



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

GROUP RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Group Risk & Audit Committee held on Wednesday 11 June 2025 at 17.30hrs in the Corporate Room at Medway. A Closed Session took place at 17.00hrs.

Present:

Mr A Hindson	Chair
Mr C Reynolds	Co-Chair
Mr M Abdel-Maguid	
Mr M Prentis	
Mrs L Snedden	

In attendance:

Ms C Burkin	Clerk to the Governing Body
Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO
Mrs H Foreman	For item 5 only
Mr J Godsmark	Validera – Internal Auditors
Ms H Knowles	ForvisMazars – External Auditors
Mr M Peat	Exec Director of Finance & Estates
Mr P Tico-Ogbomoh	Student Governor

1 Declarations of Interest

All members' interests are numbered and referenced on the Declaration of Interest log available from the Clerk.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mrs J Dyakova and Mr L Glover from Validera, Internal Auditors.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2025, Paper GBGR&A24/687 and the confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record and approved by the Committee.

4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report

Members discussed Paper GBGR&A24/688, the Outstanding Matters Report.

- No 1. ETF Governance training modules – A Hindson informed members that he had completed one of the Audit modules and found it most useful. Members were asked to complete these. The link was resent to members – **ongoing**.
- No 2. Deep Dive on reliance on data systems – to be included in the IA for 2025/26 – **complete**.
- No 3. Freedom of Information FAQ – H Foreman is actioning during the summer period – **complete**.
- No 4. Strategic Risk Management Report reviewed – **complete**.
- No 5. Devolution Kent and Potential Risks to MKC - added to the strategic risk register. **Complete**.
- No 6. Risk Management Policy – to be reviewed over the summer period. **Ongoing**.
- No 7. Internal Audit Reports – HR systems – circulated – **complete**.
- No 8. Internal Audit Reports – to be circulated outside the meeting when received – **complete**.

5 Information Security Report (GDPR) – Paper GBGR&A24/689

[Hazel Foreman joined the meeting](#) and presented the report which provided Governors with an oversight of compliance with legal requests and an update on the most recent developments in information security at the College.

Members noted additional information around the size of requests data retention. They raised a concern regarding the breaches highlighting a possible trend re human error. H Foreman reported 100% compliance with staff training but assure the Committee that further sessions are planned to include an interactive quiz to further engage learning. She informed members that she is exploring document control systems to help manage this type of breach and will update progress in her next report.

Action: H Foreman

The Committee discussed some of the detail in the report and requested data regarding attempted cyber-attacks on the College. It was agreed this could be included in future reports. The Chair and H Foreman agreed to meet during the summer period to review the content and format of the information security report and include the Director of ICT.

Action: A Hindson/H Foreman/P Hogben

Members discussed the multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirement and asked for an update regarding the completion of the onboarding process to report to the Governing Body in July 2025. They noted that MFA is required for those accessing the College systems from outside the campus and therefore all Governors must be onboarded but this is not a requirement for students.

Action: H Foreman

Members thanked H Foreman for the update, and [she left the meeting](#).

6 Strategic Risk Management Report - Paper GBGR&A24/690

Simon Cook presented the risk management report paper GBGR&A24/690.

Members noted the changes to the presentation and format of the register since its review by the Chair and Principal/CEO. This included changes to the description of controls and scoring of those controls to help with better assessment of risk. They noted the register will be fully reviewed over the summer period. Following the recent FE Commissioners report on Weston College (see item13), members recognised the possibility of heightened scrutiny of internal controls on the sector.

Members also discussed Martyn's Law, the official Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, which includes requirements for certain public premises and events to consider and potentially take steps to enhance, their security and preparedness for terrorist attacks. This is therefore being reviewed by the College and it will be included in the Strategic Risk Register.

Action: S Cook

Members noted that some aspects of the strategic risks still feel operational such as Medway School of Arts (MSA) but it is appropriate that they remain within the Strategic Risk Register. They also noted that other Committees scrutinise these topics within their remit. It was agreed that the risk appetite measures and their application needed to be reviewed and aligned with the changes in the risk registers.

Action: A Hindson/M Peat/S Cook

Members noted that the Committee Deep Dive items must be aligned with the strategic risks and held a robust discussion, agreeing the following topics for 2025/26:

1. Cyber Essentials Plus (S Cook)
2. Competitors (S Cook)
3. AI
4. MSA (after enrolment)
5. Project 25
6. Local Authority reorganisation (at an appropriate time)

It was agreed the Chair and Exec lead would review the Risk Management Policy for approval by the Committee.

Action: A Hindson/M Peat

Members thanked S Cook for the report.

7 Internal Audit Reports - Paper GBGR&A24/691a-f

James Godsman, Validera introduced the following reports:

- a) Budgetary Control Management – this had been circulated outside the Committee and received substantial assurance.
- b) Counter Fraud Health Check - this had been circulated outside the Committee and received substantial assurance.
- c) HR Systems - this had been circulated outside the Committee and received substantial assurance.
- d) Progress Report – noted.
- e) Risk Management – this report was discussed. It had received adequate assurance and will be improved by the review and implementation of the Risk Management Policy.
- f) Student Records – this audit received substantial assurance which showed an improvement on the previous audit.

