

NEW COLLEGE, SWINDON

Minutes of the Audit committee meeting held on Tuesday 15th May 2018

Present: Alexey Smirnov (Chair), Dennis Bridges, Sam McCurdy

With: Richard Harris, Director of Finance and Partnerships
Ian Hole, Head of ICT
Robin Pritchard, Gateway Assure Ltd (minutes 797- only)
Tracy Scaife, Clerk to the Corporation

791 Apologies for absence – received from Peter Foskett, Peter O’Brien, Richard Bott, Carol Davey. The meeting noted that Robin Pritchard would be arriving late.

792 Disclosure of Interests – none received.

793 Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th November 2017 – agreed as a correct record.

794 Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting held on 15th November 2017 – none.

795 Risk Management update – report by Director of Finance and Partnerships received and noted.

Reference was made to Care Vocational, a former partner. They have recently been inspected by Pearson and it is expected that they will say that Care Vocational are not fit for purpose and certificates issued to learners will be withdrawn. There is recourse to recover costs from Care Vocational but in practice this will be difficult.

The new FE Insolvency Regime was noted. The aim of the Regime is to bring FE in-line with other businesses and to protect learner provision if a college was to find itself in severe financial distress. The Regime also has implications for governors, with Courts having the power to disqualify governors and banning them from acting as a governor and as a director of a company.

796 Re-appointment of Internal and External Auditors – verbal report by Director of Finance and Partnerships received and noted.

The meeting noted that they could extend the current contracts of both the Internal and External Auditors for a further one year.

RESOLVED: that the contracts for both Gateway Assure Ltd. (Internal Auditors) and Mazars (External Auditors) be extended for a further one year.

ACTION: RH to advise Gateway Assure Ltd. and Mazars of the extension to their contracts for a further one year.

797 Critical Systems Review – report by Ian Hole, Head of ICT received and noted.

Critical systems are those back-office systems deemed business critical to the successful running of the college. The college has a Critical Systems Group that meets four times per year, chaired by Ian Hole. The meetings receive reports on identified critical systems and these form a register of systems and are added to the service catalogue maintained by the IT department. The catalogue identifies the administrators and owners of each system, licensing and contract arrangements, risks and issues, future plans and roadmaps as well as the technical details required to maintain those systems. There are 15 systems currently in scope.

The new GDPR has given rise to some concerns within the HR systems and these are being looked at. GDPR training sessions have been held with managers and training resources are currently being developed for all staff to undertake.

There have been some issues with the Tribal EBS system and alternatives are being looked at however the college is in a contract with them and it leaves no room for any changes. The contract is a standard contract issued to all clients. The replacement of the HR/Finance/payroll system is becoming urgent as support or some parts of it will cease within the next 18 months.

798 Internal Audit Block 1 report – report from Gateway Assure Limited received and noted.

The report covers Corporate Governance (focussing on the arrangements for the management of the Great Western Academy (GWA), Departmental Review – 3G pitch and Partnership arrangements. Corporate Governance received adequate assurance with 3 recommendations, Departmental Review – 3G pitch received substantial assurance with 3 recommendations and the Partnership arrangements received adequate assurance with 6 recommendations. All recommendations have been agreed by management.

With regard to GWA, clarification is sought with regard to the capacity of the appointments of staff from the college as to whether they are college or personal appointments.

With regard to Partnerships, the Quality Assessor role needs to be reviewed. The current contract ends on 31st July 2018.

799 Audit Action List – report by Director of Finance and Partnerships received and noted.

The meeting noted that the following actions be removed from the list:

2/16.2 - Corporate Governance

4/16.2 - IT Health Check

Follow up – Curriculum Course and Quality Management – Rationalise Reports

1/17.1 - Key Financial Controls: Procurement – Approved Suppliers List

4/17.2 - Student Records: Achievement Rates – Documented Procedures

5/17.2 - Department Review: Fast Forward – Performance Management Reports

6/17.1, 6/17.2, 6/17.3, 6/17.4 - Data Security Health Check: Partners

9/17.1 and 9/17.4 are both priorities for the Facilities Manager. Approved suppliers have all now been accounted for and all checks for 'live' suppliers have been checked.

800 Delegated management authority – report by Director of Finance and Partnerships received and noted.

The meeting noted that this is the bringing together of regulations into one document to provide more clarity. There is now a more structured approach and a streamlining exercise has been undertaken of those who can sign off orders etc. It was further noted that with regard to delegations, the income side as well as expenditure needs to be considered.

801 Any other business – none raised.

802 Date of next meeting – Wednesday 20th June 2018 at 0830