

Minutes  
GB Audit & Risk Committee  
Governance

<b>Date:</b>	13/06/2024		
<b>Time:</b>	4.30 – 6.00pm		
<b>Location:</b>	Online Teams		
<b>Present:</b>	Nasim Khan	(NK)	Chair
	Vincent Neate	(VN)	Vice Chair
	Simon Boulcott	(SB)	Governor
	Tracy Critchley	(TC)	Staff Governor
	Keith Smith	(CEO)	Ex Officio CEO
<b>In attendance:</b>	Dylan McTaggart	(CDEO)	Deputy CEO, Group Principal
	Shane Woodhatch	(CFO)	Chief Finance Officer
	Julie Amory	(GD P&OD)	Group Director of People & Organisation Development
	Gavin Hughes	(PRC)	Principal – Richmond upon Thames College
<b>Invited speakers:</b>	Anna Beattie	(DoF)	Director of Finance
	Karen Elliott	(POD)	Assnt Director of People & Organisation Development
	Mark Brough	(DE&F)	Director of Estates & Facilities
<b>Governance:</b>	Rekha Kaul	(SGM)	Senior Governance Manager
<b>Apologies:</b>	Ketan Sheth	(KSh)	Governor
	Perry Perrott	(CoS)	Chief of Staff

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<b>1.</b>	<b>Declaration of Recording for Data Protection Purposes:</b>
	Permission was obtained for the meeting to be recorded for the purposes of minutes.
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence:</b>
1.1.1	Apologies were received in advance from Governor KS and the CoS.
1.1.2	RK deputised as the Governance Professional.
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interests and Gifts/Hospitality:</b>
1.2.1	The PRC attended a dinner hosted by the proprietor of the Gaucho's Restaurant in Twickenham.
1.2.2	The CEO accompanied the Chair of Governors to an FEA summer event at the Lord's Cricket ground.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 A&amp;R Committee:</b>
2.0.1	The Chair asked if any members had any amendments or questions arising from the minutes, none were received and under resolution the minutes were <b>APPROVED</b> as a true and accurate record.
2.0.2	<p>The SGM updated the committee of the External Board Review activity, as conducted by Carole Drury from the Association of Colleges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Desk top review of HRUC's Governance has been ongoing since May.</li> <li>▪ Carole has observed the May SGR Committee and the June Curriculum Working Group and is scheduled to attend and observe the 16<sup>th</sup> July Corporation.</li> <li>▪ A series of 1:1 meetings with a selection of Governors, the Chief Executive and Governance are scheduled throughout June.</li> <li>▪ A draft report will be provided in mid-July, including actions or recommendations.</li> </ul>
2.0.3	<p>Early feedback received from the EBR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Governance at HRUC is good.</li> <li>➤ More opportunities for Staff Governors &amp; Student Governors to give their insights, feedback or to ask questions in the committee meetings.</li> <li>➤ Enhanced strategic challenge and questioning by Governors that clearly link back to the Strategic Plan 2030.</li> </ul>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Action Log of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 A&amp;R Committee:</b>
2.1.1	The Chair thanked all for completing 4 of the 8 Actions with due dates of the 13 <sup>th</sup> June.
2.1.2	The CFO provided assurance to the Committee of the Audit budget allocation vs. spend to date. The original budget for internal and external audit was £158k, was revised upwards in the forecast to £166k. The total budget has been used for audit purposes in 2023-24 as planned.
2.1.3	The audit budget for 2024-25 will be set according to this year's audit plan and will be used throughout the year for ongoing audit purposes, with spend reported at the A&R committee.
<b>ACTION 1:</b>	<b>Actions 3 &amp; 4 to remain on the Actions Log for completion by September 2024.</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>HRUC Financial Statement – update:</b>
3.1	The CFO's report was noted by the Committee, which provided assurance of the submission and completion of the HRUC Financial Statement activity with the ESFA. Members welcomed ESFA's confirmation of the financial health grade of HRUC as being Outstanding.
3.2	The ESFA have confirmed that there are no further questions or actions for HRUC. HRUC have requested the ESFA to confirm that the matter is closed. To date there has been no further correspondence from the ESFA regarding the year-end adjustments. The HRUC letter to the ESFA is a formal record of the ESFA meeting outcome and position that the matter is closed.
3.3	The adjusted income amount for 2024-25 vs. 2023-24 was discussed. The CFO provided assurance that the Budget 2024-25 and associated finance record submission will show the increased 5% HRUC income figures.
