MidKent College

GOVERNING BODY

GROUP RISK & AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Group Risk & Audit Committee held on Thursday 11 June 2026 at 17.15hrs in the Corporate Room at Medway. A Closed Session took place at 16.45hrs.

Present:	Mr A Hindson	Chair
	Mr M Abdel-Maguid	on Teams
	Mr S Coudounaris	Co-opt
	Mrs J Dyakova	
	Mr M Prentis	
	Mrs L Snedden	
In attendance:	Ms C Burkin	Governance Professional
	Mr S Cook	Principal/CEO on Teams
	Mr C Hare	Deputy CEO for items 6-8 only
	Mr P Fleming	Observer on Teams
	Mrs H Foreman	For items 6-8 only
	Mr J Godsmark	Validera – Internal Auditors
	Mr P Hogden	Group Director ICT from items 6-8
	Mr P Knee	JISC for items 6-8
	Mr J Thirgood	Chief Finance Officer
	Ms N Wakefield	ForvisMazars – External Auditors

1 Declarations of Interest

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

2 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2026

The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2026, Paper GBGR&A25/729, were accepted as a true record and approved by the Committee.

4 Matters Arising and Outstanding Matters Report

Members discussed Paper GBGR&A25/732, the Outstanding Matters Report.

No 1. Internal Audit – align College and MKCTS risk scores – **Ongoing**.
No 2. Information Security – annual reflections – covered in item 6 – **Complete**
No 3. Strategic Risk – risk appetites – BF 2026/27 – **Ongoing**
No 4. Deep Dive guidance – **Complete**.
No 5. Internal Audit for People Team – BF September 2026 – **Ongoing**.
No 6. Overdue audit actions – phased escalation approach – **Ongoing.**
No 7. Deep Dive – MFA / Security & Access – addressed in items 7 & 8 – **Complete**.

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

5 External Audit Planning Strategy 2026/27 - GBGR&A25/733

Nicola Wakefield from ForvisMazars presented the paper which provided an overview of the planned scope and timing of the External Audit.

She explained this had been prepared following initial planning discussions with management regarding the audit approach and included timelines and key personnel. N Wakefield highlighted the key changes including data ingestion and inclusion of MKCTS.

Members challenged the timeline and emphasised the November Joint Committee deadline. They asked questions regarding benchmarks and were assured that there were no concerns in the planning stage.

Members thank N Wakefield and agreed the approach.

Guests, Chris Hare, Paul Hogben and Paul Knee joined the meeting.

6 Information Security Report (GDPR) – Paper GBGR&A25/734

Hazel Foreman joined the meeting and presented the report which provided an oversight of compliance with legal requests plus provided an update on the most recent developments in information security at the College

As requested, the document also presented an annual report reflecting on current statistics, information regarding proportionate approach to breach reporting and subject access requests. She highlighted the challenge of increased AI generated requests and the Committee raised concerns about the department's resource. They were assured that additional support is being explored to assist with the increased volume of requests.

H Foreman assured members that the requests are being appropriately managed and delt with according to process.

Members requested Group data in future reports and thanked H Foreman for the update.

Action: H Foreman

7 Deep Dive – AI Governance - Paper GBGR&A25/735

Hazel Foreman gave a presentation (appendix 1) to members which provided members with an oversight of AI Governance adopted within the College, the Data Protection Act 2018 and DUUA 2025 legislative requirements.

The presentation explained the journey that had continued since last reporting to the Governing Body and the framework being used in practice at the College. She emphasised that AI is a Board responsibility but recognised it can be an overwhelming area requiring carefully management with support and training.

The Committee were assured that the College is following the good practice JISC framework.

It was agreed the Working Group for AI Governance would be set up and could include a member from the Committee. It would report policy, framework and appetite to the Governing Body who would have oversight of the AI Strategy. H Foreman agreed to follow this up with the Chair.

Action: H Foreman/A Hindson

Members requested a follow up report at the next meeting.

Action: H Foreman – September 2026

Members thanked H Foreman for the detailed presentation.

8 Deep Dive – Cyber Assurance - Paper GBGR&A25/736

Paul Knee from JISC joined the meeting. A Hindson explained the Chair of the Board had requested a deep dive to ensure the College's approach to cyber security was proportionate to the requirements of Cyber Essentials accreditation and the practicalities of access for Governors. This was also requested to provide external assurance to the Board in recognition that cyber security is a Board responsibility.

Paul Knee, Deputy Director of Sector Security from JISC, the sector body that leads on digital infrastructure and compliance, introduced himself and provided the following overview presentation (Appendix 2):

- Cyber Threats – he explained the cyber threat landscape that the sector operates within and the key considerations for an FE College.

