THE BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE COLLEGE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 FEBRUARY 2025

Members Present:		
Dan Tout	Board Member & Chair of the Committee	
Ian Jones	Board Member	Apologies
Saba Rubaei	Board Member	
Kim Welsh	Board Member	
Neethu Stephen	Co-opted Audit Committee Member	Apologies
Sarah Hutchings	Chief Operating Officer	
In attendance:		
Marianne Barnard	Director of Governance	
Mark Davis	Director of IT Services	
Daniel Hussain	Validera, Internal Auditors	
Gavin Shirley	Director of MI & Funding	

PART A

		Actions
019-2425	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies were received from Committee Members Ian Jones and Neethu Stephen.	
020-2425	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** There were no declarations of interest noted.	
021-2425	**PART A MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING** **RESOLVED:** The Committee reviewed and approved the Part A minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 as a correct record.	
022-2425	**INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS** The Audit Plan for 2024/25 academic year was presented: i) Risk Management: It was noted that the report was currently with the Validera quality team, the outcome was looking positive and the report would be published shortly. ii) Student Records, Apprenticeships: The Audit Brief had been issued for discussion, the expected completion date was to be confirmed. iii) Payroll, Expenses & Benefits: Audit due to commence 3 February 2025 and for completion in March 2025. iv) Bursary & Learner Support: Audit due to commence 24 March 2025 and for completion in April 2025. Validera provided an update on their staff team. In February 2025 they would welcome Karl Bently as a Director joining them from RSM, it was noted that Karl Bently was recognised as an expert in the education sector funding streams.	

RESOLVED: The committee received and noted the update on the internal audit reports.

023-2425 **INTERNAL AUDIT – FOLLOW UP**

The COO provided an update on the internal audit follow-up, showing progress with audit recommendations and a status report on completed actions. This finalised the TIAA tracker and actions related to the Health & Safety audit which took place in 2023/24.

The following updates were provided:

- Sign off on the updated Terms of Reference for the Health and Safety Committee has been delayed. The last two scheduled meetings had been postponed due to illness. The Terms of Reference had now been shared with the Health and Safety Committee and this would be finalised at the next meeting on 12 February 2025.
- The Training Matrix was an ongoing and an extensive task. A first draft of the matrix was being created, this would allow for information to be accessed easily and easy auditing.

RESOLVED: Committee Members received and noted the latest updates on outstanding actions from the Health & Safety internal audit.

024-2425 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

i) Updated College Risk Register

The COO provided an update on a number of key risk register items, as follows:

Risk 1: Failure to maintain a robust Health and Safety Framework and Critical Incident Management Plan to sufficiently protect staff, learners and the College estate.

This risk related to the external environment particularly around the Bournemouth Campus. There had been some incidents not on the college campus but nearby, and it was noted that these did have an impact on staff and students. Meetings were ongoing with David Sidwick, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset, to discuss the issues and this would remain a high priority for focus.

Risk 5: College business is affected by staff vacancies because we are unable to adequately retain staff or attract new staff to vacant posts.

This was an ongoing piece of work, it was challenging due to constraints on pay, but there were no significant issues at present.

Risk 2: Risk of significant loss of data and disruption to operations through a cyber-attack including unauthorised access, data breach, ransomware, phishing attacks and other malicious activities

This item would be discussed further under the Cyber Threat Report item (025-2425).

Risk 6: The DfE-funded capital project implementation adversely affects learners' experience and learner recruitment during this period.

The COO confirmed that the project was progressing well. There had been some issues on costs and noise disruption, but it was confirmed this was being managed well.

Risk 3: An employer/(s) providing significant Adult/Full cost/Apprentice learners to the college, which in turn generates significant grants and fees, ceases to contract with the college

The COO noted a number of updates around this item:

- Changes being made to the way the college engaged with the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts
- The change of ownership of Sunseeker was being actively monitored for impact
- The NHS recruitment freeze which was impacting on L3 and L5 recruitment. The committee discussed options to work with private health providers as well as the NHS and it was noted that this was being explored
- It was noted that new partnerships with Hall & Woodhouse and Nationwide, had recently commenced

Risk 7: The College fails to have positive employee satisfaction as measured by the annual staff survey.

