# BASINGSTOKE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY CORPORATION

# AUDIT COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 MARCH 2025

| Membership (5): | * | Charles Cardiff | External Member | Chair |
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| | * | Caroline Baker | External Member | |
| | | Beryl Huntingdon | External Member | |
| | | Nicole Martin | External Member | Vice Chair |
| | * | Ian Ward | Staff Member | (DoIT) |
| | * | Pamela Woolgrove | External Member | |
| | | | | |
| Quorum: | | 3 Members required | 4 Members present | Meeting quorate |
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| In Attendance: | | Mark Bonnett | Finance Manager (FM) | |
| | * | Anthony Bravo | Principal | |
| | * | Simon Burrell | Clerk to the Corporation (Clerk) | |
| | v | Paul Goddard | Scrutton Bland (Internal Auditor) (IA) | |
| | * | David Moir | Deputy Principal Finance & Resources (DPFR) | |
| | | | | |
| Present at meeting: | * | | | |
| Via video link | v | | | |

## PART 1: NON-CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

| (5.15pm) | | ACTION |
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| **862.** | **APOLOGIES**<br><br>Beryl Huntingdon, Nicole Martin, Mark Bonnett (Finance Manager), Craig Mincher (MD of WBTC), Ryan Pearce (Scrutton Bland) | |
| **863.** | **WEST BERKS TRAINING CONSORTIUM (WBTC)**<br><br>It was noted that Craig Mincher, MD of WBTC was currently absent on sick leave and that his presentation would be deferred to the next meeting. | **Clerk** |
| **864.** | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**<br><br>There were no Declarations of Interest made. | |

| 865. | NOTIFICATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS | |
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| | There were no items of Any Other Business notified. | |
| 866. | MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING | |
| | The Minutes of the Joint Meeting with the Finance & Resources Ctte held on 27 November 2024 and the Minutes of the Audit Ctte meeting held on 27 November 2024 were confirmed as correct records and were signed by the Chair. | |
| 867. | MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES | |
| | There were no Matters Arising discussed that were not due to be considered elsewhere at the meeting. | |
| 868. | INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE | |

**1. Cyber Security Maturity Assessment** (TIAA)

Ian Ward (as the Director of IT) advised that TIAA had undertaken their review in June 2024, and that there had been a considerable number of changes within the College's IT facilities since then. He advised further that the review had not offered any substantive recommendations but had only highlighted whether the cyber security maturity assessment had been met, and at what level.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the preparation of an action plan, the DoIT advised that Scrutton Bland were planning to undertake a similar review in the near future, and that he would be reviewing any recommendations raised at that time and develop an action plan accordingly.

In response to a further question the DoIT advised that the greatest threat to cyber security was the human risk – sharing passwords, not logging-off properly etc. He re-iterated that the College undertook regular 'phishing' exercises on the staff email system in order to ensure that no one gave away any relevant log-in data.

The IA updated the Audit Ctte on the outcomes from the reviews undertaken since the previous meeting.

**2. HR Recruitment and Retention**
**3. Staff Recruitment and Retention** (TIAA)

The review had been assessed as "Reasonable Assurance". A total of 8 recommendations had been made (3 at 'Medium', 5 at 'Low'). The action plan for each recommendation (included in the report) outlined a range of actions, all of which had been accepted by College Management.

In response to a question from a Member, the IA advised that a number of the changes highlighted had been implemented, and that improved benefits had already been felt. In response to a further question the IA confirmed that all recommendations made in all reviews were reviewed as part of Follow-up Review to ensure that appropriate action had been taken.

*[The TIAA review had been discussed at the previous meeting of the Audit Ctte, and had been included with the agenda for comparison purposes only]*

| 868. (cont) | **4. Capital Projects**<br><br>The review had been assessed as "Strong Assurance", and no recommendations had been made.<br><br>In response to a question from a Member the DPFR confirmed that lessons learnt under Phase 1 of the capital project had been implemented in the planning process for Phase 2.<br><br>**5. Learner Recruitment**<br><br>The review had been assessed as "Significant Assurance". Although no formal recommendations had been made, the IA had raised two 'added value points' for consideration by the College.<br><br>In response to a question from a Member regarding the number of records reviewed during the process, the IA advised that the review had been based on a top-level review of the processes rather than of individual records.<br><br>**6. 2024/25 Internal Audit Risk and Assurance Progress Report**<br><br>The IA advised that, from the agreed IA Plan, three reviews had been completed, fieldwork had been completed on a fourth review, and that dates for the remaining two reviews had been agreed. The Follow-up Review would be undertaken in July 2025.<br><br>It was noted that the Audit Ctte 5-day IA allocation for 2025/26 would be considered at the next meeting. | **Audit Ctte** |
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| 869. | **RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISK REGISTER**<br><br>A written report was received for information and noted. The DPFR advised that there had been no significant changes since the last report. One new risk had been added: S14 – Local Authority Devolution. At the current time, he stressed that the College did not know what was being proposed or what the consequences might be. However, it was expected that adult funding would be devolved to Hampshire as part of this initiative so there would be an implication for the College. It was expected that this would not have an impact on the College until 2026/27 at the earliest.<br><br>It was suggested that the impact of the continuing implementation and use of AI should also be considered for inclusion on the Risk Register.<br><br>The Chair of the Audit Ctte raised two concerns. The first concern related to the changing character of the student population (fewer Level 3 students and a growing number Level 1 and 2 students). The Principal advised that this was a national issue and partly driven by the lower achievements of students leaving secondary school; the College had seen the balance of L3:L1+L2 move from 2/3rd:1/3rd to 1/3rd:2/3rd. He stressed that there would be an impact on the College as it would present more challenges and require additional resources. The DPFR advised that this was an area that could be included in the new Strategic Plan that was under development.<br><br>The second concern related to the continuing ongoing uncertainties regarding Government funding. The Principal confirmed that it was a real issue for all colleges. The DPFR advised that this issue was included on the Risk Register.<br><br>The IA also advised that there was an increasing risk to colleges of 'ordinary' fraud in addition to cyber fraud. The DPFR advised that there were good processes in place in the College but that he would add it to the Risk Register. | **DPFR**<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>**DPFR** |

| 870. | **USE OF COLLEGE SEAL** | |
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| | The Clerk advised that the College Seal had not been used in the period since the previous meeting of the Audit Committee. | |
| 871. | **POST-PROJECT REVIEWS** | |
| | There had been no post-project reviews undertaken since the last meeting of the Audit Committee. | |
| 872. | **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS** | |
| | There were no items of Any Other Urgent Business discussed. | |
| 873. | **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS** | |
| | Wednesday      11 June 2025<br>Wednesday      26 November 2025<br>Wednesday      4 March 2026<br>Wednesday      10 June 2026 | |
| (6.35pm) | Meeting closed | |

NOTE:    General acronyms/references used in the Minutes include:

AI = Artificial Intelligence
MD = Managing Director
TIAA = College's previous Internal Auditor
WBTC = West Berkshire Training Consortium