

Minutes
 GB Audit & Risk Committee
 Governance

Date	22/11/2023	
Time	16:30 - 17:45	
Location	Online Teams	
Present:	Nasim Khan	Chair
	Vincent Neate	Vice Chair
	Simon Boulcott	Governor
	Tracey Critchley	HC Staff Governor
	Keith Smith	Ex Officio CEO
In attendance:	Dylan McTaggart	Deputy CEO, Group Principal
	Shane Woodhatch	Chief Finance Officer
	Julie Amory	Group Director of People & Organisation Development
	Anna Beattie	Director of Finance
Invited speakers:	Karen Elliott	Asst Dir of People & Organisation Development
	Kath Rangeley	Director - Funding and Information Services
	Abiraj Vijayakumar	Senior Health and Safety Advisor
External Guest:	James Godsmark	Manager, Validera Auditors
Governance	Perry Perrott	Chief of Staff & Governance
Minuting:	Rekha Kaul	Senior Governance Manager
Apologies:	Ketan Sheth	Governor
	Lee Glover	Head of Internal Audit, Validera Auditors

22nd November 2023 Minutes

ACTION LOG:

No.	Action:	Who:	By When:
1:	SW/PP to meet with an external Security Specialist as recommended by ND, Chair of Corporation on 30 th Nov, to advise on lockdown system and security matters.	SW/PP	30 th Nov
2:	SW/PP to send an All Staff email outlining Lockdown ppt and policy to inform staff and students, in advance of lockdown test.	SW/PP	29 th Nov
3:	Lockdown tests: to take place on 18 th Dec Harrow am / Uxb pm and 19 th Dec RC.	SW/PP	18 th & 19 th Dec
4:	SW/PP to provide a full report on efficacy and outcome of lockdown tests, to be presented at 7 th March GB A&R committee.	SW/PP	7 th Mar A&R
5:	Priority policies: to be presented at 12 th Dec GB Corporation for formal ratification.	EMT Leads	12 th Dec GBC
6:	HRUC Risk Register – top 30 risks with detailed mitigations, costs and actions to be brought to 12 th Dec GB Corporation.	EMT Leads	12 th Dec GBC
7:	PP to share copy of HRUC top 30 risks, to A&R members via email, in advance of 12 th December GB Corporation.	PP	Before 12 th Dec GBC
8:	JA/KE to provide data metrics on the staff uptake and usage of wellbeing and mental health services, to be presented at 7 th March GB A&R committee.	JA/KE	7 th Mar A&R
9:	Physical inventory to be completed at all three colleges. Schedule of Assets is required at HRUC with Depreciation Schedules are in place. Update at 7 th March GB A&R committee.	AB	7 th Mar A&R
10:	KR to provide an Apprenticeship Audit Report update at 7 th Mar A&R committee.	KR	7 th Mar A&R
11.	An internal H&S Audit is to be conducted in January 2024, 60 days to complete, full assessment of 5 campuses. AV to provide update H&S Report at 7 th Mar A&R committee.	AV	7 th Mar A&R

22nd November 2023

MINUTES OF MEETING:

1.	Declaration of Recording for Data Protection Purposes:
	Permission was obtained for the meeting to be recorded for the purposes of minutes.
2.	Apologies for absence:
	Apologies were noted from KS (who is chairing an in person Brent Council meeting this evening).
3.	Declarations of Interest:
	None were received.
4.	Minutes of 28th September 2023 meeting:
	Meeting notes were APPROVED .
5.	Progress on 9 Actions from 28th September 2023 meeting:
	1.action is complete.
	2&3. Purchase of new lockdown system: following a value for money tender process, three quotes have been obtained. SW (CFO) advises that the preferred supplier is School Watch circa £125K (across HRUC all three colleges) and this represents value for money, safety of staff and students and the preferred software.
ACTION 1:	SW/PP to meet with an external Security Specialist as recommended by ND, Chair of Corporation on 30th Nov, to advise on lockdown system and security matters.
ACTION 2:	PP/SW to send an All Staff email outlining Lockdown ppt and policy to inform staff and students, in advance of lockdown test.
ACTION 3:	Lockdown tests will be conducted: 18th Dec Harrow am / Uxb pm and 19th Dec RC.
ACTION 4:	SW/PP to provide a full report on efficacy and outcome of lockdown tests at 7th March GB A&R committee.
	4.HRUC policy and procedures – status remains Amber: Rockborn have completed stage 2 of 3, to identify 18 policies across whole group which need to be updated, of which 3 are priority policies. This is a strong position, as there were over 100 policies across the Group.
5.1	Policy Leads are overseeing the review and update of the 18 policies.
ACTION 5:	Priority policies to be presented at 12th December GB Corporation for formal ratification.
	5.HRUC Risk Register: EMT to meet on 24 th November to calculate the top 30 HRUC risks, which will then be sent back out to staff to provide a detailed list of mitigations, costings and actions. HRUC Risk Register to be brought to 12 th December GB Corporation.
5.2	Risk to be judged by using Standard and Likelihood of Impact scale.
ACTION 6:	HRUC Risk Register – top 30 risks with detailed mitigations, costs and actions to be brought to 12th Dec GB Corporation for information.
5.3	The following caveat was NOTED: due to the HRUC Risk Register not being prepared in time for today's A&R committee, on this occasion, the A&R committee has <u>not</u> had an opportunity to review and provide advice, guidance or recommendation, in advance of 12 th December GB Corporation.
5.4	Clarification of normal and correct cycle that A&R is the reporting committee into GBC.
5.5	Significant time will be spent at 12 th Dec GB Corporation to discuss the top 30 risks, for information only.
ACTION 7:	PP to share copy of HRUC top 30 risks, to A&R committee via email, in advance of 12th December GB Corporation, including summary narrative for each risk.
	6,7,8,9: Health & Safety update included in today's meeting.

