



NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

Principles: *Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, Leadership*

Virtues: *Trust, Wisdom, Kindness, Justice, Service, Courage, Optimism*

Minutes of the Audit Committee held on Microsoft Teams on:
Wednesday 12 FEBRUARY 2025 at 5.00PM

PRESENT Paul Casey (Chair)
John Barnes
Father Michael Hall
David Ellis

IN ATTENDANCE: Karen Petrillo - Director of Finance and Operations
Justine Barlow - Principal
Andy McCulloch – TIAA
Ade Kosoko - TIAA
Denise Hark – Clerk to Corporation

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

| | | ACTION |
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| 1.00 | APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS | |
| 1.01 | Apologies for absence were received from Scott Gillon (Wylie Bisset). | |
| 2.00 | DECLARATION OF INTERESTS | |
| | There were no declarations of interest made regarding items on the agenda. | |
| 3.00 | MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING | |
| 3.01 | The minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and are approved for signature. | |
| 4.00 | REVIEW ACTIONS AND MATTERS ARISING | |
| | Extension of contract with External Auditor. | |
| 4.01 | The Committee considered a written report from the DFO regarding the process to appoint external auditors. In accordance with ESFA requirements, colleges only need to formally tender for external auditors every 5 years. This would allow the college to extend the current contract for two years. | |
| 4.02 | Governors considered the disadvantages for going out to tender immediately, which included the likely cost increases, and the fact that the current auditors | |

understand the reserves and the issues with the P&L which cannot be resolved until the new finance system is in place. The Committee agreed that the current external auditors have been thorough, and they also understand the College's financial systems.

4.03 **Agreed:** To recommend to Corporation that the contract with Wylie Bisset as External Auditors be extended for two years.

4.04 The tender process for external auditors needs to start by Spring 2027 at the latest. The DFO reported that she would like to use the Crescent Purchasing Consortium for the tender, with the final decision on appointment being made by the Audit Committee.

4.05 The DFO confirmed that SG would be able to remain as audit partner for the two-year extension, but if Wylie Bisset are successful with a future tender the College would have a new audit partner.

5.00 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

5.01 Andy McCulloch, Director of Operations from TIAA reported that David Robinson, Director of Audit was unable to attend the meeting today. There had been some changes internally at TIAA. Ade Kosoko has been promoted to Audit Manager and she would present reports at future committee meetings. David Robinson would still be involved in the audit planning process.

5.02 Cyber Security Audit

There had been three recommendations made following the Cyber Security Audit. These were separate but linked together.

5.03 AM highlighted the following recommendations:
There was no centralised or automated security log-in solution.
The Incident Response plan had not been tested.

5.04 There were some Priority 3 recommendations regarding version control. This was due to the policy not having been reviewed by the due date.

5.05 There were five Priority 2 recommendations, however, the auditors were still able to provide Reasonable Assurance.

5.06 Q: Is it a problem that the critical servers are managed by a third party?
A: (AM) This will be checked out. It was a finding rather than an issue.

5.07 The Chair commented that there appeared to be more significance and more reliance on third parties. The DFO explained that this was more to do with procurement priorities and noted that CEDAR and Edupay hold a lot of sensitive data. The College needs to make sure that they have the appropriate controls in place.

5.08 Q: Do we question a company's IT security when we go out to tender?

A: Not currently, however they are questioned about whether they meet particular standards such as iso9001 so that the College can be confident in that the data they hold is secure.

5.09 Q: Do our own critical systems need to be reviewed?

A: A quote for the new system will be brought to the May meeting. The incident response plan has also been further developed as a result of findings.

5.10 The DFO reported that early indications show that a suitable system will be particularly expensive.

5.11 The Chair noted that it would be useful to quantify the frequency and exposure and suggested looking at the incident log over a 2-to-3-month period to see what is involved.

Action: KP to provide this for the next meeting.

DFO

6.00 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.01 The DFO reported on the risk register which had been provided with the papers for the meeting. The risk register had been updated since the previous meeting with the areas in blue being the most up to date.

