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**Minutes of the meeting of the**

**Audit Committee held on**

**Monday 13 July 2020, at 9.00am via Microsoft Teams**

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| **Present:** | Mark Bass - Chair  Balbinder Panesar  Mahmud Rahman (Co-opted) |  |
| **In attendance** | Wijay Pitumpe - Chief Finance & Enterprise Officer (CFEO)  Maxine Deslandes – Director of Finance & Estates  Mike Cheetham – RSM (MC)  Victoria Eastwood – Chief Governance Officer  Veronica Anthony-David – Chief Transformation Officer (part of the meeting only)  Bharat Rathod – Head of CIS |  |

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Sarkis Mazmanian, Nick Fanning (RSM) and Mark Eagle (MacIntyre Hudson).

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Members were reminded of their responsibility to declare an interest in relation to specific items on the Agenda if appropriate. None were anticipated.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting – Monday 1 June 2020**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 1 June 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

1. **Matters Arising/Matters requiring College staff to withdraw**

An update on outstanding actions from the June 2020 Committee meeting was provided:

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| **Ref.** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **By (Deadline)** | **Update** |
| 6. | Post meeting note to confirm arrangements for learner numbers audit. | DOFE/CFEO | ASAP | **Included in Agenda Item 5** |
| 6. | DOFE to liaise with CTO to obtain post meeting note re DBS recommendation. | DOFE | ASAP | **Complete** |
| 6**.** | Post-meeting note required for exams booking system recommendation to provide an update and explanation for the September 2021 implementation date. | DOFE/CFEO | ASAP | **Included in Agenda Item 5** |
| 11. | Dates of review and version of Anti-Bribery and Anti-Fraud Policies to be reviewed. Font of the policies to be considered. | CFEO | ASAP | **Complete** |
| 12. | The Chair requested a post meeting note to advise when the 2019/20 audit would take place. | CFEO | ASAP | **Included in Agenda Item 5** |
| 13. | CGO to arrange next meeting at the end of July/beginning of August 2020. | CGO | ASAP | **Complete** |

1. **Update on Post-meeting notes from the June Audit Committee Meeting**

**DBS Recommendation**

The Chief Transformation Officer (CTO) reported that a lot of work had taken place and all DBS checks had now been recorded apart from three. Two of the members of staff were on long term sick leave and had been written to but a response was yet to be received. The third member of staff was living away from home and unable to access their ID documentation, however, this was now being managed through the College disciplinary process. It was noted that the current process using hardcopies etc did not work and the new automated process would provide a streamlined approach.

The Chair advised that the Committee’s main requirement was to see a system in place to ensure that the actions within the recommendation were not repeated.

Bal Panesar stated that it should be reinforced to staff that this was an essential requirement and diarising renewals should not be a difficult process. The CTO replied that in other organisations an automated system was in place that provided a trigger for renewals. That system would be in place in the College by September 2020 and the DBS policy was being relaunched at the SLT meeting held tomorrow (14 July 2020) to reinforce to staff how crucial the process was.

*The Chair thanked the CTO for her update and she left the meeting.*

The Chair stated that this was something to keep a health check on. Bal Panesar suggested that at the next meeting of the Committee in September 2020 there should be a recap from the CTO to demonstrate that the system was working. This was agreed.

**Action: Recap on DBS system to be provided at the September meeting of the Audit Committee.**

**Learner Number Audit**

Mike Cheetham reported that RSM were still waiting for the College to re-open to be able to undertake the learner number audit and this was still therefore work in progress to agree the timing. He advised that if the information could be accessed and scanned, the work could be undertaken remotely but if staff were unable to access the information, the audit could not take place.

In response to a comment from the Head of CIS (HCIS), Mike Cheetham confirmed that the external ESFA audits were going ahead and had not been delayed.

The HCIS stated that, at this time of the year, key priorities within CIS and the College were dealing with re-enrolment and enrolment of new learners. There had been some disruption due to the work required to submit predicted grades and CIS staff were now dealing with timetabling for the new year which was going to be different to the previous system. It was proposed that the learner number audit be pushed back to October 2020 when key staff would be able to fully engage with this.

Mike Cheetham stated that the ESFA audit would take place in October 2020 and would result in there being no time for the College to correct any errors.

The Chair advised that the audit did need to be given some priority. Bal Panesar questioned whether the audit could take place at the end of August by which time the new timetabling and enrolment process should have been completed. The HCIS replied that the beginning of the year would be challenging, and staff would be working on registers. The Chief Finance & Enterprise Officer (CFEO) stated that the ESFA chose which colleges to audit on a risk basis. Mike Cheetham added that some were risk based but some colleges were chosen at random. The list had not yet been issued from the ESFA therefore the College could not yet be aware whether they were on the list.

The Chair stated if the College did find it was on the list then the priority changed, and it needed to be ensured that relevant staff would be around to act on this if and when required. The CFEO suggested that on the condition that the College was not selected for the ESFA audit, to agree to the learner numbers audit taking place in October 2020. If the College was selected for the audit then the learner numbers audit would have to take place at the end of August 2020. Mike Cheetham stated that he would not have any staff available to undertake the audit in October 2020 as staff would be undertaking the ESFA audits. Bal Panesar stated that there was a need to be specific with dates rather than talking about general months and questioned whether the end of September would provide the auditors enough time to pursue this. Mike Cheetham replied that he would speak to the team and revert as soon as possible. The CFEO stated that the last week in September and first week in October would be preferable. This was agreed.

**Action: Mike Cheetham to advise of availability to undertake the learner numbers audit during the last week of September and the first week of October 2020.**

**Exams Booking System Recommendation**

The HCIS reported that the issue was to have in place a system to charge the resit fees for the students. The recommendation date for implementation of September 2021 had been chosen because the policy had been approved and the booking system was ready to charge the resit fees this year, however, as the exams had not taken place this year due to covid-19, the resits had not taken place and could therefore not be recorded. In response to a query from the Chair, the HCIS confirmed that the exams booking system was in place and ready to be used.

Bal Panesar stated that there was the option to sit exams in October 2020 if there were disputes over the grades. The HCIS responded that this would be common across colleges on the advice from the DfE. The College would implement this but these exams were not resits from previous exams. After discussion, it was confirmed that the exams booking system would be used to book the exams post August 2020 but no fees would be charged.

**Action: Exams booking system to be used to book exams post August but no fees to be charged.**

**Subcontracting Control Assurance Audit**

The CFEO reported that the Subcontracting control assurance audit would take place tomorrow (14 July 2020) and submitted to the ESFA by 31 July 2020.

**Agreed: That the current position be noted.**

1. **Any Other Business**

There was no further business.

**Date and Time of Next Meeting - September 2020 – Date and time to be agreed.**

It was agreed that a meeting would be scheduled towards the end of September 2020.

The Chair thanked all present for their contributions.

The meeting concluded at 9.30am.



**ACTIONS FROM MEETINGS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE**

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| **Ref.** | **Action** | **Responsibility** | **By (Deadline)** | **Update** |
| 5. | Recap on DBS system to be provided at the September meeting of the Audit Committee. | CTO | September 2020 |  |
| 5. | Mike Cheetham to advise of availability to undertake the learner numbers audit during the last week of September and the first week of October 2020. | Mike Cheetham | ASAP |  |
| 5. | Exams booking system to be used to book exams post August but no fees to be charged. | Head of CIS | September 2020 |  |

Signed…………………………………….. Date……………………………….

Mark Bass (Chairman)