GREENHEAD COLLEGE CORPORATION	
Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee	
Monday 16 June 2025, 4.30pm Held in Upper Greenhead House, Greenhead College	
Governors present:	**Alison Jones (left 17.30); Chris Kneale; Ed Wynn (Chair); Michaela Boyrslawskyj (via Teams); Mohammed Usman (via Teams – from 17.59); Sally Watts; Stuart Irving (from 16.48); Yuliana Buchkovska**
In attendance	**Mike Benson (external audit) (left 18.06); Paul Goddard (internal audit) (via Teams, left meeting between 16.45-17.00 and left 18.06); Lauren Metcalfe (DoFF); Sarah Walters (DoEO); Sharon Roper (Clerk)**
Apologies:	**None**
Governor attendance:	**100% attendance**

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
1. Welcome, Apologies	EWY welcomed participants.	
2. Declarations	No declarations of pecuniary/ prejudicial interest.	
3. Minutes 17/3/25	**3.1** Minutes 17/3/25, previously circulated, **approved** by Committee, signed off by Chair, returned to Clerk for filing. **3.2** Matters Arising Action Log: 1. (13/5/24 Min 10.3 Action 3) Retention schedule - SWA confirmed evidence is held via a log when destroying or deleting records. A&R members agreed this action can be closed. 2. (23/9/24 Min 3.2.2.4 Action 4) Catastrophic hardware failure - A&R members agreed they were happy with the due date which has been extended to 10/7/26. 3. (23/9/24 Min 5.10 Action 7) Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation – EWY asked how accreditation has been achieved without the Bring Your Own Device work being done. SWA will find out. 4. (23/9/24 Min 9.3.7 Action 10) New payroll and finance system – Access Education has been chosen; it is a comprehensive package at a reasonable cost. The changeover will take place in October/November 2025	Clerk SWA

	following staff training. External auditors have been notified as this will coincide with their audit work. 5. (17/3/25 Min 5.13 Action 17) EWY asked LME to chase the correction required to the Bursary Report from RSM. 6. (17/3/25 Min 7.1.4 Action 19) Cyber Risks - EWY asked for this action to be closed. EWY requested a new action: Cyber Risks to be discussed at A&R next academic year. A&R members **approved** the following Action Log numbers for closure: 1-2-3-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-18-19-20-24-25-26-27-28-29-31-32-33 **3.3** Audit Follow up recommendations log, previously circulated. 1. EWY asked if permission has been granted by the internal auditors to extend the dates on some of the actions. (*PGO had left the meeting at this point so did not take part in this discussion*). SWA said there is currently no process in place to seek permission for revising target dates. LME suggested that this is discussed with internal auditors during the Follow Up Audit at the end of each academic year. MBY is used to a process where there is executive agreement to extend a due date once, then further extensions should be flagged to A&R committee and extensions should be for a good reason and not become a systemic issue. AJO agreed with this process. EWY asked for an additional column to be added to the audit recommendations log so the rationale for any extension to the action can be added. 2. EWY asked for an update regarding nominated staff undertaking media training – some of CLT attended media training in December 2024 and Counter Terrorism Northeast are visiting GC to speak to all CLT members in July. 3. EWY asked about progress against the timeline for emergency planning and implementation – the final part of this action will be finalised in two weeks when a full college lockdown test is scheduled.	LME Clerk for agenda Clerk Clerk
4. Risk Registers & summary of Key Risks/KPIs	Risk Registers, summary of Key Risks/KPIs, and Risk Appetite, previously circulated, summarised by SWA. **4.1** Risk Registers and Key Risks 1. Emerging risks like AI are continuing to be added and mitigated against. 2. AJO asked about management of preventing inappropriate use of AI – MBR said this has been added to the Exams Policy and the NEA Policy. The college does not use any software to prevent cheating as it is ineffective and expensive. There have not been any misuse issues with	

