Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee meeting held on
Tuesday 25 November 2025 at Truro College and on MS Teams

Members: Linda Batchelor, Ken Curtis, Lowenna Ovens and Sarah Sanderson

Also Present: Robert Townsend (Chair of the Corporation), Martin Tucker (Principal), Lisa Briscoe (Director of Student Experience), Adele Bull (Director of People, Culture & Curriculum), Lucy Langdon (Chief Finance Officer, CFO), Hayley McKinstrey (Director of Business Partnerships & Skills), Wendy Randle (Head of Governance), Nathan Coughlin (Bishop Fleming) and Roopa Patel-Harji (Validera)

Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
1	**Apologies and Declaration of Interests** Apologies were received from Chris Weavill (Governor) and Lucy Maggs (Director of Quality). The meeting remained quorate and there were no further declarations of interest to those previously disclosed.	
2	**Minutes** The minutes of the meeting held on 03 June 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.	
3	**Matters Arising** The Committee reviewed the report. The Head of Governance highlighted that some of the actions had been in place for some time and was tasked to liaise with action holders to identify completion dates for all actions.	WR
4& 5	**Progress against Strategic Objectives** **Objective 8 - Establish a clear sustainability strategy to achieve a target of net zero by 2050.** **Environmental Sustainability Policy** A lengthy discussion took place on the development of a Sustainability Strategy and the potential risk of progress in this area without sufficient allocation of resources, versus, resource light quick wins and cultural gains which could be achieved. A Governor referenced the government guidance for college leadership teams and the development of climate action plans, reflecting that the policy covers many of the requirements, with adaptation and resilience areas requiring further review. The following actions were agreed: ▪ develop a Sustainability Strategy; and associated timeline. ▪ consider the inclusion of *progress within environmental sustainability due to resourcing* in the risk register. ▪ benchmark with similar colleges to identify good practice for resourcing in this area and value for money proposals.	 LL LL LL/AB

	▪ identify how environmental sustainability can be captured within the planned Curriculum Strategy and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The Committee received the policy and agreed to recommend to Board its approval.	AB LM KC
6 6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4	**Risk Management** **Risk Management Plan 2025/26** The Committee received the plan and agreed to recommend approval to Board. **Risk Register** Following previous feedback from Committees, a further developed, more refined risk register was presented for Committee review. The Committee noted the increasing risks around competition and transport and the introduction of fraud. **Risk Appetite statement** In response to a Governor question, risk tolerances and appetite will be linked to the risk register and grouping of risks will be completed. The Committee agreed the Risk Appetite statement. **Risk Management Policy** The Committee agreed to recommend to Board approval of the policy, noting this now included links to fraud management. In response to Governor questions, the following points were noted: ▪ the risk rating of a Callywith College risk has increased due to GDPR issues shared with Corporation. ▪ A risk management internal audit was completed as part of the previous year's internal audit programme and testing of risks is completed as part of every internal audit. ▪ There have been no reports of fraud; there have been some non-significant reports of missing stock. ▪ The internal fraud risk rating of medium rather than low will be explored, with an update provided at the next meeting.	 KC LL LL
7 7.1 7.2 7.2i 7.2ii 7.2iii 7.2iv 7.3	**Internal Audit Plan 2024 – 25** **Progress against the plan** The Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 was reported as completed. **Internal Audit reports** The Committee received the reports and Validera provided a verbal update on progress: Core Financial Controls/ General Ledger – adequate assurance provided, with 6 recommendations. Information Governance – adequate assurance provided, with 11 recommendations. Bursary & Learner Support – adequate assurance provided, with 5 recommendations. Follow up – adequate assurance provided. **Recommendations tracker** The Committee received the paper. A Governor sought assurance on the recommendations, to include progress against these, and whether they were broadly comparable to other colleges and cleared at reasonable pace. The resource implications on progress made was noted, with target dates adjusted	

	accordingly. The External Auditor reflected on the tracker and reported positively against the recommendations and progress being made.	
7.4	**Annual report 2024/25** The Committee reviewed and agreed the Internal Annual 2024/25 report. It was noted that during 2024/25, 5 internal audits had been completed with a total of 31 recommendations provided. The Committee noted the opinion of the Internal Auditors; that the College has adequate and effective risk management, governance and control processes in place. The Committee recommended to Board the review of this report and to note the assurance provided.	KC
7.5	**Progress against the Internal Audit 2025/26 plan** The incorrect progress report had been uploaded to the meeting pack; the November report will be circulated once received. Validera verbally updated that internal audit briefs have been approved and they are in the process of scheduling the internal audits. There had been some confusion with the meeting pack; Validera will review the papers for accuracy one week prior to the meeting and inform the College at this point, of any concerns.	LL Validera /HG
8 8.1 8.2	**Draft Final Accounts for 2024/25** **Report of the Members of the Corporation and Financial Statements 2024/25** **External Auditors Key Issues Discussion Document** It was noted that the draft papers had been considered and recommended by the Finance, Infrastructure and People Committee at their November meeting and that the Chair of the Corporation and Principal, both members of FIP, were present at this meeting. The Committee received the draft final accounts for 2024/25, prepared on a going concern basis, and invited Bishop Fleming to present the agenda papers. An explanation of the external audit process was provided. It was reported that the audit had gone smoothly, with the auditors providing a clear opinion that effective controls were in place, that no material issues had arisen during the audit and that there was an unmodified entry around going concern. The significant risks identified as part of the audit plan and the work completed to address these were noted, including management override of controls, revenue recognition and pension assumptions. Regarding pension assumptions, the College has not recognised the surplus, as recommended, and the next revaluation of the scheme is underway which will impact contribution rates from April 2026. Significant gains had been received under disposals due to assets sold in year and therefore this was an improvement on last year. These were considered as part of the going concern reviews. Accounting standards changes were highlighted, specifically the new FEHE SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice) which has been published. Changes have been considered with the College and shared with the Committee; the College will need to be comfortable with this approach for August 26. In response to a Governor question, this will have a greater impact within the HE sector and in areas such as operating leases.	