Members noted that two audits were still outstanding and asked that these are completed, and the Chair is informed of the outcome by the Governing Body meeting on 10 July 2025.

Action: Validera/MKC Management

The Committee requested that they are kept more informed of the progress made with closure of audit actions during 2025/26, and it was agreed they would receive a tracking document for inclusion in the Internal Audit item at each meeting.

Action: Validera/M Peat

Member thanks Validera for the update.

8 Internal Audit Strategy for 2025/26 – Paper GBGR&A24/692

James Godsmark introduced the paper for discussion.

After some discussion members agreed the following Internal Audits for 2025/26:

1. Enrolment – September 2025
2. Curriculum - Local Need
3. External Intervention (scope to include business continuity/Martyn's Law preparedness)
4. Data Reliance
5. Stakeholders
6. Financial controls (Core financial controls as well as income and debtors)

It was agreed the following would be removed from the plan:

- Student Records as an external monitoring piece of work is being conducted in 2025/26.

- Cyber Security as this is covered by Cyber Essential Plus & JISC.
- Governance as an External Board Review is being conducted in 2025/26.
- Marketing as this is not an identified risk.

**9 External Audit Planning Strategy – Paper GBGR&A24/693
New Framework Summary – Paper GBGR&A24/693a**

Helen Knowles ForvisMazars, presented the report which set out the planning strategy for the year end.

Members noted that the plan had been agreed following the planning meeting, with the College where no risks were highlighted. Members were assured that ForvisMazars are aware of the timeline for the approval meetings, i.e. Joint GR&A and F&R and final presentation and approval at the Governing Body meeting in December 2025.

H Knowles guided members through the report noting there were no fundamental changes or additional work required as part of the audit strategy compared to last year.

Members noted the assurance of independence and the consideration of the new audit framework.

They thanked ForvisMazars for their continued work with the College.

10 GR&A Committee Self-Assessment 2024/25 & Draft Improvement Plan 2025/26

The item presented the outcome of the Committee's self-assessment in 2024/25 and the proposed improvement plan. Committee members had been asked to complete a self-assessment questionnaire with 100% returns.

The results were discussed noting 56% of the responses strongly agreed with the statements and none strongly disagreeing.

The Committee discussed the draft improvement plan and agreed the strengths remained the same. They amended the areas for improvement as two had been met but added the alignment of the IA schedule with the risk register.

Subject to the amendments, members agreed the SAR and improvement plan for recommendation to the Governing Body.

Action: A Hindson

11 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The Committee terms of reference were presented for review and agreement.

Members noted it is good practice to review this document annually to ensure the Committee continues to meet their duties. The amendments were suggested in tracked changes with additions made to reflect minor changes. It was requested that the cycle of business table is further used to inform agenda setting.

Action: A Hindson/Clerk

Member **approved** the Terms of Reference for **recommendation** to the Governing Body for approval in July 2025.

Action: A Hindson

12 MKCTS Audit Committee minutes from the meeting held on 3 March 2025

These minutes were noted for information. M Peat reminded members that this Committee was set up to scrutinise the MKCTS risk register and track their growth budget. Members were reminded that M Peat and S Cook attend the MKCTS Board and can answer any questions.

Members requested that MKCTS are included in the External Board Review.

It was noted that Chair of the MKCTS Audit Committee will be invite to the next GR&A Committee meeting to present the annual review of the MKCTS risk register.

Action: Clerk

13 Information Item – FE Commissioners (FEC) Report - Weston College

Members noted this for information following a request by the Governing Body that the GR&A Committee had oversight of the report.

They noted that the FEC published report re Weston College, highlighted the failure by the board of governors to ensure that the college demonstrated value for money for the public purse and proper accountability for use of public funds, specifically with regard to pay for the senior postholder.

The Remuneration Committee had considered the recommendations of the FEC report and evidence for all the recommendations had been presented with one good practice point being put in place in 2025/26 to strengthen compliance.

Both Committees have recognised this may lead to further regulations or interventions.

Members accepted the report for information.

14 Any Other Business

There were no items.

The agenda for 18 September 2025 will be amended in line with the decision made in this meeting and brought forward to the Chair for agreement.

Deep Dives for 2025/26:

- Cyber Essentials Plus (S Cook)
- Competitors (S Cook)
- AI
- MSA (after enrolment)
- Project 25
- Local Authority reorganisation (at an appropriate time)

Members thanked Chris Reynolds for his contributions to the Committee and Board as this was his last Committee meeting.

15 Dates of Committee Meetings 2025/26

Members noted the dates. All meetings are on Thursdays at 5pm on teams:

18 September 2025

26 November 2025 Joint meeting followed by GR&A Committee

5 March 2026

11 June 2026

The meeting closed at 19.10hrs.