	NEA work this year (there were three last year). GC is a member of the SFCA AI working party and there is currently no common approach to AI misuse across the sector. AI training will continue to be delivered to staff. SWA said that AI is rapidly evolving, and the college is keeping up with changes. 3. R4 Lead Governor vacancy for Careers and Skills. EWY asked why this is a red risk – this is an error, the Lead Governor is in role, and the R4 risk needs archiving. 4. SWA said the Hirst Risk Register will be completed shortly as the building project is due to finish and this register will be replaced by an overarching project risk in the main risk register. Each project has an individual risk register which SWA manages operationally. 5. MUS (via EWY) asked for the meaning of 'mot' in risk F4 – this is an error and should say 'most'. **4.2** KPI monitoring 1. SWA will develop a section for comments in KPI monitoring for next year when they sit outside their targets or where further information is needed. 2. MUS (via EWY) asked what will trigger an amber or red rating in KPIs 36 to 38 – the KPI targets are detailed in column F. KPI targets are not detailed for all the KPIs and SWA will develop this further next academic year. EWY asked how far away from the target does the KPI become amber or red – LME says she uses her judgement of how far from the target the KPI is when she codes them red or amber. MBR said with quality of outcomes KPIs the KPI should be red if the target is missed. EWY asked for a key to explain the coding of red or amber adding to the KPI monitoring sheet and an explanation if the KPI travels via amber before it is red or green. 3. EWY said the KPI for staff absences has been red for four half terms and asked what actions are being taken – there are two long term employee absences contributing to this. EWY noted that two staff absences are significantly affecting the KPI – MBR said the staff cover costs to date are more than £100,000. SIR asked if the staff cover costs of £100,000 related to the two long term absent staff only – other staff absences and the long-term absences are included in the staff cover costs. EWY asked how the staff absence KPIs are calculated - SWA will find out how the data is derived. LME said that benchmark data around KPIs will be available after tracking them for a year. EWY said the target for staff absences might be too low and unachievable. LME said the budget is not at £100,000+ to cover absence and this year's costs feels like an anomaly. SIR asked that CLT consider staff stress, workload, and unhappiness.	SWA SWA SWA SWA SWA SWA

	4.3 Risk Appetite A Risk Appetite Matrix has been generated following Governor and CLT completion of a Risk Appetite survey. The responses were predominantly risk averse. This will inform updates on the Risk Registers, but the cautious responses means that some current risks will not be aligned to the risk appetite. EWY asked members about their response to GC's risk appetite, in the discussion it was noted that the conservative response reflected the responsibility of the governor role and members felt more cautious than they are in their daily personal and professional lives. EWY asked about the CLT risk appetite response – SWA said the CLT response aligns with the governor response. SWA will work on risk appetite and the benefits of becoming more risk seeking and this item will come back to A&R. MBR said if the survey questions were more specific there might have been a nuanced response. SIR said if organisations want to develop and grow they must be prepared for some things not to work out. AJO said context is required in the risks that governors are asked to discuss. PGO noted that the business development score is 3.6 which is the highest scoring risk in the survey and this risk tolerant response can help encourage innovation. MBY said risk appetite is set in the abstract, but everyone should understand and be comfortable that this might change for specific issues. EWY **summarised** that governor and CLT opinions have been canvassed, acknowledged that everyone is more conservative than expected, and SWA will look at risk appetite for academic year 2025/26 and A&R members will be asked to approve any changes to risk appetite before it goes to the Board. EWY said that members need to understand that some risks will sit outside risk appetite and this is okay if there is rationale and context for it.	SWA/Clerk for agenda
5. Internal Audit	Paul Goddard, from Scrutton Bland gave an update on the internal audit papers, all previously circulated. **5.1** Updated Internal Audit Charter The Global Institute of Internal Audit Standards requires internal auditors to be more overt at sharing the Internal Audit Charter with its clients. PGO pointed out the mandate states they should 'have full and unrestricted access to all functions, data, records, information, physical property, and personnel related to carrying out internal audit responsibilities'. EWY asked who the chief audit executive is – this is Paul Goddard.	

