OLDHAM COLLEGE

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 April 2025 Via Teams

Present:	David Kay	Governor - Chair
	Jane Shelton	Governor
	Sarah Thompson	Governor
	Phil Mayall	Governor
	Laura Windsor-Welsh	Governor
Officers:	Rachel James	Deputy Principal
	Rebecca Johnson	Finance Director
	Scott Winters	ICCA
	Janet Frost	Clerk to the Corporation
Apologies:	Karen Musgrave	RSM

41/24 **Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Karen Musgrave.

42/24 **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**

None declared.

43/24 **Permission for Officers of the Organisation to be Present**

It was **RESOLVED** that officers present should remain in the meeting.

44/24 **Minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held 12 December 2024 had been previously circulated to members for consideration.

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting be accepted and approved by the members of the Committee.

45/24 **Matters arising from minutes of the previous meeting**

There were no matters arising.

46/24 **Notification of Items of Any Other Business**

There were no Items of AOB reported.

47/24 **Rolling Action List Update**

1. 12 December 2024 Min 24/24 Risk Management Policy

Recommend approval to the Corporation at its December 2024 meeting.

It was RESOLVED this action was complete.

2. 12 December 2024 Min 34/24 Counter Fraud Strategy

Item deferred to April 2024 meeting.
It was RESOLVED this action was complete.

3. 12 December 2024 Min 27/24 Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2024 for Oldham College be recommended to the Corporation for approval
It was RESOLVED this action was complete

4. 12 December 2024 Min 29/24 - Audit Finding Documents
Recommended for approval to the Corporation at its 17 December 2024 meeting
It was RESOLVED this action was complete

5. 12 December 2024 Min 30/24 - Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24
Recommended to the Corporation for approval.
It was RESOLVED this action was complete

6. 12 December 2024 Min 35/24 - Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure
Recommended for approval to the Corporation.
It was RESOLVED this action was complete

48/24 **<u>Risk Management Register</u> (Item 8)**

A report detailing the updated Risk Register had been prepared by the Finance Director and previously circulated for consideration.

The Finance Director introduced the report advising the Committee that the key operational risks had been updated and the mitigated scores adjusted to reflect the current position for the following risks:-

- Risk E – Insufficient progress with quality and compliance - to maintain Ofsted Good - this risk has been updated since the recent inspection.
- Risk G – Failure to improve the quality of teaching and learning consistently across the college has had the net risk impact increased following the recent inspection.
- Risk T - Impact of changes in governmental, macro-economic circumstances and educational policies, nationally, regionally and locally has been increased due to the Government announcing the increase in defence funding and the uncertainty regarding the College funding allocations.

A discussion ensued and members reflected on the report and actions being taken by management to mitigate the risks for each risk listed. Discussion took place relating to the mitigating factors in place for Risks E & G and it was reported the risk should reduce as the assurance processes are implemented throughout the year.

Following a discussion relating to AI and potential risks for the college systems it was agreed RJo review the likelihood of impact and potential consequences of AI and consider whether a risk should be added to the register for monitoring purposes. **Action**

A governor observed that it may be beneficial to include a risk relating to the change in labour market needs from a wider skills perspective given the focus on inspection on this. **RJ to review.**

A governor observed there is a potential risk to reduced student numbers and possible impact on employer engagement due to Ofsted outcome. In reply the FD reported these areas are being monitored; an employment engagement strategy is in place and there are no immediate indicators of impact and early indicators on recruitment show numbers are being maintained.

It was RESOLVED that members noted the Risk Management Register as presented.

5.30pm – Laura Windsor-Welsh joined the meeting

49/24 <u>Presentation – Risk Q – Failure to ensure resilience of and protect IT systems from cyber attacks and other potential hazards</u> (Item 9)

The Head of IT Lee Murphy provided a detailed presentation on the measures the college put in place to safeguard its IT systems against cyber attacks and other potential hazards. He explained the key components the college has in place to manage the risks noting the ongoing potential threats the college has to deal with. He provided practical examples of actions taken to ensure the colleges IT resilience e.g. daily penetration testing and ongoing CPD for staff. Further assurance was provided to members in the explanation of the work taking place to build a strong cybersecurity framework and the efforts in place to ensure adequate resources are available to fund the cybersecurity and disaster recovery initiatives.

