



**MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2025
AT 5pm IN THE EXCHANGE BOARD ROOM AND VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

PRESENT:

Taiyab Sufi	Member (Chair)
Ojan Rohani*	Member
Sharjeel Salahuddin*	Member
David Swift	Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Fazal Dad CBE	Principal and Chief Executive (joined 17.30pm)
Jennifer Eastham	Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services
William Simpson	RSM - Internal Audit
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

*Denotes joined via MS Teams

The meeting commenced at 5pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. PRESENTATION: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RISK

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services talked the Committee through a presentation on student recruitment, reflecting the current position and risks, including the potential impact on funding and staffing.

In discussion, the following was covered:

- Funding arrangements differ for FE and HE
- DfE targets and performance against predictions
- Potential impact of student over/under recruitment on staffing, courses and financial position
- Marketing opportunities
- Local demographics and skills need
- Challenges of delivering HE in an FE College and sector wide concerns
- Planning for the future, local and national politics

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services for the presentation.

17.30pm By prior arrangement, the Principal and Chief Executive joined the meeting.

2. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

For the benefit of the new RSM Strategic Lead, William Simpson, who would be working with the College and attending this Committee, there followed round table introductions from those present and on Teams.

Apologies were received in advance from Lisa Randall, RSM.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Audit Committee become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting. No declarations were made.

4. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 JUNE 2025

Having canvassed the Committee, and in the absence of any comment, the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday 3 June 2025 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the updates on the actions from previous meetings.

6. REGULARITY AUDIT SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Board was required to make a statement on regularity, propriety and compliance with the annual financial statements.

To support the Board in making this assessment and to ensure completeness, the College had completed a self-assessment questionnaire. This provided clarity over the framework, including the funding bodies' interpretation of the key requirements and the type of evidence that should be considered.

The questionnaire must be completed and submitted to Beever and Struthers, the College External Auditors, to review as part of their year-end work. Beever and Struthers visit, test and provide their Audit opinion. A copy of the Regulatory Audit Self-Assessment Questionnaire must be signed by the College Accounting Officer and Chair of Governors in advance of the accounts being signed off.

The Committee recognised the good work and efforts of the Vice-Principal and Director of Governance to complete the Regularity Audit Self-assessment Questionnaire and **RECOMMENDED** this to the Corporation Board for approval.

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2024/25

The Post-16 Audit Code of Practice (ACoP) has been replaced by the College Financial Handbook from 1 August 2025. This sets out the specific requirements for assurance, accountability and audit arrangements for Colleges and the broad framework in which they should operate.

The guidance states that the College Corporation must set out clear Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee, one of which was to produce an Annual Report, summarising the Committee's activities relating to the financial year under review. This report would also be shared with the DfE to assure them that the College is compliant with the College Financial Handbook and effective governance arrangements are in place.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services explained that she had collaborated with the Director of Governance to produce the draft Report at Appendix One.

Having reviewed the Report, the Committee agreed that it was an accurate reflection of the Committee's business and **AGREED** to recommend the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Corporation Board for approval.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

William Simpson, RSM, presented the RSM Internal Audit Annual Report in respect of internal audits completed in the College for 2024/25. This report provided assurance to the Committee, and the opinion would be included in the Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control as part of the Financial Statements to be considered by the Corporation Board.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

The Committee thanked William Simpson for this Report.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT – ACTION POINT STATUS

This Report provided the Audit Committee with an update on progress towards the completion of recommendations following the Internal Audits that had been undertaken by RSM in 2024/25. No Internal Audit assignments had yet been completed in 2025/26.

The Committee noted the update on the content of the Report.

10. AUDIT PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25 UPDATE AND PROPOSED FOR 2025/26

The Vice -Principal: Finance and Corporate Services presented an update on the Audit Performance Indicators for 2024/25 which assisted the Committee in assessing risk. The Report included information on Compliance, Financial Health, Solvency, Debtors, Creditor days, Financial Health, Debt parameters and Loan covenants. It was noted that with the exception of Creditor Days and Debt Parameters all KPIs were 'green'. Creditor Days and Debt Parameters would not be cleared until the Financial Statements were completed. The detail was supplied in Appendix One, and the Report proposed that the same indicators be used for 2025/26.

The Audit Committee noted the performance against the approved performance indicators for 2024/25 and **AGREED** for the same performance indicators to be used for 2025/26.

11. UPDATE ON OFS HE ILR STUDENT DATA AUDIT

The Audit Committee had previously agreed to oversee progress on the response to the OfS HE ILR Data Audit and agreed action plan. An update was provided.

12. RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

The Committee considered the Report which summarised the College's risk management for 2024/25.

The Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services informed members that there had been one new risk added for the new Future Focused, Ready to Learn 'Launchpad' centre, and that the risk attached to Failure to make cost savings and streamline processes had reduced from very high to high during the year.

In discussion, Members noted the key risks during the year and the mitigating controls.

Having reviewed and discussed this Report, the Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Risk Management Annual Report to the Corporation Board for approval.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT – RISK REGISTER 2025/26

Following on from Item 12, the Committee, in its role to regularly review the potential risks to the College operations and strategic direction, discussed the issues to be included in the College Risk Register for 2024/25.

The risk rating for each risk was determined using the Board approved Risk Management Policy. Using the RAG rating, the Committee noted that two risks were currently rated as red and were satisfied with the mitigating actions and controls in place to effectively manage these.

In discussions, Members asked questions and explored issues around student recruitment and confirmed that the OfS HE ILR Data audit appeared on the Register.

Committee members agreed with the changes and **AGREED** the Risk Register.

14. AUDIT SCHEDULE 2025/26

This Report was provided to the Audit Committee for information and contained the dates and details of both the Internal and External Audit schedules for 2025/26.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

15. DATA RETURNS MONITORING REPORT 2024/25 AND 2025/26

This Report was provided for information and confirmed that funding and data returns had all been submitted on time for 2024/25, the remaining dates in 2025 for returns, and those for 2025/26.

Members noted the content of this Report.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items discussed under Any Other Business.

17. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the Committee discussions in College and online.

18. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 18 November 2025 at 5.00pm.

The meeting ended at 18.34pm