AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 20 June 2023 at 4.30pm

Present physically:	J Wakelam, Vice Chair	
Present virtually:	A Maltpress	R Inman, Chair
In attendance:	A Brewster, Finance Manager A Lynch, M+A Partners (part) A McGarel, CFO C Shepherd, FA Risk N Savvas, CEO S Gales, Governance Professional S Graham, CPO	
Apologies:	F Shippam, M+A Partners G Kerkham, Larking Gowen M Whittingham R Murray	

		Action
1.	**Declaration of Interests and Apologies for absence** J Wakelam declared her role as a Governor of West Suffolk College. No other conflicts of interest in relation to the items of the agenda were declared. Apologies were received from M Whittingham and R Murray.	
2.	**Minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2023** The minutes of the meeting on 7 February 2023 were **agreed** as an accurate record.	
3.	**Matters Arising from meeting on 7 February 2023** Five of the eight matters arising from the previous meeting were complete, with one on-going, one on hold and one is no longer needed. Trustees discussed the 'on hold' action relating to the fraud, corruption, theft, and bribery policies and procedures, and **noted** that these are included within the Financial Regulations. Trustees **agreed** that the Finance Committee should continue to have primary oversight of these policies, with this Committee to oversee the whistleblowing policy. Trustees discussed the 'on-going' action relating to SATR050 and **noted** that, upon the Executive's recommendation this risk remains on the Risk Register until we have implemented the mitigations.	
4.	**Risk Management Update** There are currently **2 red, 6 amber, 5 yellow** risks on the register. 4 risks (SAT061 relating to unbudgeted pay costs, SATR063 relating to the risk arising from migrating to a single domain across the Group, SAT062 relating to the potential merger and SAT060 relating to students' use of AI detrimentally impacting their acquisition of knowledge and skills) have been removed, and 1 risk has changed post mitigation scores.	
	Trustees noted SATR060 is an environmental risk affecting the education sector, and questioned how many risks the Committee should consider and whether all risks are specific strategic risks affecting the Trust which can mitigated. Trustees discussed and **agreed** to leave the risk on the register and assigned this risk to the Educational Excellence Committee.	FA Risk
	Trustees discussed the proposed changes to the Risk Register and **agreed** to amend the 'assurance' column to stipulate the evidence source and whether it is internal or	FA Risk

external. Trustees **agreed to recommend** it to the Trust Board, subject to the amendment above.

Trustees discussed Risk Appetite and **noted** that, given the close strategic alignment of the Trust and Group, it was not an activity that the Trust Board needed to priorities.

Trustees **approved** the Risk Register and **agreed to recommend** it to the Trust Board.

5. **Audit Recommendations Tracking Report**

Trustees received and considered the summary report provided, of the eleven recommendations, two are complete, two are partially complete and seven are ongoing.

The CPO noted that actions 2 and 3 relate to an externally provided service, and informed that we are considering bringing this service in-house to improve the service.

Trustees discussed action 1 relating to the Business Continuity Plan and asked to receive this at the next meeting. — R Stevenson

6. **Internal Auditor's Findings Report**

i. Month End Procedures

Trustees received and considered the internal audit which took place in March 2023 and received **substantial** assurance; with 4 moderate-risk recommendations and, 5 low-risk recommendations, which are due to completed by May and August 2023.

Trustees queried if the Internal Auditors were satisfied with the management response to the recommendations. A Lynch confirmed they were.

Trustees thanked M and A Partners for their professional support.

A Lynch left the meeting at 5.16pm

7. **Internal Auditor's Proposed plan of works for 2023/24**

Trustees received and considered the report which noted that in April 2023, M&A Partners (the Trust's current internal auditors) notified us that they are no longer offering internal audit services and will not be providing our internal scrutiny work for 2023/24.

Trustees **considered** the advice of the Trust's procurement team regarding the tender process. Trustees queried if this was compliant with our Financial Regulations, and the CFO confirmed it is.

Trustees considered and discussed the proposed plan of works for 2023/24 from Scrutton Bland. Trustees **approved** the plan of works for 2023/24 and **delegated authority to the CFO** to allocate the third internal audit to estates management or health and safety, whichever is a greater concern. — CFO

Trustees **agreed to recommend** to the Trust Board the appointment of Scrutton Bland as the Trust's internal auditors for 2023/24.

8. **External Auditor's Proposed plan of works for 2023/24**

Trustees received and considered the proposed plan of works for 2023/24.

The CFO advised that the price for this service has increased substantially and proposed we re-tender the service for 2024/25. Trustees **approved** this. — CFO

Trustees **approved** and **agreed to recommend** it to the Trust Board.

9. GDPR Update

Trustees received and considered the report provided. The CPO noted that since the previous update, there have been 13 GDPR data breaches of which 3 were at ASFC and 10 were at OSFC (all of which have been investigated and any actions required have been carried out), 1 Data Subject Access Request (which was responded to within the legal time frame) and 0 Freedom of Information requests.

The CPO advised that our new GDPR lead started this week.

Trustees queried whether the CPO has any concerns about the levels of GDPR breaches or whether the levels are comparable within the sector. The CPO confirmed he had confidence that the Trust has a diligent approach to data security and is pro-active in reporting.

10. Data Returns Compliance update

Trustees received and considered the report provided which summarised the information submitted to DfE and ESFA that affects funding, including people number returns and funding claims, in accordance with the expectations of the Committee as laid out in the section 3.14 of the Academies Trust Handbook.

Trustees **agreed** to receive this report annually and asked the Executive to confirm our compliance against each deadline (as an additional statement) to support the Committee's assurance. CIO

11. Whistleblowing Policy

Trustees received and considered the policy and **agreed to recommend** it to the Trust Board for approval.

12. Any Other Business

None.

The meeting closed at 5.36pm