed with management for all of the internal audits scheduled for 2025/26 to ensure that all fieldwork will be completed by the end of the academic year.

The Internal Auditor presented the Continuous Assurance Visit 3 2024/25 report. Members were advised that of the 10 control areas tested there is one new recommended action. Members were assured by the report and were assured that recommendations have been actioned.

The Internal Auditor presented the Follow Up internal audit report for September 2025. Members noted the internal audit opinion that DN Colleges Group has demonstrated reasonable progress in implementing agreed management actions. Members were assured that all actions are being implemented and there were no high priority actions outstanding.

The Internal Auditor presented the Annual internal audit report for the year ended 31 July 2025. Members noted the finding of the report and were assured by the audit opinion that DN Colleges Group has an adequacy and effectiveness framework for risk management, governance and internal control. Members noted identified enhancements to the framework for risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective. Members were assured by the report.

11 Teachers' Pensions EOYC Return 2024/25

The Chief Operating Officer, People & Information (COOPI) advised the Committee that DN Colleges Group is responsible for producing the information and maintaining proper records complying with the terms of Teachers' Pensions Regulations and for preparing the End of Year Certificate (EOYC) for the financial year 2024/25.

Member noted that External Auditors were engaged to prepare the letters in relation to the EOYC and annual Reporting Guidance TP05 issued by the Teachers' Pensions. Members were assured that the auditors identified no exceptions or errors and gave assurance that the contributions shown on the EOYC were paid in accordance with the rules of the Teachers' Pensions.

Members were assured the EOYC 2024/25 was submitted correctly within the required deadline.

12 Annual Report on Fraud, Irregularities and Whistleblowing 2024/25

Members received the annual report on fraud, irregularities and whistleblowing 2024/25. Members were advised that the report covers those items that have been brought to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team and the Clerk to the Corporation over the course of the year to 31 July 2025. Members were advised that any items that are of perceived importance or materiality are recorded and reported. Members considered and discussed the contents of the report.

Members were assured that there had been no instances of fraud, Irregularities or whistleblowing during 2024/25.

13 Review of Committee Terms of Reference

Members reviewed the Audit and Risk Committee's Terms of Reference (ToRs). Members noted the ToRs were last reviewed by the Committee in October 2024 and approved by the Corporation Board in December 2024. Members considered and agreed updates to the ToRs.

Resolution: The Audit and Risk Committee approved the updates to the Audit and Risk Committee's Terms of Reference 2025-26 for recommendation to the Corporation Board for approval.

14 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, data and business systems risk rating reduce with strong assurance received on works completed.
- Feedback from Annual Internal Audit Report
- Review of draft Audit Committee Annual Report

15 Any Other Business

The Chair asked members to provide feedback on the conduct of the meeting. Members agreed the meeting had run smoothly with the right level of reporting, discussion and assurance received.

16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 26th November 2025 at 5.30 pm, Doncaster College.

Sharon Harmon
Clerk to the Corporation

TABLE OF ACTIONS				
Date	Minute	Action	Responsibility	Due Date
01/10/25	7	The Clerk to schedule risk management training and a review of the strategic risk appetite for the Corporation Board in consultation with the COOFI and Chair of the A&R committee.	Clerk COOFI	Jan 2026