	EWY asked if Scrutton Bland's inclusion in the Sumer Group is a new development – it is, Scrutton Bland has joined a network of hubs but retains its own identity. A&R members **noted** the Internal Audit Charter. **5.2** Draft Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 1. The suggestions for the audit plan have been made in collaboration with CLT 2. This is intentionally called a draft plan until A&R members make suggestions and then approve it. 3. The Anti-Fraud Framework Audit – DfE now have active anti-fraud specialists within their organisation; audit committee expectations are increasing around this risk, and more college clients are asking Scrutton Bland to undertake anti-fraud audits. 4. Health and Safety Audit – this is inherently a higher risk area which CLT wanted to add to the Audit Plan, following improvements made to college processes in recent years. 5. Student Progression Audit – this is an important and challenging area and has been chosen because it is one of GC's higher risks. 6. Payroll Audit – payroll is GC's highest area of expenditure, and a new Finance system will be rolled out next academic year. The audit is planned after the rollout is embedded. 7. EWY is comfortable with the Audit Plan. 8. AJO asked if the Health and Safety Audit will focus on a specific area or be a broad review. SWA said it is a broad review so she can measure the impact of recent changes that have been implemented. PGO said the scoping document has not yet been shared, normally the auditors check risk assessments, training, evacuations, personnel awareness, management level reporting and how the health and safety committee works. 9. MBY asked why the Audit Plan only looks at one red rated risk – PGO said some of the other high risks have been audited recently and used Cyber Security (audited in 2025) as an example. Safeguarding had good assurance in 2022/23 and there are other sources of assurance that GC receives for Safeguarding. 'Industrial action by staff' is a high risk but this is a difficult risk area for internal auditors to audit. 'Students are unsupported in their studies due to inadequate transport links leading to poor outcomes.' This is an acute risk which the Student Progression Audit is attempting to link into this high-risk area. 10. EWY asked that commentary is provided against the red risks for upcoming years in the draft Audit Plan. A&R members **approved** the Audit Plan 2025/26 with the proviso that A&R committee will review the plan and request changes in-year to the Audit Plan if necessary.	

	5.3 Cyber Security Audit 1. Cyber Security is currently a high-profile area, and the audit was given significant assurance. 2. GC is currently reviewing its firewall network rules and changing its anti-virus software provider. 3. Effective access controls are in place. 4. During the audit GC was working through the cyber essentials requirements and PGO noted Bring Your Own Devices is a challenge for all organisations. 5. GC is continually developing which is necessary in the current climate. 6. There was one medium recommendation – the cyber security bitesize training has low engagement of 50% completion and consideration should be given to make this a mandatory process. This is an important area because successful cyber-attacks are often the result of a human element. 7. There were two low recommendations – progressing and enhancing firewall plans and developing a cyber security roadmap which can be used as an action plan. 8. CKN asked about staff compliance with completing mandatory training – it has improved, but there has been staff resistance to completion. Next academic year there will be a rigorous process to make middle managers accountable for staff completion. MBR said mandatory training will likely be added into the performance management process for staff. CKN asked if time can be built into inset days for mandatory training – this has been built into CPD days in 2025/26. EWY asked for KPI targets for staff mandatory training to ensure this issue is highlighted and followed up, and MBR asked for the target to link in with the staff absence rate. 9. EWY was pleased to see significant assurance for the Cyber Security Audit which is such a critical area. **5.4** Budgetary Control Audit 1. This audit was given significant assurance. 2. Robust processes are in place for setting and monitoring budgets. 3. Budget holders gave positive feedback about the interaction and support from the finance team. 4. There were three low recommendations – the introduction of the new finance system should help implement further training and support for budget holders; visibility of reporting of bank covenants within the management accounts; adding cash flow reporting in management accounts and enhancing how it is tracked and monitored. 5. Added value points were added to the Budgetary Control Audit. 6. Engagement by the management team during the audit was praised by PGO. 7. MBR asked about delaying the due date of the recommendation which relies on the installation of the	SWA

	finance system – PGO agreed and said the date can be revised. The audit recommendation log should be updated with the revised date. EWY **thanked** LME and all the teams who have contributed to the significant assurance audit reports. SIR **thanked** the internal auditors for their positive contributions to the A&R meetings. **5.5** Progress Report – the main audit plan is complete. The follow up audit will start in June and will come to A&R meeting on 29/9/25 together with the annual report which will include internal audit opinions for 2024/25.	LME
6. External Audit	Audit Strategy Memorandum, previously circulated. MBE gave an update that Nicola Tucker has been promoted to partner so her input at GC will reduce, although she may attend A&R meetings if MBE has a diary clash. Steve Turner is the main contact for the college. From the Audit timeline MBE confirmed that the Audit of Teachers' Pension Return and the audit planning meeting have already been completed. Planning work and regularity work happen over the summer, and the field work starts in September. EWY asked if the implementation of the new finance system at GC will cause the auditors an issue – MBE said this will not be an issue for his team. A&R members **approved** the Audit Strategy Memorandum.	
7. Replacement of Audit Code of Practice	Replacement of the Audit Code of Practice, previously circulated. A&R members did not have any questions and **noted** the replacement of the Audit Code of Practice.	
8. End of year review of A&R effectiveness against the A&R Terms of Reference	Review of A&R effectiveness against the Terms of Reference paper, previously circulated. The Clerk checked against the agenda and minutes in 2024/25 to ensure the duties in the A&R Terms of Reference have been covered in A&R meetings. The only identified issue was that there has not been a specific discussion about the effectiveness of the internal and external auditors. This has been added as an agenda item at today's meeting.	