<b>ACTION 2:</b>	<b>HRUC Financial Statement July 2023 to remain on the risk register (reduced from high to medium rating) for assurance purposes.</b>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>HRUC Risk Register:</b>
4.1	The Monday.com HRUC Risk Register has 120 lines of risks and mitigation actions.
	The HRUC Risk Register extract provided in the pack, highlighted three of the highest risks and risk owners had provided the updated mitigation actions, costs and notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data breach</li> <li>▪ Safeguarding</li> <li>▪ Catering contract</li> </ul>
4.2	The HRUC Risk Register is to be oversighted by the Chief Executive's office as the owner, with delegated authority given to the CoS and a member of the Chief Executive's office.
4.3	A series of meetings is scheduled on the 28 <sup>th</sup> June with each of the risk owners to review, cleanse and ensure the appropriateness of each of the 120 lines on the HRUC risk register and to ensure correct alignment to the HRUC Corporate Goals and Strategic Plan. The Chair of A&R was invited to attend the initial review of operating the risk register via an Excel spreadsheet in the interim.
<b>ACTION 3:</b>	<b>Updated HRUC Risk Register to be provided in the 16<sup>th</sup> July Corporation pack.</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Risk Register – progress on researching alternative software:</b>
5.1	The CoS's team have researched alternative software solutions. Q-Hub is to be presented to EMT as one possible risk register software solution, which is easy to read and user-friendly.
5.2	Members stressed the need for appropriate project management controls to be put in place, surrounding the acquisition of the new risk register software options.
5.3	Members pointed out the requirement for more than one software solution to be presented to the Executive and A&R Committee, with pros and cons, to enable a fully informed decision to be made.
5.4	Additional capacity has been created in the executive team, with the Chief of Business Strategy role which oversees HRUC's partnerships and commercial activities, to manage the risks associated with the increased commercial activity of the HRUC Group.
5.5	Members were reminded of the Corporation's ratification of the formation of a Chair's Committee with delegated authority, to be used in exceptional circumstances, to act on behalf of the HRUC Corporation, when a swift decision is required outside of the normal cycle of governance meetings.
5.6	The Chair thanked all for a positive discussion about the best way to manage HRUC's risk management. There is confidence that new risk register software solutions will be effective and enable deeper dives into specific risks.
<b>ACTION 4:</b>	<b>Risk register software solutions (more than one software solution) are to be presented to EMT, with the pros and cons of each software, to enable the important decision-making process on how best to manage HRUC's risk management process going forward and to ensure that the best risk management system is in place and fully operational by the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024.</b>
<b>ACTION 5:</b>	<b>A&amp;R Members to be invited to review the risk register software solutions in early July and to provide strategic level recommendation to the full Corporation of the agreed HRUC risk register solution going forward.</b>
<b>ACTION 6:</b>	<b>The UK general election outcome is to be added to the risk register as a short-term risk. Members await to any material change of central policy impact upon the HRUC Group i.e. Reserves policy.</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Lockdown Tests Report and Lessons Learnt:</b>
6.1	Members were assured that the Schoolwatch lockdown system is on target to be fully installed by the end of the summer and fully operational by the start of September 2024. This will ensure the safety and protection of the entire College community. <b>Hayes and Harrow on the Hill campuses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lockdown system is fully installed and undergoing final testing.</li> <li>▪ Next step to live test the system and provide training to staff and students.</li> </ul> <b>Uxbridge, Richmond and Harrow Weald campuses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uxbridge installation to be begin by mid-June</li> <li>▪ Followed by Richmond and Harrow Weald campuses shortly after.</li> </ul>
6.2	Two lockdown tests involving staff and students will be conducted each year, commencing at the beginning of the autumn term 2024.

