

**Barnet and Southgate College Corporation
Audit & Risk Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 25th November 2025
at 18:00**

**Governors
present:**

Diane Moore, Chair
Alex Middleton
Thomas Streater

In attendance:

Maxine Bagshaw, Director of Governance & Corporation Secretary
Neil Coker, CEO and Principal
Paul Goddard, Internal Auditors (Scrutton Bland) (6pm – 7.30pm)
Simon Evans-Evans, COO
Sarah Surrey, CFO
Costas Calcanis, Director of Technology, Innovation and Development (6.30pm – 7.20pm)
Mark Munroe, External Audit Partner (Bishop Fleming) (6.20pm-6.55pm)
Louise Putt, External Audit Manager (Bishop Fleming) (6.20pm-6.55pm)

Item	Description	Action
1	Preliminary items 1) Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Adam Morley. 2) Confirmation of eligibility, quorum and declarations of interest It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and standing declarations were noted. 3) Requests for matters of urgent business It was confirmed that no requests for matters of urgent business had been raised in advance of the meeting.	
2	Minutes 1) Minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2025	

	The minutes were reviewed and committee agreed they were an accurate record of discussions. AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2025. 2) Matters arising and outstanding actions Committee noted the progress updates provided on the tracking document. Committee specifically discussed: • Ongoing action for Internal Auditors to report on previous findings (specifically the levels of assurance) when areas are re-tested. • Dundee University – lessons learned: Information shared with ARC and Finance Committee members. All agreed that governance needs to always remain objective and independent. • Internal audit plan – Destinations: On-site testing re-timed to February 2026 to align with data availability. • 16–19 funding focus: Clarification provided regarding internal audit scoping; CFO and auditors to keep this under review outside the meeting. • Internal audit contract: Current year is year 5 (final year) of the agreement; CFO (with Tenet) commencing a retender exercise. Scrutton Bland were encouraged to re-apply. AGREED: to A, note the content of the updates provided, and B, CFO to progress the internal audit retender timetable and report back on procurement steps.	*
3	Cyber Security – 2024/25 Annual Report Director of Technology, Innovation and Development introduced the annual report, noting the rising prevalence of phishing and ransomware in education. The College continues to run simulated phishing exercises (recent click-throughs average between 6–12%) and to require MFA for staff and students. He emphasised that while technical controls are maturing, human behaviour remains the principal vulnerability. Members explored the treatment of repeat offenders in simulations. COO confirmed current practice is mandatory retraining with line-manager visibility, and the College is actively considering proportionate sanctions. Committee members supported strengthening the deterrent arrangements while preserving a learning culture.	

	In relation to student exposure, staff explained that student accounts are segregated with highly limited access and MFA applied; nonetheless, the College is building digital safety education into broader student support and the evolving digital vision workstream. COO added that a targeted programme for students will complement staff exercises, prioritising awareness and personal cyber requirements that in turn protects College infrastructure. COO outlined a planned CMG level cyber incident exercise, designed to test operational resilience and decision making. The Chair acknowledged the value of “appropriate jeopardy” to anchor learning and asked that outcomes (including gaps and next steps) be reported back to the committee. One governor asked whether ransom payments are permitted. COO confirmed prevailing guidance that such payments are not permitted, reinforcing the importance of prevention and recovery planning. Committee also asked about cyber insurance. Staff confirmed a comprehensive policy is in place, subject to annual assurance questionnaires and demonstrable evidence of controls. Members noted insurance rarely covers the full direct and indirect costs, and claims can be challenged if controls are not evidenced, underlining the need for audit ready documentation. Director of Technology, Innovation and Development proposed establishing a set of cybersecurity KPIs—covering technical controls, user behaviours, and incident readiness—to enable ELT/Board oversight and trend analysis. The Chair endorsed the proposal and asked Director of Governance to include the cyber governance code of practice summary in the Board papers, alongside the exercise outcomes, to link practice to Board assurance. AGREED to: • Note the content of the annual Cyber Report • Note the planned CMG incident exercise with a report on outcomes to ARC. • Support the development of cybersecurity KPIs/dashboard for ELT and ARC oversight. • Encourage the adoption of the voluntary cyber governance code of practice.	* * *
4	2025/26 External Audit – Progress Update (Verbal) External auditors updated the Committee, with key matters highlighted including:	

	• First year fieldwork has been demanding given team changes and bedding-in of new systems; however, work is now substantially complete. • Auditors anticipate unmodified opinions on both the financial statements and regularity • The External Audit report will be issued ready for the planned joint ARC/Finance committee meeting set for Tuesday 2 December 2025. Members welcomed the anticipated outcomes, acknowledging efforts by both audit and College teams. The Chair encouraged partner presence at the joint meeting, noting governance expectations for partner visibility. AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	
5	Regularity Self-Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ) CFO presented the draft RSAQ, which now subsumes prior "Schedule of Musts" requirements. Members discussed and: • Asked for clearer articulation of counter-fraud controls—including preventive/detective mechanisms, simulations, and control testing—in addition to listing policies and logs. • Requested that the RSAQ specify control operation (e.g., fraud response plan testing cadence, simulated scenarios, escalation routes) in more detail. • The Chair requested explicit reference to recently updated "failure to prevent fraud" obligations and that the narrative in the RSAQ (and, where appropriate, the financial statements) make clear how the College is responding e.g. training, refreshed risk assessment, targeted checks in vulnerable processes, and planned assurance. • Asked the CFO to check and update senior pay approval thresholds in line with the latest guidance. Governors all agreed that they would find it useful to have more time to review the content outside the meeting. It was agreed that members would send RSAQ comments to CFO (including VfM/common themes examples and counter-fraud control clarifications). It was also agreed to provide this document to Finance Committee members for review and comment. It was agreed that, following further review by both committees, the updated version would be presented for board approval on 17th December 2025.	*
6	Schedule of Musts 2024/25 – College Response (Verbal)	

	External auditors confirmed a separate "Schedule of Musts" document is not mandatory and that all requirements are addressed within the RSAQ. Committee asked that the CFO ensure that the RSAQ comprehensively evidences compliance with all "musts".	*
7	Committee's Annual Report to the Board 2024/25 Members endorsed the shorter, more accessible format benchmarked against other colleges. Requested refinements included: 1. Add narrative on collaboration with internal audit to clear historic recommendations, including the Committee's challenge, monitoring, and observed trajectory of improvement. 2. Reflect cross-committee risk oversight, noting where Property Strategy Steering Group, QTSE, and People Committee routinely consider risks drawn from the corporate register. 3. Insert a clear ARC opinion statement on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management, and internal control, positioning it prominently for Board readers. 4. Offer illustrative examples, where appropriate, to bring the report to life. It was agreed that governors would submit any additional comments by 3rd December and that a revised document would be finalised by the Committee Chair to be circulated to board on 10th December 2025.	*
8	2025/2026 Internal Audit (Verbal) Internal Auditors provided a progress report that was shared at the meeting. Key matters highlighted were: • The Health & Safety audit was not concluded ahead of this meeting, but all information has now been provided. Finalisation is expected shortly, with the report available for presentation to the next committee meeting in February 2026. • The first follow-up visit on prior recommendations is scheduled for 1 December. CFO confirmed all owners have been notified and indicated that any date changes need to be approved by ARC. • A Risk Management review is planned pre-Christmas, aligning well with the College's risk framework work.	*

	Internal Auditors will share a sector risk update to keep members sighted.	*
8	Audit Actions Tracker CFO reiterated the focus on clearing historic internal and external audit actions, with termly follow-ups to maintain momentum. The Committee emphasised the importance of demonstrably addressing 2023/24 external audit recommendations and evidencing progress on the 2024/25 cycle. Request from the committee was for the CFO to maintain oversight and ensure agreed dates are met and ensure improvements are evidenced for the 2024/25 external audit. AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	
9	Risk Management CFO and COO presented the direction of travel to make risk management a live, tiered framework with clear ownership (Campus Directors, ELT etc.) including frequent reviews. COO set out a risk appetite vs tolerance distinction, aligning appetite with strategic ambition (e.g., innovation in digital and agile curriculum) while maintaining low tolerance for high-impact areas (e.g., safeguarding, cyber). He advised that a Board workshop is proposed to calibrate appetite across strategic pillars. Members asked that Ofsted framework changes be recognised explicitly within the operational risk register refresh. It was acknowledged that Internal Audit's December work will test current arrangements and inform future design. AGREED: - COO and CFO to present a draft risk appetite matrix at the next meeting in February 2026 and schedule a Board workshop. - To align internal audit fieldwork with framework changes; incorporate Ofsted changes into risk register refresh.	* *
10	Gifts and Hospitality Return 2024/25 A nil return was reported. Members asked that awareness and tracking continue routinely through the year given prior modest entries (e.g., small gifts, hospitality). AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	
11	Martyn's Law – Assurance Report	

	COO summarised substantial progress, including: • Installation/testing of campus wide audio notification systems (Tannoy), • Duty manager training completed, • Classroom/office safety packs issued (e.g. door wedges, glass-cover materials), and • A phased rollout of staff and student training. • Full lockdown simulations will be carefully staged to build confidence while avoiding unnecessary alarm or damage. • The College is assessed as ahead of the curve within the 24-month implementation period. AGREED to note the content of the update provided.	
12	MPM Monitoring Report – 2025/26 (Verbal) CFO confirmed that there was nothing to report.	
13	Fraud, Irregularity and Whistleblowing – any instances to report (Verbal) CFO confirmed that there was nothing to report.	
14	ICO Reportable Incidents 2025/26 CFO confirmed that there was nothing to report.	
15	Sector publications Members noted recent sector materials (DfE Fraud Awareness Guide; FE Emerging Issues – Autumn 2025; GGI Board Assurance Prompt) as useful context. The RSM risk document was highlighted for cyber/insurance references and the importance of human risk.	
16	Date and time of next meeting These were noted as: • Joint Finance & ARC: Tuesday 2 December 2025 (external audit presentation). • ARC (onsite): Tuesday 3 February 2026, 18:00. • Board: Wednesday 17 December 2025; papers due 10 December 2025.	
17	Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th September 2025 These were approved as an accurate record. Meeting closed at 7.55pm.	