In discussion members commented on the following key points:-

- Sought assurance the plans are regularly updated and shared with all relevant staff – RJ reported the timeframe of review noting the process of the dissemination of the updated plans to all appropriate staff members
- Reported the penetration testing is carried out every day with a report produced every 24 hours
- In answer to a question raised LM reported the college works with other colleges to share good practise and learn from others
- Reported all staff have to complete mandatory training on cybersecurity
- Provided assurance the current systems are good. The next stage will be to review data centres and how the college can benefit from these.

The Chair thanked LM for his informative report and members noted the actions being addressed to reduce specific areas of risks relating to IT systems and potential hazards.

<u>5.45pm – Lee Murphy retired from the meeting</u>

50/24 <u>Programme of Presentations of Individual Risks 2024/5</u> (Item 9.1)

The Clerk informed members that at each meeting of the Audit Committee a presentation detailing the risks associated with a College area or activity and how those were mitigated would be delivered to members by a staff member or senior manager from the area/activity. This would form part of the training activity for Governors but be specifically directed at audit members.

Members requested the topic for the June meeting to focus on Risk E – Insufficient progress with quality and compliance to maintain Ofsted Good and Risk G – Failure to improve the quality of teaching and learning consistently across the college. **Action**

It was RESOLVED that members noted the report.

51/24 <u>Internal Audit Assignment Reports</u>

The Internal Audit Assignment Reports had been prepared by ICCA in accordance with the Audit Plan for 2024/25 and had been previously circulated to members for consideration. In discussion the following reports were considered:-

51/24.1 Examinations Report (Item 11.1)

The Internal Auditor introduced the report and highlighted the scope of the review which had been to provide management and the Audit Committee with an independent assurance opinion that the College has effective systems and controls in place for the management of awarding bodies and the costs associated with examination.

It was reported that the Internal Audit opinion was that the Board could take **'Substantial assurance**' that the areas of the control environment tested were designed and operating effectively with no significant weaknesses.

SW reported it had been a thorough audit and was pleased to report there was only one advisory recommendation arising from the visit.

In discussion members reflected on the action identified relating to late fees and noted the outcome of the implementation the action will be recorded on the Audit Tracking Tool at a future meeting for review by members.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received as presented.

51/24.2 Student Voice (Item 11.2)

The Internal Auditor introduced the report and highlighted the scope of the review which had been to provide management and the Audit Committee with an independent assurance opinion that the College has in place effective processes and controls for its Student Voice survey and analysis.

It was reported that the Internal Audit opinion was that the Board could take **'Reasonable assurance**' that the areas of the control environment tested were designed and operating effectively with no significant weaknesses.

There were two medium level recommendations arising from the audit and these were noted by members.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received as presented.

52/24 **Counter Fraud Policy and Procedure for Fraud, Prevention and Detection (Item 12 & 12.1)**

A copy of the Counter Fraud Policy and Procedure for Fraud, Prevention and Detection had previously been circulated to members for consideration prior to the meeting. In discussion it was reported the Counter Fraud Policy is aligned to the Fraud Procedure and Fraud Response Plan.

It was RESOLVED that members recommended approval of the following policies to the Corporation at its July meeting :-

(i) Counter Fraud Policy

(ii) Procedure for Fraud, Prevention and Detection

53/24 **Audit Rolling Recommendation Tracking Tool (Item 13)**

A copy of the Audit Rolling Recommendation Tracking Tool had been prepared by the Finance Director and previously circulated to members for consideration.