<b>ACTION 7:</b>	<b>Results of the autumn term 2024 lockdown test involving staff and student, is to be brought to the next A&amp;R committee.</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Estates round Up:</b>
7.1	<p>Barra Hall: HRUC's Estates Strategy has projected an increase of HRUC's High Needs provision leading to the decision to relocate the High Needs provision to a suitable location.</p> <p>Final approval by the L.B. of Hillingdon strategy and asset board will be taken at the 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 meeting. The council currently does not anticipate any issues with above progressing, therefore an exchange of contracts could follow 7 days following Cabinet approval (cooling off period).</p> <p>HRUC has appointed Lambert Smith Hampton to value Barra Hall (a grade two listed building). Gardiner &amp; Theobald has been appointed to do a structural review of Barra Hall. The indicative asking price for Barra Hall is £2.4-£2.7m.</p> <p>The timelines are TBC following independent structural surveys. HRUC occupation expected to be by January 2025.</p> <p>A specialist team of HRUC staff (led by the Assistant Principal - Supported &amp; Targeted Learning) will visit Barra Hall to provide assurance of the suitability regarding installation of the best practice disabled accessible equipment within the building.</p>
<b>ACTION 8:</b>	<b>Formal ratification to be sought from the Estates &amp; Property Task Force/Finance &amp; Resources Committee and by the full Corporation. This is likely to be via emails, due to the summer period.</b>
7.2	<p>Project Ambition – revamp of the Uxbridge campus: MICA architects have been appointed to design the building works, with a budget of £9m - £12m of works to be managed over a three-year period.</p> <p>A meeting has taken place with Robert Drury, as part of the consideration of the development works at Uxbridge campus. Planning permission is in place for a link of the South block to the West block. The viability of Robert Drury's alternative solution (which is separate from MICA's solution) is to be discussed at EMT.</p>
<b>ACTION 9:</b>	<b>The final Project Ambition decision is likely to be taken by October 2024 and will come to full Corporation for ratification.</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Standing Items:</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Staff Wellbeing report:</b>
8.1.1	<p>HRUC's Wellbeing strategy is to be developed, on the HRUC's journey to being the College of choice.</p> <p>Following a discussion, reconsideration is to be given to the timing of next year's Mental Health Week activity that avoids a clash with the exam/invigilation period to ensure staff are able to access the wide range of wellbeing services across HRUC.</p>
8.1.2	<p>18<sup>th</sup> July Wellbeing Village event is scheduled, encompassing a wide range of wellbeing activities planned for staff to come together at Uxbridge campus a Health, Wellbeing and Recognition Day. Future consideration will be given for future events to be held at the other campuses.</p>
<b>ACTION 10:</b>	<b>An Annual Wellbeing Report to be provided to Governors at the end of the year which includes metrics of the impact of the wellbeing activities in terms of reduced sickness and absenteeism rates, improved retention rates. A Staff survey will be conducted to inform the A&amp;R Committee of the feelings of staff across the HRUC group.</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Tracking on previous Audit Recommendations:</b>
8.2.1	The HRUC Audit Recommendations log was taken as read, with the audit recommendations from the previous two A&R Committee meetings added and updates shown in red.
8.2.2	The A&R Committee noted that a supplier has been selected to complete the necessary Asset Verification activity across the HRUC Group, at a cost of £38k.
<b>ACTION 11:</b>	<b>Timescale title to be renamed to "Date first raised".</b>