	EWY **thanked** the Clerk for the summary and agreed with its contents.	
9. Audit & Risk annual cycle of business	A&R annual cycle of business 2025/26, previously circulated. A&R members **approved** the A&R annual cycle of business 2025/26.	
10. Policies to review	**1.** Freedom of Information Policy – SWA said the policy has been aligned to the model publication scheme of the Information Commissioner's Office SIR asked how many Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are received – a few are received each term, generally they are from salespeople, and some have been received from FE Weekly to gather information to help them write specific articles. Subject Access Requests are also low volume. SIR asked if we had been approached by anyone to outsource these tasks – we haven't, but the college has signed a retainer for 1 year with a solicitor; this is an educational package which includes GDPR support. An FOI request about asbestos in the block that was demolished went via the solicitors and onto DfE who hold the records. A&R members **approved** the Freedom of Information Policy. **2.** Whistleblowing Policy – The Clerk said this policy is due for review. It needs an extensive update, and GC will be subscribing to an Eversheds subscription in October. The subscription includes whistleblowing templates; the update is delayed until we have access to these. JRA confirmed to the Clerk that there have been no whistleblowing disclosures to report. EWY confirmed that the Clerk had referred delaying the review of the Whistleblowing Policy to him when the review date became due. MBY shared that she has worked with Eversheds previously, they have significantly invested in the sixth form sector and confirmed she was happy to pause the policy review until the template can be accessed.	Clerk
11. Legal, regulatory, sector updates	Briefings on emerging audit and risk issues. PGO gave the following updates: 1. PGO mentioned Weston College and the learnings and reflections that Boards must consider following the findings.	

	EWY summarised the irregularities and misuse of public money, discovered at Weston college. Guidance has subsequently been issued to colleges from the DfE. GC has changed the Chair of the Remuneration Committee in response to this. It is recommended that the Audit Committee has a qualified accountant; MUS is an A&R member and is a qualified accountant. The Clerk confirmed that the Weston College report and subsequent FE Commissioners letter have been shared with all governors. 2. DfE have released their first Generative AI document for education. PGO will share the link. MBE gave the following updates: 3. MBE referred to the findings at Weston College and said issues can arise in charities if the relationship between the Chair and the CEO becomes too close, and independence between these roles should be maintained. Sometimes the executive can become too powerful and arrange appointments of trustees themselves. 4. The college auditors forum confirmed that DfE have released college accounts direction, the regularity self-assessment questionnaire, the framework for external auditors and a guide for novel, contentious and repercussive transactions.	Clerk to distribute
12. AoB	EWY spoke about Black Swan Risks which he wants to cover by a facilitated session in the first term of next academic year. The Clerk has identified a specific audit and risk self-assessment for governors, EWY said this could be introduced at the end of next academic year to help with continuous improvement of the committee. The Clerk will share the template with A&R members with the minutes.	EWY/Clerk Clerk
13. Confidentiality	Effectiveness review of internal and external auditors.	
14. End of meeting review	EWY asked if A&R members were comfortable and have sufficient assurance from all areas across college. A&R members **were happy** with the assurance provided.	
15. Effectiveness review of Internal and External Auditors	EWY thanked PGO and MBE for their input across the academic year, this was echoed by the A&R members. *Internal and external auditors left the meeting before the following discussion.*	

	EWY explained that this item has been identified as best practice by the Clerk and has been added into the annual cycle of business. The A&R committee are responsible for approving the appointment of internal and external auditors and this item gives A&R members the opportunity to discuss their effectiveness. This discussion was confidential.	
16. Date next mtg	Date of next meeting: Mon 29 September 2025, 4.30pm at Upper Greenhead House, Greenhead College	All: note

Minutes prepared by Sharon Roper (Clerk to the Corporation) on 2/9/25

Approved & signed by, Ed Wynn, chair of Audit & Risk, dated 29/9/25