The Finance Director reported that the tracking system had been developed based on the RAG rated system of reporting and included all recommendations taken from the Internal Audit assignment reports that required implementation by the College.

The Finance Director gave an update on outstanding actions and provided assurance that the remaining outstanding actions would be progressed in a timely manner.

It was RESOLVED that members noted the report and progress achieved.

54/24 **Use of Consultants (Item 14)**

The Finance Director reported the use of consultants since the previous meetings.
No further comments were raised on the report.
It was RESOLVED that members noted the report.

55/24 **Any Other Business (Item 15)**

55/24.1 AoC Audit Committee Masterclass

The slides form the recent AoC event which provided governors with clarity on the responsibilities of an Audit Committee had previously been circulated to members for information.

55/24.2 Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of College

A copy of the recently published framework was provided to members of the committee. The FD briefly explained the purpose of the framework advising the document replaces the Post 16 Audit Code of Practice and described the changes within this version compared to the previous ACOP.
It was Resolved that members noted the report as presented.

57/24 **Committee Workplan 2024-25 (Item 16)**

A copy of the Workplan for 2024/25 including changes to the reporting sequence for the current meeting was presented to members for consideration. Members noted the amendments.
It was RESOLVED that members noted the Workplan as presented.

58/24 **Meeting of Auditors with Members only (No officers) (Item 17)**

The Clerk advised that this item gave the opportunity for members to speak to Auditors with no management present. Members agreed that they had no matters to discuss with the Auditors. It was agreed that at future meetings this item be brought forward on the agenda.
It was RESOLVED that the members did not currently require a meeting with Auditors without management present.

59/24 **Dates of meeting for 2024/25**

24 June 2025

6.40pm Scott Winters ICCA retired from the meeting

60/24 **Confidential Item**

External Audit Contract Extension – see confidential minute

Minutes Approved: ……………………………………………………………… Date: ……………………….

Chair

Meeting closed at 6.45pm

Rolling Action List – Audit Committee 1 April 2025

Meeting Date & Item No.	**Rolling Action List** (Outstanding actions from previous meeting(s) to be carried forward, listed below, and not removed until completed/closed.)	Actionee	Reported as Completed at meeting of
12 Dec 2024 Min 24/24	**Risk Management Policy** Recommend approval to the Corporation at its December 2024 meeting	FD	01 04 25 47/24.1
12 Dec 2024 Min 34/24	**Counter Fraud Strategy** Item deferred to April 2024 meeting	Clerk	01 04 25 47/24.2
12 Dec 2024 Min 27/24	**Financial Statements for year ended 31st July 2024** for Oldham College be recommended to the Corporation for approval	FD	01 04 25 47/24.3
12 Dec 2024 Min 29/24	**Audit Finding Documents** Recommended for approval to the Corporation at its 17 December 2024 meeting	FD	01 04 25 47/24.4
12 Dec 2024 Min 30/24	**Annual Report of the Audit Committee for 2023/24** Recommended to the Corporation for approval.	FD	01 04 25 47/24.5
12 Dec 2024 Min 35/24	**Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure** Recommended for approval to the Corporation	FD	01 04 25 47/24.6
1 April 2025 Min 48/24	**Risk Management Register** Agreed RJo review the likelihood of impact and potential consequences of AI and consider whether a risk should be added to the register for monitoring purposes.	RJo	
1 April 2025 Min 50/24	**Presentation on Risk** The topic for the June meeting to focus on Risk E – Insufficient progress with quality and compliance to maintain Ofsted Good and Risk G – Failure to improve the quality of teaching and learning consistently across the college has had the net risk impact increased following the recent inspection	RJa	
1 April 2025 Min 58/24	**Meeting with Auditors** Schedule item of business at the start of the meeting for future meetings	Clerk	
1 April 2025 Min 52/24	**Polices:** Recommend the following policies for approval to the Corporation at its July meeting (i) Counter Fraud Policy (ii) Procedure for Fraud, Prevention and Detection		