



# **BURY COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

## **MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD VIA TEAMS ON TUESDAY, 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025**

Meeting Commenced: 1.00 p.m.  
Meeting Closed: 1.26 p.m.

### **Present:**

Liaqat Ali	Independent Corporation Member - Chair
Anne Holt	Business Support Staff Member
Phil Johnson	Independent Corporation Member
Danny Weidenbaum	Co-opted Committee Member

### **In Attendance:**

Lee Glover	Validera
Daniel Hassan	Validera
Vicky Hayhoe	Head of Financial Services
William Mcgillivray	Clerk to the Corporation Designate
Tracy Pullein	Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Resources
Peter Ryan	Clerk to the Corporation
Becky Tootell	Deputy Principal

<b>AC24/25.13</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (AGENDA ITEM 1)</u></b>
	Apologies for absence were received from Stephanie Nixon and Scott Gillon and Daneil Johns.
<b>AC24/25.14</b>	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 2)</u></b>
	There were no declarations of interest in relation to any of the items on the Agenda for the meeting.
<b>AC24/25.15</b>	<b><u>STANDING ITEM – Meeting between Auditors and the Audit Committee (AGENDA ITEM 3)</u></b>
	The Audit Committee agreed that there was no reason to meet with the Auditors to the exclusion of College Management.
<b>AC24/25.16</b>	<b><u>MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 4)</u></b>
	The Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 were approved and signed as a true and correct record.
<b>AC24/25.17</b>	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING (AGENDA ITEM 5)</u></b>
	The Clerk presented the Matters Arising Report and advised the Committee that all agreed actions had been implemented.
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report and management actions implemented should be noted.
<b>AC24/25.18</b>	<b><u>INTERNAL AUDITORS (AGENDA ITEM 6)</u></b>
	<b><i>Validera Internal Audit Reports 2024/25</i></b> <b><i>a) Core Financial Controls</i></b> Daniel Hassan presented the report and confirmed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based upon the work undertaken and findings within this report in our opinion the Corporation is able to take an overall substantial level of assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage risks material to the achievement of its objectives are suitably designed and applied.</li> <li>1 recommended action had been identified and implemented;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three areas of good practice were highlighted.</li> </ul> <p><b>b) Counter Fraud Health Check</b></p> <p>Daniel Hassan presented the report and confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based upon the work undertaken and findings within this report in our opinion the Corporation is able to take a substantial level of assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage risks material to the achievement of its objectives are suitably designed and applied.</li> <li>There were no recommended actions identified; and</li> <li>Six areas of good practice were highlighted.</li> </ul> <p><b>c) IT Cyber Security</b></p> <p>Daniel Hassan presented the report and confirmed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based upon the work undertaken and findings within this report in our opinion the Corporation is able to take a substantial level of assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage risks material to the achievement of its objectives are suitably designed and applied.</li> <li>There were no recommended actions identified; and</li> <li>Nine areas of good practice were highlighted.</li> </ul> <p>Following questions and discussion it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members considered that the Substantial Assurance within all 3 reports provided Governors with confidence that appropriate systems and controls were in place and active;</li> <li>Given the ongoing risks, Cyber Security needed to continue as a priority area; and</li> <li>The Internal Audit Service commented that Substantial Assurance in the Counter Fraud Health Check and IT Cyber Security was unusual and difficult to achieve.</li> </ul>
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the reports should be noted.
	<p><b>d) Validera Internal Audit Progress Report 2024/25</b></p> <p>Daniel Hassan presented the report and confirmed that the IAS was approved by Committee at its June 2024 meeting and the Corporation in July 2024. There had been no amendments made in this period and all Audit Briefs had been issued and work was underway to deliver the Annual Plan. The IT Cyber Security had been completed earlier than scheduled and therefore was submitted to this Audit Committee meeting.</p> <p>Members noted that the draft Audit Plan for 2025/26 would be presented to the next meeting.</p>
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.
<b>AC24/25.19</b>	<b><u>EXTERNAL AUDITORS (AGENDA ITEM 7)</u></b>
	There were no reports scheduled from the External Audit Service.
<b>AC24/25.20</b>	<b><u>OTHER AUDITS (AGENDA ITEM 8)</u></b>
	There were no reports scheduled for this meeting.
<b>AC24/25.21</b>	<b><u>REPORTING FRAUD OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITY TO ESFA – UPDATES TO THE ANTI-FRAUD POLICY AND FRAUD RESPONSE PLAN (AGENDA ITEM 9)</u></b>
	<p>The Vice Principal confirmed that in November 2024 the ESFA issued new guidance on reporting fraud or financial irregularity. The guidance covers what and how to report suspected fraud or financial irregularity. This new guidance required referencing in 3 of the following current approved policies/plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy, an appendix to the Financial Regulations.</li> <li>The Fraud Response Plan; and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Public Interest Disclosure Policy – Whistleblowing.</li> </ul> <p>Accordingly, a new section had been added to each of the above, referencing this new guidance. In terms of approvals, the Audit and Resources Committees are required to review any changes to the Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy and recommend it to the Corporation for approval. The Audit Committee can approve any changes to the Fraud Response Plan and the Resources Committee has approved any changes to the Public Interest Disclosure Policy – Whistleblowing, earlier in the day.</p>
	<p>It was <b>Resolved</b> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The contents of the report should be noted;</li> <li>The amendment to the Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy should be recommended to the Corporation for approval; and</li> <li>The Amendment to the Fraud Response Plan, is approved.</li> </ol>
<b>AC24/25.22</b>	<b><u>MONITORING REPORTS (AGENDA ITEM 10)</u></b>
	<b><i>a) High Risk Management Register 2024/25</i></b>
	<p>The Vice Principal confirmed that since the last meeting of the Audit Committee a further High Risk had materialised: the College HR Payroll/Pension managed provider had given notice that it would cease trading on 1st April 2025. The Corporation agreed this should be added to the Risk Register (R16/HR10).</p> <p>The High-Risk Action Plan had now been updated on actions in Term 2 up to February 2025 by risk owners. The Leadership Team reviewed the updated High-Risk Register at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025.</p> <p>Following questions and discussion it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C7/HR4 – Apprenticeship Provision – The DP provided background information on the reduction in dental nursing enrolments and the actions implemented to reduce resources and to maintain the quality of provision;</li> <li>Members reviewed the High Risk Management Register and mitigation actions and were satisfied that the high risks were being managed; and</li> <li>There had been a recommendation in the Risk Management Internal Audit Report that consideration could be given to changing to the format of the Risk Register to Excel. Members confirmed they were happy with the current format of the Register.</li> </ul>
	<p>It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.</p>
	<b><i>b) Accuracy of Funding and Data Returns</i></b>
	<p>The Vice Principal Finance and Resources confirmed that the College had a good track record of accurate and timely funding and data returns and all Returns for 2023/24 were all completed timely and accurately and this had been maintained in 2024/25.</p> <p>The final ILR for 2023/24 was submitted on time and was extensively checked by the College to ensure maximum accuracy &amp; funding. Additional audit review, undertaken by Wylie Bisset as part of the year-end financial statements audit, identified no issues. Additional checks continue to take place to ensure the data submitted to the funding bodies is accurate, error free and complete.</p>
	<p>It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.</p>
	<b><i>c) Fraud Log</i></b>
	<p>The Clerk confirmed that the College Fraud Log was presented to the Audit Committee, in accordance with Bury College Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy. The Fraud Log recorded the nature of suspected/actual fraud/Irregularity, actions taken to prevent reoccurrence and lessons learned.</p>

