

B O S T O N C O L L E G E

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2014

1 PRESENT

Mr A Reynolds (Chair), Mrs H Wright, Mr D Hanson, Mr D White

Meeting attendance: 100%.

Also in attendance: Miss S Hill (Clerk to the Audit Committee), Mrs A Mosek (Principal), Ms J Lau (Finance Manager), Mr J Creed (Icca Education Training and Skills) and Mr M Standish (Baker Tilly).

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Hemmant.

It was commented that Ms Lau would be leaving the College within the next few weeks and the Chairman thanked her for her hard work during the past year and wished her well in her new post.

2 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20 MARCH 2014

The question was asked by a member of the Committee as to why a copy of the minutes had been downloaded to the internet, when they had not yet been presented to a Corporation meeting. Mrs Mosek said she would ascertain the reason and report back to the Committee.

The minutes were approved as a true record of the meeting.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT

a) Study Programmes

Mr Creed explained to the Committee that the Study Programme Set Up and Planning Process Review was done as an advisory report, not seeking to give an assurance. He added that because of changes in funding methodology the report looked at the way the College is funded. The key message arising from the report is that the College has kept abreast of external regulation and ever changing guidance. It showed that there is good training in place which is percolated through the organisation. The Chairman asked about the gaps and recommendations to go into the planning process and Mrs Mosek stated that curriculum planning is very complex but should be easier next year because new managers would have greater experience. The report showed evidence of some good planning.

Mr Creed said that much of the report is a management report which the team can use to look at their processes and consider how they can secure greater levels of efficiency. It was stated that Boston College is doing well in many areas compared to other colleges of a similar size. The Committee asked that thanks be given to Mrs Grady for the excellent work she is doing in this area.

b) Learner Journey Review

Mr Creed said that this report focused predominantly on the 16-19 year old learner journey from the first enquiry through to achievement. The report identified that the College was not capturing all enquiries. Mr Creed said that this is common throughout the sector as it was normal that 16 year olds tend to sit on a number of offers from local schools/colleges. Mrs Mosek told the Committee that she was aware of what is required, that the software needed is available, but the necessary resources were not. Mr Creed said that the processes were good, with room for development.

c) Significant Partnerships: Sub-Contracting

Mr Creed confirmed that this report had been given a substantial assurance with one low priority recommendation and acknowledged that this was the best review of sub-contracting that he had seen this academic year. Mrs Mosek said that she was really pleased with the work of the Partnership team. The Committee asked that thanks be passed to the Sub-Contracting team for this excellent report.

d) Learner Records and Funding – Apprenticeship Provision

A substantial assurance was given with no recommendations, which Mr Standish believed to be quite unusual. Mr Creed said that his team had looked at a range of apprenticeship activities, and all had shown the same good results. The Committee asked that thanks be passed to the team for this excellent report.

e) Follow up

Mr Creed confirmed that this report had been given a substantial assurance and concluded that the College had made substantial progress in making improvements with 20 recommendations. Fifteen had already been fully implemented, 3 had been superseded and 2 carried forward, one of which needs to be put in place for the start of the next academic year. Mr Creed said that the report had shown that the management team are dealing with recommendations in a timely manner.

4 INTERNAL AUDIT STRATEGY

Mr Creed presented the Internal Audit Strategy for the next 3 years, and the rolled forward plans for 2014/15. The 31 audit days had been reduced to a 30 day plan for 2014/15 which had been put together with the management team. It was noted that a number of contingency days have been left as follow up work may be necessary on some of the proposed audits. The Chairman asked Icca for an update at future meetings of number of days used so that the Committee can keep track of all audit days. This to be included on the agenda for future meeting.

Mrs Wright asked about the Audit Committee's area of choice, and Mrs Mosek suggested that the Committee could focus on efficiencies. Mr Hanson asked if some areas are mandatory and Mr Creed confirmed that there is a requirement to look at some such specific areas such as risk assessment. Mr Standish said that there looked to be a good balance of areas on the list, and although it was not necessary for Controls to be an area, Mrs Mosek said she would prefer for this to be done.

The Committee said that they would like the papers to be printed landscape and for the double sided pages to flow to make the reports easier to read. Discussion took place and it was decided that electronic papers would be piloted for the Corporation at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

It was commented that the internal audit is being used as an internal tool as well as meeting an objective and that Icca's first year working with Boston College had been effective. The Committee were happy to approve the audit plan for 2014/15.

5 EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

Mr Standish presented his report to the Committee starting with the timetable and communication plan.

Mr Standish said that looking at income, it is very unlikely that there will be any retrospective clawback for 16-18 learner funding. It was confirmed that the 16-18 and adult budgets were on target.

The offer on the sale of De Montfort Campus was discussed and Mr Standish said that this audit focus should be an appropriate disclosure.

Section 5 of the report showed items brought forward from the previous year and discussion took place on the joint tenancy with Grimsby College of the property in Skegness. Mr Standish stated that if this is deemed to be an onerous contract, then provision should be considered to be made in the financial statement. The Chairman said that this is the third year that the building is vacant and no provision had been put into previous accounts as the College has been trying to find an alternative use for the building in order to minimise the cost. Mrs Lau was asked to check the likely impact on the covenant agreement, with the help of Mr Hanson as College Governor, if required. The issue would be further considered by F&GP.

The Chairman thanked Mr Standish for his report.

6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman thanked the management team for their achievement in the recent Ofsted report with a result of a 'Good' rating. It was commented that there would be a review of Audit Committee Targets and new objectives set at the next meeting.

It was also stated that percentage attendance figures to be publicised on future Audit Committee minutes.