<b>8.3</b>	<b>HRUC Safeguarding and Prevent Mid-Year Report findings incl. recommendations:</b>
8.3.1	<p>The PRC talked to the highlights of HRUC's Safeguarding and Prevent report with detailed feedback and recommendations. The Safeguarding report included all five campuses across the HRUC Group. NK is the Safeguarding &amp; Prevent Link Governor.</p> <p>The findings were that <i>'HRUC has a strong and positive safeguarding culture where learners receive effective support to ensure they succeed... Senior leaders have very good oversight of the safeguarding casework and recording. In addition, they provide highly effective supervision for the safeguarding team. However, a few broader aspects of safeguarding, such as safer recruitment and monitoring compliance with training requirements need more robust scrutiny to ensure they remain effective.'</i></p>
8.3.2	<p>The two key recommendations were noted as being to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement a cycle of quality assurance activities to ensure that safeguarding and safer recruitments arrangements remain effective.</li> <li>2. Conduct a detailed examination of the Single CR to identify missing information and establish how best to ensure all aspects and stages of safer recruitment are supported.</li> </ol>
8.3.3	Following a discussion about the relatively short timeline to achieve the 7 key recommendations, The PRC confirmed that the intention is to have completed the majority of the actions by July, with the remaining actions to be fully completed by September 2024.
<b>ACTION 12:</b>	<b>Timescale to be considered for a mini audit of HRUC's Safe Recruitment practices.</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Report on fraud/corruption issues:</b>
	None were reported.
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Any Other Business (AoB):</b>
	None.
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Proposed dates of the meetings 2024-25:</b>
10.1	<p><b>Dates of A&amp;R meetings 2024-25 are subject to ratification by full Corporation at 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wednesday 11th September 2024, 6.30 - 7.30pm @ RC</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 20th November 2024, 5.30 - 7.30pm (joint with F&amp;R) @ UC</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 12th March 2025, 6.30 - 7.30pm @ HC</li> <li>▪ Wednesday 18th June 2025, 6.30 - 7.30pm @ UC</li> </ul>
10.2	Chair thanked all for a productive A&R Committee meeting.
	<b>The meeting was closed at 5.45pm</b>

**SIGNED:**

**DATED:**

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**13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 A&R ACTION LOG:**

No.	Action:	Who:	By When:
1.	<p>Following actions to rolled over on the Actions Log, for completion by Sept 2024:</p> <p>Action 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Risks to be transferred into the new Risk Management software during August 2024.</li> <li>New Risk Register software to be fully operational, with training to be provided to Governors and EMT/SLT during September 2024.</li> </ul> <p>Action 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Governor ease of reading, the proposal is for the Audit Recommendation Log to be incorporated into the potential new Risk Register software Q-Hub.</li> </ul>	<p>Governance/ CEO Ofc</p> <p>Governance/ DoF</p>	<p>Sept 2024 A&amp;R</p> <p>Sept 2024 A&amp;R</p>
2.	HRUC Financial Statement July 2023 to remain on the risk register (reduced from high to medium rating) for assurance purposes.	CFO	Sept 2024 A&R
3.	Updated HRUC Risk Register to be provided in the 16 <sup>th</sup> July Corporation pack.	Governance/ CEO Ofc	16 <sup>th</sup> July Corp
4.	Risk register software solutions (more than one software solution) are to be presented to EMT, with the pros and cons of each software, to enable the important decision-making process on how best to manage HRUC's risk management process going forward and to ensure that the best risk management system is in place and fully operational by the 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2024.	Governance	16 <sup>th</sup> July Corp
5.	A&R Members to be invited to review the risk register software solutions in early July and to provide strategic level recommendation to the full Corporation of the agreed HRUC risk register solution going forward.	Governance/ A&R Committee	16 <sup>th</sup> July Corp
6.	The UK general election outcome is to be added to the risk register as a short-term risk. Members await to any material change of central policy impact upon the HRUC Group i.e. Reserves policy.	Governance/ CEO Ofc	16 <sup>th</sup> July Corp
7.	Results of the autumn term 2024 lockdown test involving staff and student, is to be brought to the next A&R committee.	Mark	Sept 2024 A&R
8.	Purchase of Barra Hall: formal ratification to be sought from the Estates & Property Task Force/Finance & Resources Committee and by the full Corporation. This is likely to be via emails, due to the summer period.	CFO	16 <sup>th</sup> July Corp
9.	The final Project Ambition decision is likely to be taken by October 2024 and will come to full Corporation for ratification.	CFO	Oct 2024 A&R
10.	An Annual Wellbeing Report to be provided to Governors at the end of the year which includes metrics of the impact of the wellbeing activities in terms of reduced sickness and absenteeism rates, improved retention rates. A Staff survey will be conducted to inform the A&R Committee of the feelings of staff across the HRUC group.	POD	Sept 2024 A&R
11.	HRUC Audit Recommendations log: "Timescale" to be renamed to "Date first raised".	DoF	Sept 2024 A&R
12.	Timescale to be considered for a mini audit of HRUC's Safe Recruitment practices.	PRC / GD POD	Sept 2024 A&R