8.3 8.4	**Letter of Representation and Management Letter from the Auditor** Standard letter received and to be shared with the Board. **Regulatory Self Assessment Questionnaire** Completed by the College as part of their self review, this document provides the starting point for the external audit; the auditors undertake testing on the outcomes. The Committee thanked the Head of Finance and Chief Finance Officer for their input into the College's draft final accounts for 2024/25. The Committee recommended to Board approval of the Financial Statements for 2024/25, the Letter of Representation and Management Letter from the Auditor and the Regulatory Self Assessment Questionnaire. The KIDD will also be shared with the Board.	
9	**Remuneration Committee Annual report** The Committee received the report noting that typically this report would go to the Corporation meeting in the first part of the Autumn term and would be shared Corporation. A Governor challenged how the Board currently received assurance from all Committees that they had fulfilled their annual terms of reference and contributed to effective governance. It was noted that the annual Board self assessment questionnaire and committee effectiveness meetings, where held, should enable some of this reflection. It was also recognised that following changes to the governance structure a mid term review is planned by Search, Governance and Remuneration (S,G&R) on the effectiveness of the governance structure, and there is a review of the TOR and scheme of delegation planned for the 2026/27 academic year. The Committee agreed to recommend to S,G&R the need to reflect on how Committees provide assurance to the Board on the fulfilment of their terms of reference and effective Committee governance, to include whether annual reports from Committees should be provided to Board.	KC
10	**Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Annual Report** The Committee approved the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Annual Report, noting the assurance that this report provides to the Corporation. The report will be shared with Corporation.	KC
11	**Annual Teacher's Pension report** The Committee received the report.	
12	**Annual Whistleblowing report** The Director of People, Culture and Curriculum reported that there had been no whistleblowing reports. It was reported that the HR team plan to further review policy and reporting of whistleblowing. A Governor requested written reports.	
13 13.1	**Policy** **Counter Fraud**	

13.2 13.3	The Committee received the revised policy following Governor feedback at the previous meeting and a review of other colleges Counter Fraud policies. The Committee agreed to recommend to Board its approval. **Gifts & Hospitality** The CFO reported that this was now a separate policy with an annual summary reviewed by the Chair of the Corporation and Principal. The Head of Governance advised this summary be reviewed by the ARA Committee and a Governor emphasised the need to continually remind staff of proper process. The Committee approved the policy. **Anti-Bribery** In response to a Governor question on whether the College undertake internal training on bribery it was reported that general awareness training is delivered, with fraud training part of the TES training offer. The Committee agreed to recommend to Board the approval of the Anti Bribery policy. A Governor was keen to explore how policies and policy updates are shared with staff. The College are reviewing their induction process, yet current practice includes making staff aware of policies during induction, via signposting. The College will consider how to raise staff awareness of new/ updated policies in the staff 'what you need to know' weekly email.	KC WR KC MT
14	**Policy management** The Head of Governance and Chief Finance Officer reported that progress remains slow, they are testing the use of a compliance portal to improve practice. When challenged on completion dates, they would plan for June 2026.	
15 15.1 15.2	**Governance** **Committee Cycle of Business 2026** Approved. **Membership** The Committee recognised the need for additional members, noting that Christopher Weavill had joined this Committee. The Search, Governance & Remuneration Committee continue to meet with potential candidates.	
	Non Committee members left the meeting	
16	**Private meeting with the Auditors** The Committee held a private meeting with the External Auditors; the Internal Auditors had left the meeting. Bishop Fleming reported that the external audit process worked really well, with greater delegation to the new Head of Finance. The Committee considered concerns with the consistency and performance of the internal auditor provision despite the Chair meeting with the lead in the summer term.	
17	**Dates of next meeting** Tues 24 February 2026 Tues 16 June 2026	

	All meetings start at 4pm in the Valency Building, Truro campus. Sometimes there will be a training session at 3:30pm.	