



MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

GROUP RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Group Risk & Audit Committee held on Thursday 18 September 2025 at 17.30hrs via Teams. A Closed Session took place at 17.15hrs.

Present:	Mr A Hindson	Chair
	Mr M Abdel-Maguid	
	Mrs J Dyakova	
	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 &6 only
	Mr L Glover	Validera – Internal Auditors
	Mr J Godsmark	Validera – Internal Auditors
	Mr P Hogben	For item 5 only
	Ms H Knowles	ForvisMazars – External Auditors
	Mr M Peat	Exec Director of Finance & Estates

Prior to the Committee a Confidential Item was held and the following discussed:

- Internal Auditor Assessment - GBGR&A25/699
- External Auditor Assessment - GBGR&A25/700

A closed session followed and was minuted separately.

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

There were no apologies.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025, Paper GBGR&A24/698 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&A25/701, the Outstanding Matters Report.

- No 1. ETF Training - Ongoing reminder
- No 2. Risk Management Policy – **completed.**
- No 3. Information Security Report – **completed.**
- No 4. Information Security Report (MFA) – **completed.**
- No 5. Strategic Risk Management Report – Martyn’s Law – following the last meeting changes have been made in policy and actions are reviewed to ensure compliance. S Cook informed the Committee that the College is partnering with the Police as part of a working group. The DfE guidance for this law has not yet been issued. The College will follow any actions required in the guidance. **Ongoing.**
- No 6. Risk appetite – **completed.**
- No 7. Internal Audit Reports – two reports outstanding – these have been **completed.**

Members accepted the report and the recommended actions arising from it.

5 Deep Dive – Cyber Essentials Plus CE+ - GBGR&A25/702

Hazel Foreman and Paul Hogben joined the meeting to present the item.

The report provided Governors with an oversight of compliance with Cyber Security. P Hogben and H Foreman explained that CE accreditation review is due in November 2025 and is mandated in the College funding agreement.

CE+ accreditation is due in February 2026 and is required for Group insurance, with the accreditation allowing MKCTS to bid for additional work.

They explained the background and processes involved and gave examples of how the College is protected by the system. Members asked questions regarding the number of threats and staff training and were assured by the process of raising awareness amongst staff.

Members thanked H Foreman and P Hogben for the presentation and P Hogben left the meeting.

Julia Dyakova joined the meeting with apologised for being late.

6 Information Security Report (GDPR) – Paper GBGR&A25/703

Hazel Foreman presented the newly formatted report for information which provided Governors with an oversight of compliance with legal requests. It also updated members on the most recent developments in information security at the College.

The report highlighted the data and H Foreman gave examples of recent cases and the work involved.

She reported on the Internal Audit which received a substantial score and how she is following up on the recommendations and good practice points to ensure continuous improvement.

Members were assured that the College is working with other local colleges to learn and share good practice and support each other. They asked about the internal management of the process and were assured that H Foreman is fully supported by her line manager and other Exec members; however members felt lessons may be learnt from other public sector bodies and agreed further discussion would be held outside the meeting.

Action: H Foreman/A Hindson

Members thanked H Foreman for the update, and she left the meeting.

7 Risk Appetite Review - GBGR&A25/704

The Chair, Alex Hindson and Martin Peat presented the amended Risk Appetite for discussion and agreement.

They explained the new risk appetite statement set out the definition of appetite and provided a suggested statement per category of risk source, i.e. hungry, open, cautious, minimal and averse and recommended methods of implementing the risk appetite.

Members discussed how this helped identified to Governors, risks that are outside the appetite. They discussed some of the language used and agreed 'willing' would be used where appropriate to suggest a risk was being tolerated, rather than sought out, and the labels would be reviewed.

Action: M Peat

Recommendation:

Subject to the above amendments, the Committee approved the risk appetite statement and implementation for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

Action: A Hindson

8 Strategic Risk Management Report - Paper GBGR&A25/705

Simon Cook presented the risk management report.

He explained several changes and recommendations in the report had been made following a review of the College's risk appetite and scoring as a result of the Internal Audit undertaken, plus the annual review and refresh of the register by The Executive Team.

Members discussed the risk score changes following the review and were assured by the explanations recognising that the impact of some of the scores will be addressed at other Committees such as QTL.