6.0	HRUC Risk Register:
	Verbal update and associated actions provided above.
7.0	Standing Items:
7.1	Staff Wellbeing:
	KE provided a verbal update of the main activities in place to drive up staff wellbeing.
	a. A dedicated “Wellbeing” job role has been created to focus on the health & wellbeing of staff.
	b. HRUC Staff Wellbeing programme 2023-24 is to be shared with all staff, detailing activities taking place at each campus throughout the year. Examples include piano classes, knitting, and volleyball.
	c. Friday 22 nd December HRUC Staff Wellbeing day – college will be closed.
	d. People Plan: staff wellbeing is a key priority, including focus on EDI.
	e. HRUC employment contracts: including harmonisation of terms of conditions.
	f. Departmental hampers/care packages have been provided at big events such as October pay award, to recognise, value and say thank you to staff and to lift moral.
7.1.1	The committee enquired about activities in support of the mental health of staff.
7.1.2	Mental Health First Aiders have been trained across the group. A plan is to be rolled out to enable the mobilisation of services for staff and students to be able to access mental health services.
7.1.3	Link to the Plumm Wellbeing app was shared with members.
7.1.4	The committee were assured to see wellbeing including mental health of staff and students is a key focus across the Group.
ACTION 8:	JA/KE to provide data metrics on the staff uptake and usage of wellbeing and mental health services, to be presented at 7th March GB A&R committee.
7.1.5	The committee noted a strong link between staff wellbeing and health & safety.
7.1.6	Staff Workload is also closely linked to staff wellbeing. There have been embryonic developments in artificial intelligence apps that can automate the design and building of whole teaching plans for a year. The AI is in testing phase; however early indications are that staff are impressed with how effective the AI can be used to drastically reduce staff workload time in preparing annual work plans.
7.1.7	Asif Khan has produced a report on AI and curriculum and will be presenting it at 12 th December GB Corporation.
7.2	Tracking on previous audit recommendations:
7.2.1	AB talked to the highlights of the detailed action log spreadsheet, which had been provided in advance and taken as read in the meeting pack.
7.2.2	There is one health & safety recommendation to be completed, from June 2021 H&S Audit report: a. Shelter in Place Lockdown procedure to have taken place.
7.2.3	There are 5 Funding recommendations.
7.2.4	Apprenticeship Work Based Learning audit: findings report awaited and will be added to the log.
7.2.5	High Needs Provision and Learning Support audit: thirteen new audit recommendations are active.
7.2.6	There are two outstanding Finance & Audit recommendations:
	A. Logging of fixed assets register and process of disposing of assets. AB has compiled new fixed assets register incl new building since HRUC merger.

ACTION 9:	Physical inventory to be completed at all three colleges. Schedule of Assets is required at HRUC with Depreciation Schedules are in place. Update to at 7th Mar A&R committee.
7.2.7	A new Projects Manager is to be recruited to track progress of this key activity.