6.02 The Principal reported that the pause on some of the proposed defunded qualifications have resulted in the impact of this having been significantly reduced as courses withdrawn from September 2025 have alternatives. This risk has been mitigated by government action.

6.03 The risk regarding the funding of teachers' salaries was subject to regular changes. Keeping abreast of funding changes covers this risk.

6.04 Recruitment figures for September 2025 look strong and are up 10% on the same time last year. The significant increase in applications is due to the College's reputation and the work carried out by the marketing team.

6.05 The College has gone out to tender for a Lockdown system to replace the current one which is not robust. The new system will have speakers and an app as well as the ability to have a message displayed on college computers.

6.06 Q: Is the estates spending against provision on track?

A: Of the 150k planned maintenance budget 32k has been spent to date. The spend is expected to reach 138k. Much of the work on the roof can't be undertaken until the summer holidays.

7.00 POLICY APPROVAL

The following policies were presented for review:

7.01 Business Continuity Plan

Q: Why has there been a change which includes online as part of alternative accommodation?

A: Since Covid this has become a valid option.

Q: Why is the policy review period 2 years and not annually?

A: There had been very few changes. It would be reviewed sooner if this became necessary.

It was noted that Corporation had previously agreed that policies should only be reviewed every two years unless it is required that they are reviewed annually.

Agreed: to **approve** the Business Continuity Plan.

7.02 Incident Response Plan

This is a new policy. The document was previously in existence but not as a policy. Internal Audit advice had been that this should be dated and reviewed.

Q: Do people know their responsibilities?

A: Yes.

Q: Is there a paper copy in case of an IT issues.

A: The DFO will hold a paper copy.

Agreed: to **approve** the Incident Response Plan.

7.03 Risk Management Policy

The DFO reported that there had not been any changes to this policy but there may be some changes following the internal audit in this area in February.

Agreed: to **approve** the Risk Management Policy.

7.04 IT Network and Information Systems Security Policy

The policy had been amended to reflect job changes and changes to the software used.

The Chair asked for further explanation over the immutable storage and whether the encryption key is as secure as it can be. The DFO noted that data is stored in the Cloud in two locations. The Principal added that she had questioned the Head of IT regarding security, and he had confirmed that Cloud storage is as secure as it can be.

Agreed: to **approve** the IT Network and Information Systems Security Policy.

7.05 ICT Acceptable Use Policy – Staff

This policy is reviewed annually and is circulated to staff.

The DFO drew attention to point 5 which states that if staff use personal phones to look at their College emails, they must have up to date IOS security.

Agreed: to **approve** the ICT Acceptable Use Policy – Staff.

7.06 ICT Acceptable Use Policy – Students

In response to a question from a governor the Principal confirmed that the statement “I have read the acceptable use policy” is on the College log-in screens.

A governor commented that the best practice additions were good from a parent’s perspective.

Agreed: to **approve** the ICT Acceptable Use Policy – Students.

7.07 Social Media Policy (Staff and Students)

Q: Do staff use departmental What’s App groups to comment on College matters?

A: It is possible that they might do this as an effective way of communicating within the team.

The Principal reported that the policy did not tell staff how to communicate, but advised them not to bring the College into disrepute.

The DFO reported that the line about What’s App had been added to make it clear to staff that they should be careful when communicating this way as any conversations could be subject to Freedom of Information requests.

AM reported that the risk from What’s App is that the College does not have oversight and What’s App should be removed from College phones. The Principal replied that the policy refers to communications on personal phones. Only senior leaders have College work phones.

AM commented that staff should be advised to consider the security of information if they are using personal phones. The Principal agreed to raise this in Head of Department meetings and ask them to share this with their teams.

Agreed: to **approve** the Social Media Policy (Staff and Students).

7.08 Social Networking Policy (Staff and Students)

Agreed: to **approve** the Social Networking Policy (Staff and Students).

8.00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.01 There were no items of Any Other Business raised.

9.00 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

9.01 The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 20 May at 5.00pm.

The meeting at closed at 6.12pm.