

PROSPECTS COLLEGE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

AUDIT COMMITTEE

20 APRIL 2015

Present: Theo Steel (Chair)
Gerry Levelle
Peter McKee

In Attendance: Madeleine Austin PA to the Principal & Assistant Clerk to the Corporation
Robin Jones Clerk to the Corporation
Neil Warren Chief Operating Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Rachel Richards and Jackie Northedge.

2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the resignation of Jackie Northedge from the staff of the College and, therefore, from the Corporation. The Clerk reported that arrangements would be progressed to appoint a member of the staff to serve on the Corporation as soon as practicable.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Members and others present confirmed that there were no declarations of interest relative to the business to be considered.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2015

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January 2015 were confirmed to be a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2015

The Committee agreed that there were no issues arising from the minutes of the last meeting which were not covered by the published agenda.

6 EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee noted that a Panel consisting of Theo Steel and Peter McKee supported by the Chief Operating Officer and the Clerk to the Corporation had spent several hours immediately before this meeting in hearing the presentations by the three shortlisted firms of potential External Auditors and asking a number of specific questions.

The Committee reviewed the presentations and the responses to the questions and concluded that it was appropriate to recommend to the Corporation on 6 May 2015 the appointment of MHA MacIntyre Hudson as the External Auditors to undertake the annual review of the Financial Statements subject to references which would now be requested with due urgency.

It was recognised that the initial appointment would be for a period of three years subject to annual review.

Finally the Committee noted the commitment of MHA MacIntyre Hudson to maintaining the fee proposal for the period of three years as set out in the tender proposal.

7 ASSURANCE MAPPING

The Committee received and discussed an outline of the proposed Assurance Map for the College which had been prepared in the context of the discussion at the last meeting and the known demands on and expectations of the College.

The Chief Operating Officer explained the approach adopted including the reference to a publication by Baker Tilly which set out a model approach for colleges.

The Committee agreed to welcome the proposed approach for PROCAT and to look forward to receiving the full document at the next meeting (scheduled for 30 June 2015) the preparation of which would be progressed with regard to the following:

- The inter relationship of the Assurance Map with the Risk Register which will both be RAG rated and the subject of ongoing review
- The inclusion of a “trend arrow” so that the direction of travel was apparent
- The acknowledgment that the maintenance of the Risk Register and the Assurance Map supported judgements on the part of College Management and the Corporation as to the acceptance of a level of risk in given circumstances and where it was appropriate to carry out a further review possibly when the support of an external organisation.

Whilst discussing the various risks for the College the Committee acknowledged that an example of an issue where there was an extremely low appetite for risk concerned health and safety. It was the stated intention of the College to take all reasonable actions to avoid accidents and incidents and, in doing so, to safeguard students, staff and others.

The Chief Operating Officer took the opportunity to highlight the approach to addressing the forthcoming departure of the Head of Finance as it was acknowledged that this provided a number of potential risks for the College. This included a proposed overlap between the successful candidate for the post about to be advertised joining the College and the current Head of Finance leaving the organisation.

Finally the Committee noted the intention to present to the next meeting the College’s Risk policy statement as it was appropriate to review the published contents once again in the light of experience and developments.

8 Date of Next Meeting of the Committee

The Committee agreed to meet on Tuesday 30 June 2015 commencing at 2.30pm at Basildon.

It was noted that main items of business would concern (1) the proposed Audit Plan prepared by the External Auditors relating to the forthcoming review of the Financial Statements for 2014/15, (2) the draft Assurance Map and (3) the Risk policy statement.

9 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2015/16

The Committee agreed the following provisional Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16:

- Tuesday 17 November 2015
- Tuesday 15 March 2016
- Tuesday 21 June 2016

The meetings will commence at 2.30pm and, subject to ongoing review, will take place at the Basildon campus.

Signed: _____ Date: _____