

The Henley College Corporation

**MINUTES of the Meeting of the Audit Committee**

**held on Monday 2nd March 2015 at 9.00 am**

**Members present:**

Ian McGaw (Chair)

Simon White

Charles Wiggin

**In attendance:**

Sue Bishop, Director of Finance

Jayne Davis, Principal

Jim McCaffrey, Health, Safety & Security Manager

Robyn Vitty, Marketing and Communications Manager

Claire Harris, Corporation Secretary

**AS THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE WAS INQUORATE, THESE NOTES ARE FOR INFORMATION ONLY.**

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| **Agenda item** | **Minute** | **Action by:** |
| **2.1 14/15** | **Opening of meeting** |  |
|  | The meeting opened at 9:17 am. |  |
| **2.2 14/15** | **Apologies for absence** |  |
|  | Apologies for absence were received from the Jacqui Williams. |  |
| **2.3 14/15** | **Declaration of interests** |  |
|  | No interests were declared. |  |
| **2.4 14/15** | **Minutes of the meeting of 10th November 2014** |  |
|  | The committee agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting of 9th June 2014 and the minutes were signed by the Chair. |  |
| **2.5 14/15** | **Matters arising** |  |
|  | There were no matters arising from the minutes. |  |
| **2.6 14/15** | **Risk Management** |  |
| **2.6(a) 14/15** | **Risk Management Group Minutes** |  |
|  | JDav circulated the notes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd February 2015. A number of items from the minutes were discussed in further detail.  **Smoking and Reputational Risk.** Nikki Hounsell (Property and Estates Manager) is in the process of obtaining a quote for a smoking shelter for the Deanfield site. The location is to be determined and will have cameras pointed towards it once in place. Anti-smoking policies are to be continued, but the provision of a shelter should bring the smokers to one location and hopefully away from the entrance and the road outside.  IMG asked what the plans for the Rotherfield site were. There are staff issues involved with monitoring a site away from the reception area; Deanfield will be tackled first. JM suggested that a camera be placed behind the hall at Rotherfield.  **Substantial squeeze on College finances.** A planned mitigating action is to maximise room utilisation. A review of who is teaching when, is in progress and will be produced in September.  **Review of use of Delphi House.** SB reported that the five-year lease, currently £20,000 per annum, expires in July and the decision has been made not to renew the lease. There is capacity to absorb the activities that take place there elsewhere.  **Business Continuity Plan***.* This is being sent to the local Police to review, before being revamped and sending to SLT. The Police will keep the finished version in their offices.  RV reported that this also feeds into the Communication Strategy. RV has met with JDav to discuss possible events that would attract media attention, for example, recent cases of radicalisation within schools, Ofsted inspections and student behaviour. RV constantly monitors twitter and JDav is making it known to students that she has a good grasp of what is going on. |  |
| **2.6 (b) 14/15** | **Risk Register – new format** |  |
|  | JDav circulated an updated Risk Register for 2014/15. JDav explained that she had taken the risk register as it was and scored it slightly differently. The 41 risks have been reduced to 20. Some have been merged, some removed.  Descriptors have been changed to “Likelihood of event happening” with a rating from 1 – very low, “very unlikely event could happen” to 5 – certain, “confident event is likely to happen”. “Impact/Severity of the event on College” is rated from 1 – very low, “little to no disruptive or negative impact on College, to 5 – very high, “becomes a crisis and Emergency Planning is needed”.  The new format was noted. SW suggested a Top 5 summary, listing the items in order of risk and highlighting definite/actual risks. |  |
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| **2.6(c) & 14/15** | **Identification of Top Risk Items** |  |
|  | JDav then expanded on the highest scoring risk items on the Risk Register.  Full-time Enrolments: The risk that the College will not meet its full-time student numbers has materialised, in lower student numbers and applications. JDav is currently looking at marketing approaches, to convert applications to attendance. It will be difficult to function with continuous falling numbers.  CW commented that the impact on apprenticeships is close to his heart. JDav agreed that it is difficult to convince students to think about the benefits of long-term prospects, over immediate wages. Henley College Training is hoping to expand its apprenticeships and is exceeding its targets. It was noted that it might be perceived as inconvenient for companies to cope with the associated paperwork, but CW felt for him, paperwork was not the issue, rather supply of good candidates.  Falling income and increased expenditure. Reductions in EFA funding would affect the College’s reputation, breadth of provision, pay and staffing.  CW expressed concern over the issue of pensions; long-term this could be a big problem if there are insufficient funds in the pot. SB explained that this matter is reviewed regularly. She looks to see if Oxfordshire has a particular issue, which it doesn’t and there are no sensible alternatives to using the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Pensions are a potential risk but it is a key part of staff recruitment and retention. Other authorities also feel on balance, it is better to stay with the LGPS.  CW sought clarification on how the score was reached and JDav explained that 50% meant that the risk was likely to have an impact on the College. SW suggested that it was made clear which of the risks were actually happening/affecting the College, which was noted.  Ofsted. The risk is that the College fails to get a good report. This risk has been given the highest severity rating of 5.  Social Media. Examples were given of students making inappropriate comments with reference to the College, on Twitter. Outlets such as Facebook also provide the opportunity to use bullying language regarding other students. These areas are monitored constantly where possible by RV, but Facebook comments in particular are outside of the College’s control.  Home to College Transport. Cuts to services and subsidies are very likely to affect student numbers. SB gave further detail, in that there are 10 to 12 bus routes, serviced by three bus companies. Most routes are catered for by Horseman and all routes are subject to a tender process. There has been a down turn in Oxfordshire numbers and the County Council subsidy has decreased. The routes have therefore been reviewed with the providers and the start times. The travelling times and routes have been improved, allowing a reduction of one bus route.  JDav noted Members’ comments on Risk Register and will continue with the revised format, highlighting the definite risks. |  |