- Cyber Security – members noted the obligations the College is required to demonstrate, particularly those relating to cyber security assurance,

including the contractual obligations placed on the College and MKC Training Services.

- Cyber Security Assurance – P Knee explained the reasons why the College pursued Cyber Essentials (CE) and CE+ and its implications. Members noted the requirements of CE accreditation and the processes that must be followed by staff and Governors such as mandatory MFA. They noted the risks of not following the CE requirements. They were informed that students will be increasingly included in the scope and the College is well placed to meet these requirements.

The Chair thanked P Knee for attending the meeting and asked for more clarity around Governor access. Regularity and mandatory requirements were discussed and the future landscapes noted but further clarity was sought.

Members were assured and recognised that the College was taking the appropriate measures in cyber security. They acknowledged that the College's approach to cyber security was proportionate to the requirements of Cyber Essential accreditation and thanked ICT for their continued work in this space.

The guests and H Foreman left the meeting.

9 Risk Management Review including Strategic Risk Register - Paper GBGR&A25/737

Simon Cook presented the risk management report which provided the highlights of the Group Strategic Risk Register. He explained the paper had minor updates following the report seen at the last meeting, but there would be a full review by the Executive during the summer period with an update reported at the next meeting. A review of emerging risks would also be carried out with support from the Committee.

Action: S Cook/S Coudounaris

Members discussed the risk implications of the College's strategic direction and the inclusion of any amendments following the planned review. It was agreed that the some of the risks would then be considered as deep dive topics for the Committee during 2026/27.

Members accepted the report.

10 Policy for Review - GBGR&A25/738

James Thirgood informed members that the CCTV Policy had been reviewed with minor updates.

Members noted the policy.

11 Internal Audit Reports - Paper GBGR&A25/739

James Godsmark, Validera introduced the following reports:

a) Progress Report – Validera had been unable to finalise any audit reports since the last Committee, however, Dependency on Data, HR Health Check audits had commenced on 5 June 2026 and Follow Up was due to be completed before the end of the academic year. Members stressed the importance of management being kept informed of any delay and asked Validera to keep James Thirgood fully informed. It was noted that any outstanding items would be completed by December 2026.

b) Internal Audit Strategy for 2026/27 had been updated in consultation with the Chair and Management. The plan outlined for discussion for 2026/27 was:

1. Payroll, Benefits and Expenses – Term 1
2. Data Subject Access Requests – Term 1
3. Curriculum Reforms – Term 2
4. Student Records - Student Destinations – Term 2
5. Business Continuity – Term 3
6. MKC Training – Term 3 – J Thirgood to discuss the scope with MKCTS.

Members approved the above plan and it was agreed J Thirgood and A Hindson would identify the appropriate Executive lead for each IA and communicate the timeline and agree the scope, including the deadline for audit closure.

Action: J Thirgood/A Hindson

Members noted the update to the IA tracker and thanked Validera for the update.

12 GR&A Committee Self-Assessment 2025/26 & Draft Improvement Plan 2026/27 - GBGR&A25/740(a)

The Chair and Governance Professional introduced the document for discussion and agreement. They thanked members for completing their self-assessment and the results had been shared. The results were all positive and within the strongly agree scores.

Members reviewed the current improvement plan and discussed progress and amendments. They agreed:

Strengths to remain the same with the following additions

- Risk Focus in IA plan
- Move efficient risk appetite

Improvements:

To remove - High risk owners to attend the Committee as this was complete.

To reword the action for IA planning and reporting to include the planned escalation process to be introduced in 2026/27.

Members asked the Chair and Governance Professional to agree wording outside the meeting and approved the SAR/Improvement plan subject to these changes, for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

Action: Chair/GP

13 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference - GBGR&A25/741

The Chair and Governance Professional introduced the document for review and agreement. The current document was presented with minor tracked changes.

Members agreed the changes for **recommendation** to the Governing Body.

Action: Chair

14 MKCTS Audit Committee minutes - GBGR&A25/742a-b

The following minutes were presented for information.

- Thursday 5 March 2026
- Thursday 21 May 2026

Members noted the minutes with no concerns raised.

15 Any Other Business

It was agreed that Mike Prentis would introduce the GR&A Committee item at the Governing Body meeting in July in the absence of A Hindson.

The agenda for 16 September 2026 was agreed with the following noted:

- H&S Annual report – invite Stuart Hardie as H&S Link Governor
- Deep dive – succession planning specific to SLT – S Cook and A Hindson to discuss the scope.

Action: S Cook/Chair

16 Dates for 2026/27

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 16 September 2026 on Teams.

The dates for the Committee meetings in 2026/27 were noted as:
16 September 2026
18 November 2026
25 November 2026 (Joint with F&R)
1 March 2027 (Monday)
16 June 2027(in person TBC)

The meeting closed at 19.26hrs