

**Minutes of the Audit Committee (AC) video-conference AC22.3 held on Wednesday 21 June 2023  
Long Road Sixth Form College, Cambridge**

Present: Sebastian Rasinger (committee Chair), Gary Bourton, Chris Cope, David Evans (part meeting) and Hugo Macey

In attendance: Charlotte Hemmins (Finance Director), Hugh Swainson from Buzzacott (to the end of agenda item 5)

Clerk: Anne-Marie Diaper

**Ref** **Actions:**

**AC22.3.1 Apologies for absence**

None. The meeting was quorate. The AC Chair welcomed Gary Bourton to his first ever committee meeting. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Principal was unable to attend the meeting due to her attendance at a key sector event.

**AC22.3.2 Declarations of Interest**

None.

**AC22.3.3 Minutes of AC22.3 Wednesday 22 March 2023**

With no comments or amendments, the committee approved the minutes of the last meeting as a true and accurate record.

**AC22.3.4 Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

None.

**AC22.3.5 Financial Statements Audit 2023/24**

The Chair drew the committee's attention to the external audit strategy document that was available in the pack, and he handed over to the FSA to address the meeting.

The FSA drew the committee's attention to the key points outlined in the strategy on which the external audit would focus. He pointed out that there had been a significant update in auditing standards, and much change across the sector, which was all outlined in the audit plan. Page 5 highlighted new items and changes, including Managing Public Money (MPM), and updates to the regularity audit relating to MPM.

The AC Chair thanked the auditor for a clear report. He paused to allow time for Governors to ask questions. A Governor referred to embedding the new requirements set by MPM, and the Clerk commented that triggers built into the Corporation work plan and policies would support MPM requirements. There was a short discussion about new financial auditing standards, and borrowing.

With that, the committee was content with the external audit plan. The AC Chair reminded the committee that the AC23.1 8 November 2023 meeting would be in person in College.

*Hugh Swainson left the meeting at 5.17pm.*

**Ref****Actions:****AC22.3.6 Audit assurance mapping including internal/specialist audit plan for 2023/24**

The FD presented her paper. She gave a short background to this item, the live assurance map, for new committee members.

She drew the committee's attention to a couple of new pieces of assurance under JCQ regulations, and examinations processes (including a UK scam that had been reported publicly). Other updated areas of the map including careers, the College site including the new build. A Governor referred to the accountability agreement that could be mentioned in the assurance map. In year there had also been a JCQ unannounced inspection in College which had gone very well. The committee also noted the NHS careers week and the recent student visit to the Royal Papworth hospital, all which had been mentioned on LinkedIn.

The FD moved onto the Internal audit plan for 2023/24, and she explained some of the rationale for these audits:

*Health & Safety:* A re-written policy had been in place for 12 months so now was a good time to review arrangements. Helpful feedback from internal H&S group.

*IT and cyber security:* College has cyber essentials certification already, and this would be level 2. Some Governors would feed into the planning for that audit.

*Peer review of exams:* A growing area and audit would relate to a new risk on the risk register.

*Key financial controls audit:* standard annual audit

*External governance review:* The Clerk gave an update on this, commenting that the Governance & Search committee (GSC) was the lead for this work. The Board at its meeting in July would be asked to appoint a reviewer.

The AC Chair asked a further question about the peer review for exams; he was pleased to see this on the list. The staff Governor contributed some helpful background to this.

A Governor thinking about the numbers nationally of young people suffering with their mental health, asked about a possible audit of the College's safeguarding and wider wellbeing support. The FD agreed that the matter could be considered in 12 months' time (June AC23.3 meeting), when the internal audit plan for 2024/25 is being drafted.

**Finance  
Director/  
Principal**

*David Evans joined the meeting at 5.47pm.*

No further questions or comments. The AC was content with the internal audit plan for 2023/24.

**AC22.3.7 Internal/specialist audit reports**

Curriculum peer review. She spoke to the written peer review report on which the College VP had led. The AC Chair had recently attended a meeting that provided some reassurance on the recommendations from

**Ref**

the report. A Governor asked how the recommendations from the report would be taken forward. The committee asked the Clerk to pencil in a report from the VP for the summer 2024 AC meeting.

**Actions:****Clerk****AC22.3.8 Risk management**

Termly update to risk register and action plan 2022/23. The FD reminded the meeting as to the background for this. She highlighted updates and new risks. There was a short discussion about the academisation key strategic project, industrial action, forthcoming open days, and welcome day.