	<i>External visitor: James Godsmark, Validera joined e-meeting at 5.10pm</i>
7.4	Introduction to Validera (Auditors):
7.4.1	James Godsmark is a Manager at Validera Auditors is the main contact for day to day HRUC activity.
7.4.2	Lee Glover, Head of Internal Audit (sends his apologies today).
	Outline of the services provided at Validera: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. conduct an internal needs assessment audit of HRUC. b. Meeting with key stakeholders, reviewing key documents such as risk register, previous internal and external audit reports and any other sources of assurance HRUC may have. c. 3 year internal audit strategy is prepared, reviewed at start of each year. d. Validera are invited to attend A&R committee meetings in year to provide progress reports and to review Validera's progress against the agreed plan. e. An annual internal audit opinion is provided which comments on the adequacy and effectiveness of HRUC's risk management governance and internal control systems. f. Follow up recommendations: management internal audit tracker.
7.4.3	Validera will review HRUC's internal audit reports and come back to the committee with comments and feedback.
7.4.4	Members' asked for an experienced understanding of what HRUC's top three priorities may be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. cyber security is a top risk for all organisations b. risk management in general / effective management of risks c. business continuity (different to March 2020 pandemic experience)
7.4.5	SW (CFO and now the DPO) highlighted CONCERN about data protection, storage of data and the deletion there of across the Group.
7.4.6	GDPR is a priority area that Validera will be supporting HRUC with by conducting an audit review on.
7.4.7	Validera to share their wider experience / lessons learned from other similar organisations / sector updates / best practice in the form of helpful updates to the A&R committee, in a palatable format.
7.4.8	The critical view of Validera is also welcomed during the early stage implementation of HRUC's new Risk Management process.
7.4.9	The Chair thanked James Godsmark and Validera. The A&R committee aims to be outstanding in every aspect of its work and will be leaning on Validera for support in this regard.
7.4.10	HRUC has widened it's internal audit specification, Validera can provide funding assurance, security, GDPR and key financial controls.
7.4.11	Year round support is available to call on their expertise on internal audit function. Validera contract is 3 years long, in line with best practice. There are potential cost savings to Validera.
7.3	Report on Fraud / corruption issues:
	Nothing new to report.