| **2.6(d) 14/15** | **Risk Management Action Plan** |  |
|  | To follow at the next meeting. |  |
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| **2.7 14/15** | **Health & Safety** |  |
| **2.7(a)**  **14/15** | **Policy – Management of Violence and Aggression** |  |
|  | As violence and aggression are more prevalent in society, JM felt it timely to review the above policy, which was circulated for information. JM noted that Lone Working has stood out as a potential area of risk, particularly for teachers meeting with parents alone. Bullet points on safe working practices are to be produced for staff. SW suggested that a short statement, like those displayed in hospitals and GP practices be produced and displayed in reception areas and in classrooms. |  |
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| **2.7(b) 14/15**  **2.7(c)** | **Policy – Bomb Alert**  JM gave the background to the bomb policy, which had been produced around seven years ago, following several hoax calls. The policy has recently been updated for review. JM explained that he goes through the policy with all members of staff. RV suggested that the Social Media policy be added to the policy once finalised, and SW suggested the use of a flow chart, to make the procedure more visual. JDav noted these comments and suggested that JM produce a text and flowchart version to see which works best.  **Report on “Preventing and Detecting Radicalisation training**  JM reported that he and Karen Caulfield (KC), Head of Student Services, had attended the Preventing and Protecting from Radicalisation seminar. 275 people attended and the seminar had been very instructive. For example, the Police made a report on the Birmingham schools “Trojan” case. It took over seven years for Governors to infiltrate schools and subsequently influence school polices, who would be employed and dismissed and so on. KC would like to run RAP or Raise Awareness and Prevent training, subject to locating a trainer for the region. JM suggested asking an inspirational speaker to attend College, as this will be very affecting for students.  JM also reported that it had been suggested at the seminar, that the word radicalisation should be avoided, as this is a key word for students when they reach university, where radical thinking is encouraged. Prevent is also a word that the Muslim community doesn’t like, but this is difficult to avoid as it is the current Government’s term for preventative action. Finally, JM reported that Ofsted representatives at the seminar had stated that tutorials should cover religious and cultural matters. |  |
| **2.8**  **14/15** | **Internal Audit Services - Buzzacott** |  |
|  | SB reported that Buzzacott were not present at the meeting, as they had held their first internal review the previous week. Three Auditors were in for three days. There were no significant findings so far and the report was currently being drafted. On the 20 April the Auditors will be reviewing payroll and on 27 April, MIS, IT and audit. There should be three reports for submission to the June Audit meeting. |  |
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| **2.9**  **2.10**  **14/15** | **Financial Statements Auditor – Buzzacott**  SB had completed a review of the Performance of the Financial Statements Auditors – 2013/14. SB felt that, as previously, Buzzacott provide a good, planned audit and had scored the audit highly to reflect that. The score was lower for staff continuity, as staff on the audit had changed, but the Audit Manager remained the same. SB explained that there was no score for value for money, as the audit is subject to a three-year tender, (with an option to renew for two years). The contract will therefore be reviewed/ re-tendered every three years. CW noted that the internal/external audit is a good arrangement and helps keep costs down.  SB confirmed that IMG was happy for the performance Indicators to be forwarded to the forthcoming audit.  **Any other business** |  |
|  | Audit of Paradise Road legal action.  JDav asked whether Governors would like to proceed with an audit of the legal action taken, concerning Paradise Road.  It was noted that it had been a unique situation but that it had been expensive. The question was asked as to whether it would be useful to review whether lawyers could have been instructed differently. Many of the Governors involved directly in the case have now left.  CW felt it would be good to conduct a review, for the sake of transparency and to manage risk of damage to the reputation of the College.  SW offered to carry out a review, and requested CW to help. SW will need to meet with SB and JDAV for the background information and will meet with CW to finalise the report. |  |
| **2.11 14/15** | **Items to Take to Next Corporation Meeting** |  |
|  | * Updated Risk Register, with the Top 5 risks summarised * Appeal for further members of the Audit Committee |  |
| **2.12**  **14/15** | **Date and Time of Next Meeting** |  |
|  | The next scheduled meeting is on Monday 8th June 2015 at 9:00am. |  |
| **2.13 14/15** | **Meeting closure** |  |
|  | The meeting closed at 10.40 am |  |

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 2nd March 2015 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair

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