The COO noted the following:

- The latest staff survey continued to reflect positive progress, however it was noted that there was still more work to do
- A new internal leadership programme had been launched in autumn 2024

The Committee discussed the process for follow up following a staff survey. The COO confirmed where there were issues, more detailed surveys were completed and follow up actions agreed and communicated. It was noted that some issues couldn't be easily fixed and staff and students did understand this. The benefits of staff getting involved in solving issues was noted.

Risk 8: The College finances result in ESFA financial health grade of "Requires Improvement" and/or breach of loan covenant tests.

The COO confirmed the following:

- Controls were in place restricting capital expenditure for 2024/25 to essential items only – however this was being revisited
- The impact of the recent budget change to Employer NI would be assessed once the level of government support had been clarified and forecast, it was currently assumed this would cover 50%

Risk 4: Safeguarding procedures do not operate effectively and students do not feel safe

This risk was always ongoing; however, Ofsted feedback had been very secure.

i) DfE/BPC/Kier - Risk Register

The COO presented the latest DfE Risk Register. The following points were noted:

- It was noted that the DfE allocated contingency had been used up
- It was confirmed that the DfE would fund some of the additional costs recently identified
- The impact on the updated timeline and the library being able to move back was being managed

	It was noted that the Finance and Resources committee would do a more detailed review of the DfE/BPC/Kier Risk Register at the committee meeting in March 2025. The Chair of the committee noted the importance of emerging risks. It was confirmed that the COO had recently discussed emerging risks with Validera. The COO was also planning to give some more time to this topic at SLT and would be encouraging SLT members to filter potential items for the Risk Register up to the Executive team for consideration and review. **RESOLVED:** The Committee Members reviewed and noted both the College and the DfE/BPC/Kier Risk Registers.	
025-2425	**CYBER THREAT REPORT** The Cyber Threat Report was presented by the Director of IT Services and the following key points noted: Accreditation: The College had regained Cyber Essentials accreditation in December 2024. The focus moving forward would be around planning capital requirements to replace workstations which would not be compliant from October 2025. Vulnerability Scan: The next penetration testing was planned for Spring 2025, during the Easter break. The college was currently out to tender for an internet filtering system. Cyber Attacks: The colleges internet and email protection system blocked most malware and phishing attacks. Since the last meeting a further 2,400 (2.5%) emails had been blocked post-delivery each week. Cyber Awareness: Staff phishing campaigns were conducted termly, using differentiated testing, to identify areas for improvement. The autumn term (2024) phishing test outcomes (with previous test outcomes) were; 94% (88%) of staff did not open the email, 5% (6%) of staff opened the email but did not submit any information, 1% (6%) of staff submitted information. It was noted that all of the staff who submitted information did so for the first time, and advice had been provided. The spring campaign was planned for the end of February 2025. The Cyber bulletin would go out ahead of this in February 2025. The Committee discussed the use of AI by security systems and it was noted that providers were harnessing AI in their systems to enhance alerts for the benefit of the college. GDPR: It was noted that some more work needed to be done around GDPR, and that some college staff needed to be better aware. The Committee discussed the resource within the IT team. It was noted that a recent Jisc survey had asked how many FE colleges had a cyber security specialist – and it was noted that 42% of colleges that responded had a dedicated support for this. It was confirmed that the BPC team were confident that they were covering things, but there was not a single individual who had this as a sole focus. The Director of IT services reported that he was not seeing any bigger threats than a few years ago. It was noted that college had good contacts with BU and they had a discussion once a term. The Director of IT Services was also part of the AoC SW Colleges IT network, so was well connected. The committee discussed how BPC would deal with a cyber-attack. The COO noted the business continuity preparations and that work was ongoing on this. Committee members discussed the benefits of simulating an attack. It	

	was noted that the National cyber security centre offered an exercise that could be used. The impact of an attack would be far reaching, and examples had recently been seen in the press. The Chair of the committee asked about controls in place when college staff left the organisation. It was confirmed that is a manual process but it worked well, and that there was also a process in place for suspended staff. **RESOLVED:** The Committee received and noted the latest Cyber Security Report.	
026-2425	**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** There were no items of AOB.	
027-2425	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee would be held on 10 June 2025.	
028-2425	**EVALUATION** It was noted that the Committee had undertaken the required activities.	
Daniel Hussain left the meeting at 09.55. Saba Rubai left the meeting at 09.55.		
029-2425	**CONFIDENTIALITY** Confidential points were recorded in Part B minutes.	