A Governor asked what proportion of teachers exercise their right to strike, and the FD responded with approximate numbers. A Governor asked if there was any work planned on 'generative AI'? The FD responded that it was on the staff development agenda for the next year, as it had been identified a possible emerging risk. The AC Chair commented that it was becoming a big issue at University. The AC Chair said institutions and students would need to learn how to use it in a productive way, with institutions developing an understanding of how to approach it and prepare students to use it in a productive and critical manner, to facilitate and promote learning. He said it would be helpful to add it as a new risk, possibly a Standards Committee risk.

**Finance  
Director**

On 'academisation' there were many risks associated with this complex project which would be likely to develop rapidly, and with many stakeholders, the AC Chair was keen to understand how it would be kept on track. A Governor/Vice Chair commented that the Academisation Working Group (AWG) would take delegated responsibility for academisation risks, reporting to the AC. The AC met so infrequently it would not be able to keep a track of all those risks, some of which would be short term. The AWG Chair added that people may be asked to attend AWG meetings to discuss various academisation risks. It was important that risks were managed properly but efficiently by the AWG, with a separate risk register which would have AC oversight.

Annual review of risk management. With the annual review of risk management, including risk management policy (RMG ToR), and action plan for 2023/24, the AC was content that it would be able to provide assurance to the Board through the commentary in the 2022/23 financial statements and through the AC annual report in the autumn, following scrutiny throughout the year. The committee noted that responsibility for risks were delegated to committees and the Clerk provided a 'risk' paper to every meeting.

**AC22.3.9 Committee review of key policies**

Data Protection/GDPR policy. The AC considered the policy which contained no material changes (no new legislation this year).

**The committee was content to recommend Board approval of the GDPR/data protection policy.**

**AC22.3.10 Financial regulations, procedures and appendices**

**Ref****Actions:**

The FD reported. With a major rewrite of the regulations last year (a specific recommendation that had come from the financial controls audit), changes this year were mainly around MPM following the ONS reclassification of Colleges. She outlined the changes. A Governor asked if there was anything significant about the 2 organisation charts and signatory lists towards the end of the document. The FD reassured the Governor that there had been no changes in key postholders, and changes were retrospective.

**The AC approved the financial regulations, procedures and appendices as presented.**

**AC22.3.11 Post-16 Audit Code of Practice (P16ACOP) 2022 to 2023**

The Clerk pointed out that some of the data in this paper was overlapping with in the FSA report under agenda item 5. The paper articulated the main changes. The committee would need to assure itself with the alignment of both the P16ACOP and the committee Terms of Reference for 2023/24 which should reflect the policy changes introduced by MPM as a result of the ONS reclassification of Colleges. The committee didn't raise any questions and thanked the Clerk for the report.

**AC22.3.12 Review committee Terms of Reference (ToR), business plan and meeting dates for 2023/24**

The Clerk presented the AC ToR that had been updated for 2023/24 to take account of the current version of the P16ACOP and the reclassification of the College to the public sector. She advised the committee that the changes to the ToR were minimal, but MPM had implications for amendments to many College policies and documents (eg. financial regulations and procedures). Once approved, the ToR would be included in the standing orders for Board approval.

The 2023/24 meeting dates largely mirrored the previous year, with a termly meeting, and the business plan fitted the work commitments of the committee. Once approved these would be included in the Corporation Cycle of Business that would remain dynamic throughout the year.

**With no further discussion, the AC approved its ToR and meeting dates and business plan for 2023/24.**

**AC22.3.13 Governance improvement plan and self-assessment of effectiveness leading to annual report for 2022/23**

The Clerk had prepared the GIP for committee consideration for the final time this year, with updates highlighted.

She reminded the meeting about the impending external review of governance, and that the reviewer would be expecting to attend a meeting of the AC (probably the November 2023 one). There would be a discussion about this at the Board on 11 July. The committee was pleased to be at full establishment in terms of member numbers, following further Governor recruitment.

**Ref**

**Actions:**

**AC22.3.14 Any other business**  
None.

**AC22.3.15 Date of next meeting (2023/24)**

*AC23.1 Wednesday 8 November 2023, 5pm. The Clerk reminded the meeting that this meeting was to be held in College, in person, and that the external reviewer (reviewing governance processes) would be likely to be present.*