	Members noted that there had been no additions since the last meeting of the Committee.
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.
	<b>d) Gifts/Hospitality/Overseas Travel</b>
	The Vice Principal confirmed the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Overseas Travel:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of 2 staff visits aboard were highlighted within the report; and</li> <li>• The College runs a small number of student trips abroad mainly for travel &amp; tourism students. The aim was that they were cost neutral from student contributions. The cost of the trip was covered for the accompanying staff. There had been one trip in 2024/25.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Gifts &amp; Hospitality</b> – The Gifts &amp; Hospitality procedure (an appendix to the Financial Regulations) was considered by the Audit Committee on 5th March 2024 and re-approved by the Corporation on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024. A summary of items declared since the last Audit Committee meeting was highlighted within the report.</li> </ul>
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.
	<b>e) Audit Recommendations Monitoring Report Update</b>
	The Clerk introduced the report and asked Members to consider and note the Audit Recommendations: Implementation Tracking Report, as of March 2025.
	Members were satisfied that management actions were being implemented in a timely manner.
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.
<b>AC24/25.23</b>	<b><u>POST MEETING EVALUATION (AGENDA ITEM 11)</u></b>
	The Clerk presented a summary of the post meeting evaluation responses from the meeting held on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 and it was noted that the overall feedback was positive with no concerns having been highlighted.
	The Clerk Designate had developed a new online evaluation form and the link to the form would be emailed to Members. In addition, following discussion on cyber security, arrangements would be made to password protect the combined PDF reports issued to Members, commencing in the summer term cycle of meetings.
	It was <b>Resolved</b> that the contents of the report should be noted.
<b>AC24/25.24</b>	<b><u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 12)</u></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.00pm Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025</li> </ul>

There being no further discussion the meeting closed at 1.26 p.m.

Signed and approved as an accurate record of the meeting

Signature.....Date.....

Summary of Actions - Audit Committee 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2025			
Item	Action	Person Responsible	Timescale
AC24/25.21 Anti-Fraud and	The amendment to the Anti-Fraud and Irregularity Policy should be recommended to the Corporation for approval.	VP	Corporation 18 <sup>th</sup> March

Irregularity Policy			2025
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