



**MINUTES
AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

Date: Tuesday 15 March 2022
By Microsoft Teams
Time: 6:00pm

Chair	Irfan Umarji
Corporation Members	Gurjit Kahlon, Pam Rowe
Co-opted Member	John Turnbull
In Attendance	Principal & CEO: Paul Stephen Chief Operating Officer (COO): Judith Abbott Deputy Principal: Jamie Purser Finance Director, Pieter Vermeulen Scrutton Bland, Internal Audit Service: Paul Goddard Scrutton Bland, Internal Audit Service: Alice Walker Funding Audit and Compliance Manager: Simeon Gibbons
Item 05	
Clerk to the Corporation	Judith Nelson

Item No	Item of business
PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
1.	Chair's Welcome & Opening Remarks The Chair welcome Gurjit Kahlon, Newham College Corporation governor as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee.
2.	Apologies For Absence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matt Fawcett ▪ Sarah Mason, RSM
3.	Declaration of Interests None.
4.	<p>a. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 30 November 2021 The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p> <p>b. Matters Arising and Action Points from the Meeting No outstanding matters arising.</p>
ITEMS FOR CHALLENGE, MONITORING & REVIEW	
5.	<p>College Audit Compliance Progress Update The Committee received an update on the funding and compliance audits undertaken by the College's Funding Audit and Compliance Manager.</p> <p>The Committee receive three comprehensive updates on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free School Meals – receiving 1 recommendation 2. Advanced Learner Loan funding – receiving 8 recommendations 3. Study Programmes – receiving 11 recommendations <p>The Committee commended Simeon Gibbons for undertaking the audits with extreme rigor,</p>

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	<p>noting the intention of ensuring that good practice is embedded throughout College processes and data recording; and they are a useful learning experience for the departmental managers. Hence there are a lot of findings shown, together with management responses.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>INTERNAL AUDIT RISK & ASSURANCE REPORTS Paul Goddard opened this item by introducing Alice Walker – client manager for Newham College</p> <p>Risk & Assurance Progress Report March 2022 The Committee noted that since last reported, Scrutton Bland have conducted two internal audits:</p> <p>a. Internal Audit Report</p> <p>i. Health & Safety audit received - assurance opinion Reasonable with 6 recommendations identified. This includes 4 Medium recommendations, versus an average of 4.9 recommendations for this type of audit. The College's score puts it around the middle percentile of education institutions audited by Scrutton Bland. All the recommended actions are already under way or completed and it is understood from verbal feedback that completion of these would elevate the assurance level to Good.</p> <p>Although this internal audit result is disappointing, as the College hoped to have implemented more of the recommendations prior to the audit, it is nonetheless an improvement on the previous Health and Safety audit in 2018 which was rated Limited assurance. It was also noted the health and safety priority has been primarily on Covid over the last two years, where efforts to mitigate impact have been very successful.</p> <p>The Committee noted that Scrutton Bland will be undertaking an Estates audit (date to be agreed) and will be seeking assurance that all health & safety audit recommendations have been fully implemented.</p> <p>ii. Apprenticeship Recruitment & Employer Engagement Apprenticeship Recruitment and Employer Engagement – interim assurance opinion Reasonable, with one recommendation versus an average of four recommendations for this type of audit. Some 67% of all similar audits were also rated as Reasonable assurance.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Risk Register Update The Committee received a position update on the risk register noting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No new risks have been added since the start of the year. ▪ Out of the nineteen risks identified, nine are judged to have reduced in severity at this point in the year while two have increased. ▪ The two risks that have increased in severity are failure to recruit and retain sufficient 16-18 students to meet or exceed allocation of 2,006; and failure to fully deliver the apprenticeship budget. For both risks, there is no longer any chance of achieving the original target for the year.
<p>8.</p>	<p>Cyber Security/Threats Update Report The Committee received a position update on the Cyber Security / Threats noting the following:</p> <p>a. Cyber Threat Reporting - since the College commenced tracking in January 2021 when the Barracuda web filters and firewalls were introduced, the indications are that the recent levels of threats and attacks have stayed relatively low.</p>

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	<p>b. Russia Warning: The College's service provider Jisc has warned that colleges and universities are likely targets, alongside other sectors, and reporting indicates that the chances of Russian state-sponsored action, including via social engineering, have increased significantly.</p> <p>c. Staff Awareness/Training - "Ensuring that fundamental protections are in place and are functioning correctly" is the most important priority. This applies in normal circumstances but is now even more critical.</p> <p>A "report phishiness" button has been added to the College's email tools, so that staff can quickly notify IT of any suspicious emails that have penetrated the firewalls. Staff and learners simply click an email and press the button. This will remove the email from their inbox and report it directly to IT. This makes it far easier to report suspect emails and stops users sending risky emails to IT which in itself can be a risk. This has been very popular since its introduction.</p> <p>d. Progress towards Cyber Essentials Plus</p> <p>Due to supply chain issues, the core switch replacement was delayed but has now commenced. This hugely mitigates risks to the College, both security risks and the very high risk of having a long-term outage due to reliance on old and obsolete equipment. The network speed at East Ham has now increased very significantly, providing a much better user experience.</p> <p>Work will commence later this month on replacing the obsolete servers. Edge switches that are not on the critical path for Cyber Essentials Plus will be replaced over time.</p> <p>e. Solar House</p> <p>To date Solar House has been out of scope for Cyber Essentials as it has not been on the College network. A new BT/JANET line will be installed during week commencing 14 March which will link it to the rest of the College network and improve cyber security at this location.</p>
9.	<p>Safeguarding & Prevent Update</p> <p>The Committee received a position update on the College's safeguarding and prevent activities and compliance measures that the College is currently undertaking to keep its learners and staff safe. The report covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an analysis of safeguarding cases ▪ staff survey ▪ 3-year trends and compliance of staff ▪ training schedules ▪ policy updates ▪ partnership relations and activities <p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead is scheduling roadshows with Heads of departments, as the recent staff survey revealed some confusion around student behaviour and safeguarding.</p>
10.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Paul Goddard made the Committee aware of the ESFA's good practice document, which talks about board assurance frameworks and the role of the Audit Committee.</p>
11.	<p>The Committee noted the date of the next meeting - 21 June 2022 @ 6:00pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18.55.</p>