8.0	Apprenticeship Audit Report:
8.1	KR provided a verbal update and talked to the summary highlights.
8.2	Audit was conducted in 2021 based on HCUC ILR. The focus was on apprenticeships and 16-19 provision and AEB provision (funding by SFA, excluding £8m which is funded by GLA).
8.3	The report highlighted 25 recommendations, of which, 20 are in Apprenticeships.
8.4	Work is ongoing, including some work on controls for 13 recommendations. Controls Testing to be completed by April 2024.
8.5	HRUC has also been selected for another National Audit 2022-23 ILR, for Richmond College. Audit report is awaited in next 6-8 weeks.
8.6	KR has produced the detailed Apprenticeship log which will be incorporated into AB's log, to create new RuTC log.
8.7	KR confirmed the total funding errors are equivalent to 0.08% of funding. There is no reputational risks to HRUC.
ACTION 10:	KR to provide an Apprenticeship Audit update report at 7th Mar A&R committee.
	The Committee thanked KR and await an update.
9.0	Health & Safety Report:
9.1	AV, Senior Health & Safety Advisor was introduced and talked through the highlights of the H&S report which had been provided in advance and was taken as read.
9.2	<p><u>Health and Safety Action Plan 2021/2022</u> <i>We are committed to fostering a culture of safety and well-being at HRUC, and to that end, we have outlined the following key initiatives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Safety Training: <i>We are dedicated to providing comprehensive Health & Safety training, as indicated in our current training matrix.</i> • Risk Assessments: <i>We are implementing a robust process to guarantee that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for all College activities.</i> • Internal Reviews and Inspections: <i>We have established a regular schedule for internal reviews and inspections of the Health & Safety management system within Schools and Service areas, to be conducted on a termly/annual basis.</i> • Staff Awareness and Responsibility: <i>Ensuring that our staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to Health & Safety, including the preparation of Risk Assessments. Regular communication of plans and progress to staff is a priority.</i> • Policy and Procedure Review: <i>We are committed to a biennial review of our policies and procedures to ensure they remain both fit for purpose and legally compliant, contributing to continuous improvement in our safety performance.</i>
9.3	<p><u>Continuous improvement plans.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing Site Security: <i>We are actively engaged in an ongoing review of access control measures for all our sites. This comprehensive assessment aims to bolster security, ensure continuous monitoring, and uphold principles of fairness and equality for all staff. We anticipate the results of this endeavour to be tangible by the end of the academic year.</i> • Policy and Procedure Review: <i>Considering our recent merger with Richmond College, we are meticulously reviewing all our health and safety-related policies, procedures, and informational booklets. This proactive approach ensures that our documents remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of our organization.</i> • Fire Marshal and First Aider Training: <i>We have laid out plans for the identification and training of Fire Marshals and First Aiders across our campuses. Our goal extends beyond mere compliance with legal requirements. We aspire to have a surplus of capable first responders, positioning our college as a national benchmark for safety and preparedness.</i> • ISO 14001:2015 Certification: <i>We are in the process of completing an external audit for ISO 14001:2015 certification. This demonstrates our unwavering commitment to environmental management and achieving zero emissions, underlining our dedication to sustainability and responsible practices.</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOSH Managing Safely Training: Section Managers, who hold the pivotal responsibility of risk assessment, safe operating procedure development, and incident investigation, will receive IOSH Managing Safely training. This ensures they are well-equipped to fulfill their roles effectively and uphold our commitment to safety. • Health and Safety Feedback System: To encourage employee participation in health and safety, we are introducing health and safety suggestion boxes and STOP cards at all campuses. Our Health and Safety Advisors will closely monitor these inputs and prioritize actions based on their significance. This approach has proven successful in fostering a culture of safety in other industries. • Behavioural-Based Safety Approach: In the future, we are dedicated to implementing a behavioural-based safety approach. Recognizing that a majority of accidents stem from human error, this approach will proactively address safety culture by emphasizing the role of behaviour in preventing incidents. Through this, we aim to demonstrate our commitment to proactive safety practices, safeguarding the well-being of both employees and the organization.
ACTION 11:	An internal H&S Audit is to be conducted in January 2024. It will take 60 days to complete and will be a full assessment of 5 campuses. AV to provide update H&S Report at 7th Mar A&R committee.
9.4	AV clarified of 71 reported incidents this year, only 1 was deemed a serious incident reportable to RIDOR, involving a staff member. The remaining incidents were deemed minor or near miss.
9.5	This is well below national average and a 30% drop in incident reports vs. previous year.
9.6	It is HRUC's intention to reduce this to 0% incidents every year.
9.7	Mandatory training: there are 8 mandatory H&S training courses to be completed online via the Safelog. Aggregate compliance rate is 71% of staff.
9.8	Non-Mandatory training: section manager completes a risk assessment of how many staff require training (e.g. asbestos training or food safety training) and H&S team provide the training.
9.9	PP provided a verbal update on the future developments in H&S: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) PP is supporting AV and the H&S team in the development of a new digital system from January 2024. b) PP/SW are working on corporate structure to ensure there are more staff to do local risk assessments on site. c) More First Aiders walking the floor. d) Merger of Fire Safety, LockDown and all Fire Wardens, to create tighter controls. e) This will enable AV to prepare executive summary reports. f) Next stage, is to take the digital structure groupwide, reportable and local data can be drilled down.
9.10	The Chair and Committee thanked AV for a comprehensive and detailed H&S report which was clearly presented.

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10.0	Any other Business:
10.1	SW (CFO) stated that normally at this time of year, we have an integrated A&R and F&R meeting, to cover the financial statements.
10.2	Confirmation has been received from the ESFA that an extension has been given to submit the financial return and finance record in early February 2024.
10.3	There will be a special meeting convened in late January/early February 2024, to go through the financial statement, recommendations, assurance document before the data is submitted to the ESFA.
10.4	SW reminded the committee, that the Audit has been delayed due to numerous reasons: 1) Fixed assets based from RC 2) FRS10 Pensions Actuary report, Assets of RC Pensions Fund has not been moved over to HCUC report and not able to produce a FRS102 Report at Group level. We do have separate HCUC July report and RC December report, we need a consolidated HRUC report for year end. 3) Cooper Parry has not had the capacity to complete the audit between now – January 2024.
10.5	SW (CFO) provided assurance that we are track to complete the activity to meet the end January / early February 2024 deadline.
10.6	PP reminded all to attend 12 th December 4.30pm GB Corporation in person meeting (final meeting of the year) at Hayes Campus, followed by a 7pm seasonal meal in the Revisco restaurant. We encourage all Governors to attend in person. As an opportunity to say thank you and for Governor Wellbeing, there will be a Health & Wellbeing treatment provided from 3pm in the Distinctions salon.
11.0	Dates of forthcoming GB Audit & Risk Committee meetings:
	Thursday 07/03/24 at 16:30 - 18:00 @ Richmond Campus/online.
	Thursday 13/06/24 at 16:30 - 18:00 @ Uxbridge Campus/online.
	Meeting closed at 5.42pm

SIGNED:

DATED: