

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE

 WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019
10:00 AM IN CSH11

Present

Dr Stephen Critchley
Rev David Dadswell
Mr Richard Hallsworth (Chair)
The Revd Dr Sally Myers
Mr Philip Wright

In attendance

Mr Stephen Deville, Chief Operating Officer
My John Duff, Health & Safety Manager (for item 10 only)
Professor Scott Fleming, Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Ms Stephanie Gilluly, Registrar (Clerk)
Mrs Rachel Harvey, Director of Strategy & Planning
Rev Canon Professor Peter Neil, Vice-Chancellor
Mr Matthew Pitts, Governance, Compliance and Operations Manager (for items 9.1, 11, 12 & 13)
Mr Sean Ryan (Uniac)
Mr Barrie Shipley, Director of Finance
Mrs Emma Whiteley, Governance Officer (Minuting Officer)

	Action
1. Welcome	
1.1 The Chair welcomed all in attendance to the third Audit Committee meeting of the 2018/19 academic year.	
2. Apologies	
2.1 No apologies for absence were received.	
3. Declarations of interest	
3.1 There were no declarations of interest.	
4. Minutes of the last meeting held on 7 November 2018	
4.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 7 November 2018 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.	Gov Office/ R Hallsworth

4.2	It was AGREED that only one set of minutes would go to the Committee for approval. This would clearly highlight the items for redaction.	Gov Office
5.	From the part of Audit Committee, to give approval to the minutes of <u>joint FE&GP and Audit Committee meeting held on 7 November 2018</u>	
5.1	The minutes of the <u>joint</u> FE&GP and Audit Committee meeting held on 7 November 2018 were APPROVED as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.	Gov Office/ R Hallsworth
6.	Matters arising	
6.1	Action table	
6.1.1	The Committee RECEIVED the matters arising action table produced by the Governance Office and NOTED the progress against actions.	
6.2	Action table – <u>joint</u> FE&GP and Audit Committee meeting held on 7 November 2018	
6.2.1	The Committee RECEIVED the matters arising action table produced by the Governance Office and NOTED the progress against actions.	
6.3	Any other matters [REDACTED]	
7.	To review and discuss the Risk Register	
7.1	The Director of Strategy and Planning, RH, presented the Risk Register to the Committee for discussion and the four areas of risk were NOTED. RH REPORTED that we undertook scenario planning, however, this was not presented in detail to the Audit Committee.	
7.2	Value for Money (VFM) was HIGHLIGHTED and Members queries what this meant for the University. It was AGREED that, until further guidance was available from the Office for Students (OfS), it would be advisable to provide our own view of what VFM looked like. This would be put on the agenda for the next meeting. It was requested that this should be an issue discussed with Council in the future.	Next meeting Gov Office
7.3	It was NOTED that pension contributions were almost certain to increase and the University would be expected to pay the increase in costs, however it was AGREED that the wording for this risk required adjustment to reflect the schemes that affected BGU. It was NOTED that 10% of the total cost was the expected liability to the University.	SD/ R Harvey
7.4	The Committee AGREED that areas we should be examining were risks around unconditional offers, checks around borrowing and arrangements for the setting of the Vice-Chancellors pay.	R Harvey
8.	To review and discuss the Key Performance Indicators	

8.1 RH presented the Key Performance Indicators to the Committee for discussion, NOTING that we were getting closer to being able to amalgamate the Risk Register with the Key Performance indicators. It was NOTED that the four boxes shown as incomplete were due for a 6-month review of tolerances, targets and weighting on metrics. It was hoped this information would be available for the following month and the intention was that all KPIs would be able to be completed through automated data processes.

8.2 It was NOTED that it had been AGREED with the Chair of Council that the KPI's and the Risk Register would sit under the Audit Committee section of the Council agenda for discussion as it was the Committee's position to discuss how these were working and how they were made up.

Gov Office

8.3 The Committee NOTED a positive picture from the dashboard, which included an explanation on recruitment. It was NOTED that RH and SG would discuss the inclusion of intelligence surrounding complaints.

R Harvey/SG

9. To note and consider internal audit reports

Matthew Pitts joined the meeting for this item.

9.1 MKI Audit Tracker Report

9.1.1 MP presented the MKI Audit Tracker Report to the Committee NOTING the 26 updates. Of these updates there were 14 requests for closure, 10 extension requests and 2 updates, all of which had been to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group (VCEG).

MP

Matthew Pitts left the meeting.

9.2 Internal Audit Progress Report

9.2.1 SR of Uniac presented the Internal Audit Progress Report which outlined overall progress. SR NOTED that they had hoped to be much further on than they were, however, the work would be done and there would significant activity before the June Audit Committee meeting.

9.3 Uniac sector updates

9.3.1 SR PRESENTED the Uniac sector updates, HIGHLIGHTING the following areas:

- Mental health – Student Minds Mental Health Charter was recommended by the OfS and UUK.
- The footnote on KEF.
- The HESA data return.
- Future risk – the University Risk Register and the wider organisational Risk Register.

- Regulatory environment – an event in London was to be held on 11 April.
- Trying to second guess what the OfS would be doing.
- Board/Council framework. It would be worth the Committee thinking about what assurances were important and how these were monitored, going back to first principles.

Next meeting

9.4 To receive internal audit reports

9.4.1 A) Review of Staff Appraisal and Alignment with University Strategy

The Committee RECEIVED the internal audit reports. SR PRESENTED items A) and B) together NOTING the importance of staff being aware of, and bought into, the strategic context. The unique nature of the University's environment was NOTED, with a lot of people buying into the ethos, however, more could be done to tailor the staff appraisal process to the organisation.

9.4.2 Two themes that ran through both reports were planning and staff performance. Greater oversight by HR was required to confirm whether meetings were happening. Members NOTED that this was one of the priorities for the new Director of HR to take forward once they commenced their role at the end of April.

9.4.3 PN NOTED that the Staff Survey results were in and Council would be consulted on next steps in June and July. The performance Framework of the University was NOTED. The Committee AGREED that negative feedback did not necessarily mean a process was wrong but rather that it may require intelligent interpretation.

9.4.4 B) Planning Health Check Review (Advisory)

Reported on with item A) above.

9.4.5 C) Review of Information Governance and Security

SR REPORTED that this was a follow-up on work done on GDPR and was by and large a housekeeping process of the current context.

9.4.6 D) Review of Published Information/Unistats Record

SR REPORTED that this was an important area for OfS and seen as an important tool. The University had a good framework in place to ensure that applicants were able to get good and accurate information. The issue of broken web-links would be followed up.

Gov Office

10. Health & Safety update

John Duff joined the meeting for this item.

- 10.1 JD attended to present his follow-up report to the verbal update he gave to the Committee at the previous meeting. This was a follow-up to Health & Safety being added to the Risk Register. The Committee NOTED the work on developing operational procedures.
- 10.2 SD NOTED that JD was doing a great job and the question was how much the Audit Committee wanted to see, as JD did report to the FE&GP Committee for Health & Safety. It was AGREED that JD had provided reassurances to the Committee. It was also NOTED that Uniac would be doing a review of the work done over the next year. The Chair CONFIRMED that they were happy with the reassurances given and, going forward, any Health & Safety risks would go on the Risk Register.

R Harvey/JD

John Duff left the meeting

11. Safeguarding training update

Matthew Pitts joined the meeting.

- 11.1 MP NOTED that the majority of the training had been delivered via both e-learning and face-to-face. It was a requirement to have Safeguarding training renewed every 2 years therefore it was a rolling programme. It was NOTED that the number of safeguarding incidents for the last two academic years was relatively low and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) gave advice where required. It was AGREED that future reporting on safeguarding would be aligned with report on Prevent.

12. Prevent update

- 12.1 SG updated the Committee on an issue that had arisen that was now with the Prevent team. It was stressed that this had not taken place on campus and the student had intercalated.

13. Student Contention Report 2017/18

- 13.1 MP presented the Student Contention Annual Report for 2017/18, NOTING the slight increase in overall numbers, although many were found not to be justified. In terms of benchmarking we were slightly higher than other institutions, although there was no information for what was upheld or not. It was NOTED that there was an increase in students looking for financial compensation and a range of actions had been developed.

- 13.2 The Committee NOTED that they would welcome information on how complaints had been addressed. It was NOTED that the percentage of complaints around disability issues were disappointing as these issues had been addressed, and a Member queried if we should have seen a fall in these figures.

MP

- 13.3 It was NOTED that a high level academic appeals was being accepted, including appeals relating to matters that might have been addressed through the

<p>extenuating circumstances process. It was NOTED that the Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Appeals Codes of Practice were both under review. The revised Codes would be considered through Senate.</p>	<p>Quality Team</p>
<p><i>Matthew Pitts left the meeting.</i></p>	
<p>14. Annual Assurance Return response</p>	
<p>14.1 SD REPORTED that a response had not been received to date.</p>	
<p>15. Themes of risk</p>	
<p>15.1 It was AGREED that this item would be moved to the agenda of the next meeting.</p>	<p>Next meeting</p>
<p>16. Risk Appetite</p>	
<p>16.1 The Director of Strategy and Planning, RH presented the update on the work to develop BGU’s Risk Appetite Framework, which took place at Council’s Away Day in January 2019. It was NOTED that the table showed a broad range of risk appetite, however, we needed to think about refining this, aiming for a range in the arrows. The Committee AGREED that we still looked risk-adverse and if we took out Research and Partnerships everything else was down. It was NOTED that we needed to identify where we needed to take risks, which would then show the boom or bust effect. It was AGREED that further conversations were important and some examples could be shown. We could perhaps score highly on some and low on others in order to take risks. The table was illustrative and needed and open dialogue. It was NOTED that we did take risks, however, across the sector institutions were pulling back from taking risks. It was AGREED that more work would be done on this at a separate session involving Council prior to their June meeting. The Governance Office would ensure that PW was included in this separate session.</p>	<p>R Harvey</p>
	<p>Gov Office</p>
<p>17. Agenda suggestions for future meetings</p>	
<p>17.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for Money • Assurance Framework • Themes of Risk • Risk Appetite 	<p>Gov Office</p>
<p>18. Agenda management and review</p>	
<p>18.1 SM NOTED the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful if the colours used in papers were toned down. 	<p>R Harvey/ Gov Office</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be helpful if minutes were circulated to members soon after the meeting. 	<p>Gov Office</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of electronic board packages was discussed. SG CONFIRMED that this was currently being explored. 	<p>SG</p>

19. Any other business

19.1 The Chair NOTED that he would circulate a pre-minute summary to members following the audit tender presentations that took place the previous week. This would be a note from the Audit Committee to Council summarising the process with a review paragraph of each firm, explaining why different firms were discounted at different stages. Members were asked to comment on the summary ahead of the University Council meeting to take place on 20 March. SD would communicate as appropriate with all those who submitted tenders.

R Hallsworth

Steve Deville/
R Hallsworth

20. Key Items for University Council

- 20.1
- Internal audit reviews
 - KPIs
 - Risk Appetite
 - Student Contention Report
 - Gender Pay Gap
 - Value for Money
 - External auditors

R Hallsworth/
Gov Office

21. Date of next meeting

21.1 The next meeting of the Audit Committee would take place on Wednesday 19 June 2019 at 10:00 am in CSH10. *To be confirmed.*

Signed



Date

4/3/2020