They agreed Risk 5, *Students do not progress to positive destinations*, would be reworked and brought back to the Committee to ensure Governors are receiving the required information to gain assurance, having been combined with Risk 13, *the College demonstrating it is meeting local stakeholder needs*. The new risk, *delivering 16-18 Student Growth with the resource pressures and implications involved*, was agreed for inclusion in future reports.

Action: S Cook

Members discussed Risk 1, *competitor threats to current provision*, agreeing the risk has decreased and is within appetite. Members agreed that the mitigations of controls around Risk 14, *the College reliance on third party vendors to inform decisions and operate daily business*, needed to be reworded.

Action: S Cook

The Committee discussed the Novel and Contentious transactions section of the report agreeing that the Committee will regularly sense check Board discussions in this context and how the work of MKCTS is considered.

Members thanked S Cook for the report.

9 Annual Review Risk Registers

Operational Risk Register MKC - GBGR&A25/706.

Martin Peat introduced the College's Operational Risk Register and explained it had been updated to include clear identification where risks are classified as within or outside of the agreed risk appetite.

It was agreed the register would be reviewed in the light of new appetite having been agreed in principle, with focus given to actions required for the risks outside of the accepted levels. Members noted this will be completed in a timely manner, brought back to the next meeting with the register available on Board Intelligence.

Action: M Peat

Operational Risk Register MKCTS Summary - GBGR&A25/707

Martin Peat introduced the MKCTS Operational Risk Register and explained the risks summary position had been prepared for the MKCTS Risk and Audit Committee in July 2025, but the meeting was postponed until the new financial year, however, the work undertaken to review budgets and resulting actions were all agreed at an extraordinary Board meeting.

Members noted the difference in reporting frameworks and asked that MKCTS are brought in line with the College to enable them to comply with the Group Risk Appetite.

Action: M Peat

Members thanked M Peat for the update and asked for a further update of the MKC Operational Risk register and the full MKCTS Risk Register, at the next meeting with Peter Cox from MKCTS invited to attend.

Action: M Peat/Clerk

10 Internal Audit Reports - Paper GBGR&A25/708a-d

Lee Glover and James Godsmark from Validera, introduced the following reports:

- a) Follow up – all recommendations have been completed.
- b) Update IA Strategy Internal Audit Charter – this document had been amended following the recommendations from the last meeting and was approved.
- c) Annual IA Report - the document gave the statement of independence showing no concerns. Members were assured by the expertise of the Validera team.
- d) Information Governance Internal Audit Report – this audit received a substantial score, with 3 recommendations and 2 good practice points.

As requested at the previous meeting, members had been provided with an Internal Audit tracking document.

Members discussed possible improvements regarding the presentation of the reports to ensure the reader is focused on the important points raised.

Action: Validera to consider

They also discussed the amount of testing involved for some audits and were assured by the process. The content and order of audits reports for 2025/26 was discussed with these spread across the remaining Committee meetings.

Action: M Peat/J Godsmark

Member thanks Validera for the update.

11 Policy Review – Risk Management Policy – GBGR&A25/709

The Chair, Alex Hindson and Martin Peat presented the amended Risk Management Policy for discussion and agreement.

Members noted it had been rewritten in line with the new risk appetite statement and sought to clarify the risk types, evaluation of the risks and highlighted the risks that are outside of the risk appetite. The revised policy also directly addressed a number of actions arising from the internal audit of risk management conducted in 2024/2025.

It was felt this would focus discussions on the risks that required mitigations and actions in order to try and bring them within the accepted risk level of appetite.

The Policy included a control evaluation chart which provided a clear method for identifying these risks.

Members **recommended** the Policy for approval by the Governing Body.

Action: A Hindson

12 Any Other Business

The agenda for 26 November 2025 was amended to include the Operational Risk registers for MKC and MKCTS and agreed.

The Deep Dive topic agreed as MSA (after enrolment) with the understanding that F&R Committee will be scrutinising the financials and therefore GR&A Committee will focus on the wider risks and whether MSA is still achieving the outcomes set by the Board.

Action: S Cook

13 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 November 2025 after the Joint meeting with the F&R Committee. These will be held in Teams.

The meeting closed at 19.07hrs