

CORPORATION OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE

AUDIT COMMITTEE

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2015 AT 6.00PM IN ROOM D6

PRESENT:

Bose Dada	Chair, Independent member of the Corporation
Cathy Bird	Chair of the Corporation, Independent member of the Corporation
Nanda Ratnavel	Deputy Principal
Diana Pogson	Interim Deputy Principal
Mike Cheetham	Baker Tilly
Debbie Parkes	Clerk to the Corporation

1.0 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Lucy Watson and Rob Pope. The Corporation Chair was in attendance for this meeting, she was entitled to speak but did not have a vote (in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference). The meeting was not quorate, however all of the items of business were for information and it was agreed that the meeting should proceed with notes taken.

2.0 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest in the business to be discussed.

3.0 Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 26 November 2014

The minutes would be taken for approval at the Audit Committee meeting in June.

3.1 Matters arising from the minutes not covered by the agenda

Risk Register and Management Plan

In reply to a question from the Corporation Chair, the interim Deputy Principal advised that each Department's risk plan would feed into the College's main risk register which is presented to the Board.

Follow-Up Audit

The Committee noted that the fourteen outstanding audit recommendations would be considered in the Follow-Up Audit Report presented to the Audit Committee meeting in June.

Course-Costing

In reply to a question from the Chair, the Interim Deputy Principal advised that the College's course costing model did not fully absorb all overheads at present.

4.1 Review of Post Inspection Action Plan

The Committee received the previously circulated advisory audit report 'Review of Post Inspection Action Plan'. Baker Tilly advised that the report comprised a first review of the College's Post Inspection Action Plan. Two Medium priority recommendations had been made relating to staff objective setting and students setting their own targets. Both recommendations had been accepted by management.

A discussion took place about students setting their own targets; members noted that tutors help the students to set realistic targets for themselves and that longer term targets are set by teachers.

4.2 Review of the College's use of Promonitor

The Committee received the previously circulated report 'Review of the College's Use of Promonitor'; an amber/green opinion had been issued by the auditors.

Members noted that at the time of the audit Promonitor had been implemented and was largely functional. The implementation of Markbook was on-going subject to data cleansing exercises, correction of identified reporting issues and roll-out of additional functions.

In response to governors' questions the interim Deputy Principal advised that the Technology Strategy Group was overseeing a review of all of the College's IT systems and that a 'lessons-learnt' exercise, relating to the implementation of Promonitor and Markbook would be undertaken. The Committee felt that the College's use of Promonitor should be reflected in its Risk Register and the Deputy Principal drew members' attention to risk no 4 'Failure to meet the requirements of study'. The Committee noted the importance of appropriate communication between groups of staff in relation to data compatibility.

4.3 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee received the previously circulated report 'Internal Audit Progress Report'. Members noted that there had been no changes to the audit plan.

5.0 Internal Audit Charter

The Committee received the previously circulated report 'Internal Audit Charter'. The Charter set out the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for RuTC and was consistent with best practice. Members noted that the Chair of the Audit Committee would be required to sign the Charter at a future date.

6.0 External Audit Performance Indicators 2013/2014

The Committee received for information the previously circulated report 'External Audit Performance Indicators 2013/2014'.

In response to a question asked in an email by a member of the Committee, the Deputy Principal advised that the external auditors were made aware of concerns about performance

in wash up and other feedback meetings. There was also regular feedback with the audit partner during the audits.

Members noted that there was liaison between the internal and external audit firms and that the internal audit approach informed planning but was not relied on by the external auditors.

7.0 Risk Register and Management Plan 2014/2015

The Committee received the previously circulated report 'Risk Register and Management Plan 2014/2015'. The interim Deputy Principal advised that the Action Plans had not changed, however progress had been updated since last term. During discussion of the Risk Register the following points were made:

Recruitment - Income

In response to questions, members were advised about student applications in relation to last year and the importance of converting those applications to enrolment. The College was keeping in touch with those students who had applied by offering, for example, a series of taster sessions to school pupils.

Members noted that course changes had been permitted during the first 6 weeks in 2014/15, however this issue would be reviewed for 2015/2016. The importance of students staying 'on programme' was noted.

In response to a question from the Chair, members were advised that work was taking place to see whether HE expansion in Sport and IT was a viable option.

Delivery of Richmond Education and Enterprise Campus

The Corporation Chair asked why the residual risk was Medium; she thought it should be higher. Members were advised that a separate risk plan on the Delivery of Richmond Education and Enterprise Campus would go to the College Redevelopment Monitoring Group in the near future.

Health and Safety

Members were pleased to see the Low status attached to Health and Safety, which was a challenging area of risk.

Operating within budget set for 2014/2015

The Deputy Principal advised that departmental budgets were increasingly being devolved to individual department managers.

Corporation Challenge

The Corporation Chair drew attention to the Corporation's current focus on risk, noting it had held a workshop on risk management last term and that risk would feature at the top of future Board meeting agendas.

The Deputy Principal advised that relevant risks might be included as an item at the top of relevant committee agendas in the future; members agreed with this suggestion.

7.0 Any other Business

Tendering of the Internal and External Audit Services

The Deputy Principal spoke about his preference for not retendering the internal and external auditor services this year and it was agreed that a paper on this matter should be brought to the June meeting of the Audit Committee.

ACTION: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

8.0 Date of Next Meeting

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2015

The meeting closed at 7.15pm