

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 5.30pm**  
**Remote online meeting via Zoom**

**Present:**

Patrick Kwong – Associate Member  
Gabrielle Williams Hamer – Chair of the Committee

**Apologies:**

Chukwuweta Uraih – Foundation Governor

**In attendance:**

Clare Baskott - Clerk to the Governing Body  
Margaret Searle - Director of Finance and Resources  
Graham Thompson - Principal

**The meeting was quorate throughout.**  
**All reports had been circulated prior to the meeting.**

**Minutes**

**Item 1 Opening Prayer**

The Principal opened the meeting in prayer at 6:03pm.

**Item 2 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Chukwuweta Uraih.

**Item 3 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**Item 4 Committee time with Auditors (if required)**

Not applicable.

**Item 5 Minutes of previous meeting, Tuesday 12th November 2024: for review and agreement – Chair of the Committee**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

**Item 6 Matters Arising**

None.

**Item 7 Election of Vice Chair of the Committee**

Patrick Kwong was elected as Vice Chair of the Committee with a two-year term of office.

**Item 8 Standing item: Cyber Security**

**Cyber Essentials Accreditation Update**

The Principal reported that the college was preparing for the Cyber Essentials accreditation, which was required for public bodies and will be a condition of funding from September 2025.

The new IT contractors had recently discovered that the previous in-house IT provider had not renewed the Cyber Essentials certification. The new accreditation was scheduled to be in place for April 2025.

#### **Network Infrastructure**

- RM, the IT provider since August 2024, had conducted a comprehensive network assessment.
- The key findings included concerns about end-of-life servers and inadequate anti-virus software coverage.
- A new anti-virus software rollout had been completed across the college.

#### **Cyber Security Audit and Action Plan**

- A recent cyber security audit report provided a technical road map for compliance.
- All actions had been RAG-rated by priority.
- This roadmap will be implemented with RM before the Cyber Essentials accreditation.

#### **Current Security Status**

- The Principal confirmed there were no immediate security risks.
- The college was in the process of updating all its IT policies.
- Penetration testing would be part of the accreditation process.

**Governor Question: Are you confident that the action plan can be achieved in the timeline?**

**Response: The team is working to meet the April 2025 deadline. JISC would be handling the Cyber Essentials accreditation. Additional costs will be incurred this year, with projects being phased across two budgets. The long-term strategy includes transitioning to a cloud-based system.**

It was agreed that the Principal will provide an update on RM's progress at the next meeting.

**Action: Principal.**

#### **Item 9 Internal Audit – Chair of the Committee Audit Committee to review and agree plans for internal audit and key priorities for 2025-26**

The Committee noted that the internal audits for 2024-25 were confirmed as: Learner Recruitment and Funding Assurance.

**Governor question: Does the college have a Continuity Planning document?**

**Response: Yes.**

**Governor question: When did the Continuity Plan last have to be used?**

**Response: Before and during the Pandemic.**

A robust discussion took place about internal audit requirements for 2025-26.

**The Committee agreed that in addition to Learner Recruitment, the Committee would also audit GPDR and Data Protection. Action: Director Finance and Resources to contact auditors for the briefs to forward to the Committee.**

#### **Item 9.1 Internal Audit Action Report – Margaret Searle**

The Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview of the Internal Audit Action Report and reported that there were no significant changes since the last meeting.

The Director explained that the Action Plan dated back to 2022 and was linked to the on-going Cyber Essentials accreditation, as outlined above.

#### **Item 10 FMCE improvement plan: monitoring of progress – Graham Thompson**

The Principal gave an overview of the FMCE improvement plan.

##### **Enrolment**

The Principal explained that funding was based on student numbers. There were 1062 applications as at 3/2/2025, which was down in comparison to the last two-years. However, 791 offers had already been accepted, this was in comparison to 647 at the same time last year. Applications will stay open until enrolment and were expected to increase after easter.

The Principal gave an overview of the difficulties in curriculum planning, as students were able to apply to as many institutions as they wished, so it was difficult to know how many applications would convert into enrolments.

The Principal gave an overview of the additional open events; including the introduction of an additional open morning, where prospective students and parents could see the college in operation. The responses to these new events had been positive.

The Principal gave an overview of the college's additional income stream from lettings. The income had dipped following the pandemic but was steadily increasing year on year. The college facilities were being advertised.

##### **Succession Planning**

The Principal gave an overview of the need for succession planning specifically for the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, whose term of office was due to expire in June 2025 and for the Director of Finance and Resources role for the future.

The Committee commended the wealth of experience and knowledge that the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee brought to the GB.

#### **Item 11 Risk Management**

##### **Item 11.1 To receive the updated Risk Register**

##### **Item 11.2 Principal to update on the key risks and any updates – Graham Thompson**

##### **Curriculum and Qualifications**

The Principal reported that BTECs could continue to be offered for the next academic year. The discussion explored the overlap with T Levels, noting the college currently ran T Level Management and Administration which required an industry placement and had higher entry requirements.

It had been agreed that curriculum planning will be on the agenda for the Focus Morning on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2025. **Action: Clerk.**

##### **Financial**

The Principal informed the Committee that the college was working with the ESFA to ensure financial astuteness in curriculum design. T Level Broadcast, TV and Media was running at a loss in its first year with four students enrolled. Classical Civilisation continued with ten students annually and was also operating at a loss.

The Reserves Policy will be presented at the next F&R committee meeting , covering recommended reserve levels and statutory account requirements.

The Director of Finance and Resources provided an overview of the college's bank accounts.

#### **Infrastructure**

The Principal reported that the MIS infrastructure work continued with RM to achieve Cyber Essentials certification, as had been discussed earlier.

The potential reputational impact of any cyber-attack had been noted.

#### **Safeguarding**

The Principal informed that changes to local policing had occurred, with the police liaison officer role having moved to local policing. A named officer remained available when required.

#### **Item 12 To receive an update on the Board Assurance Framework and to update on key changes – Graham Thompson/Clare Baskott**

**The Committee noted the Board Assurance Framework.**

It was agreed that the Clerk will introduce a revised BAF. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **Item 13 Auditors Performance Review**

**Item 13.1 To review the performance of Buzzacott (external auditors)**

**Item 13.2 To review the performance of Scrutton Bland (internal auditors)**

The Committee noted the reports.

#### **Item 14 Standing closing items**

**Item 14.1 Committee review of effectiveness, membership and skills: online questionnaire for completion after the meeting**

Clerk to circulate. **Action: Clerk.**

#### **Item 15 Any Other Business**

None.

#### **Item 16 Identification of confidential items**

None.

#### **Item 17 Dates of next meeting**

Tuesday 6th May 2025 at 5:30pm

#### **Item 18 Close of meeting**

The meeting closed at 6:32pm.

**The minutes will be electronically signed following approval by the Committee.**