

Heart of Yorkshire Education Group Corporation ('Corporation')

Audit Committee ('Committee')

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 4 March 2025 ('Meeting')

Present: Nigel Brook ('Chair'), Jason Brook, Jayne King and Martyn Shaw

Head of Governance and Legal Services ('Clerk')

In attendance: Director of IT Services ('DIT'), Group Executive Director of External Relationships and Development ('EDERD'), Vici Cadwallader-Webb (ICCA) and Richard Lewis (RSM)

Caroline Carter (by invitation)

Apologies: Mohammed Ayub

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed those present, reported that due notice of the Meeting had been given and that the Meeting was quorate. Accordingly, the Chair declared the Meeting open.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2024

3.1. The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record.

3.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Committee of 26 November 2024 were approved.

4. Matters Arising

4.1. The Clerk addressed the outstanding matters arising:

- 4.1.1. Items 1, 3, and 7 required further action by Caroline once formally appointed.
- 4.1.2. Updates on the Reserves Policy and financial planning were discussed.

5. Cyber Attack Disaster Recovery Report

5.1. The DIT provided an overview of cybersecurity measures, risks, and recovery strategies. Key points included:

- 5.1.1. Cyber Essentials certification and the exclusion of some non-compliant devices.
- 5.1.2. Support from Jisc for filtering, security alerts, and guidance.
- 5.1.3. Backup and recovery strategies including cloud-based immutable backups and tape backups.
- 5.1.4. Ongoing disaster recovery site developments.

5.2. Governor Questions and Answers:

- 5.2.1. Q: When was the last phishing test conducted, and what were the results?
A: The organisation uses Boxfish to conduct phishing simulations monthly. The risk rating is currently around two out of five, but completion rates for training need improvement.
- 5.2.2. Q: How are virtual reality headsets managed for cybersecurity?
A: They are kept separately due to their lack of appropriate-level security features.
- 5.2.3. Q: Has a scenario-based cybersecurity response been tested?
A: While some failover tests have been conducted, full-scale incident response testing is needed and will be prioritised.

6. Apprenticeship Audit Update Presentation

6.1. The EDERD provided an update on the external audit of apprenticeships noting:

- 6.1.1. The external auditors completed further assurance work on apprenticeship funding.

6.1.2. The total funds at risk of recovery.

6.1.3. Compliance checks on records across all campuses showed an error rate of only 2%, a marked improvement.

6.2. Governor Questions and Answers:

6.3. Q: Has the matter now been closed by the funding agency?

A: Yes, the ESFA has confirmed that no further audits will be conducted related to this issue.

6.4. Q: Will there be an impact on current apprentices?

A: No, existing learners will not be affected, and all necessary funding adjustments have been accounted for.

6.5. It was agreed that a briefing paper summarising the findings will be circulated to governors.

7. Status of Previous Audit Recommendations

7.1. The EDERD provided an update on outstanding audit recommendations noting 19 total recommendations on the tracker, with 11 completed and 1 overdue.

7.2. Governor Questions and Answers:

7.2.1. Q: Can we include due dates on the recommendation tracker?

A: Yes, due dates will be added for better tracking.

7.2.2. Q: Are all work experience recommendations fully implemented?

A: To be confirmed by the next meeting.

8. Risk Management, Internal Control and Governance (inc. Risk Register Update (and Emerging Risks))

8.1. Discussion took place regarding the following:

8.1.1. The cybersecurity risk tolerance had been recommended for adjustment to moderate but no change had been made by the Board.

8.1.2. The risk register was to be reviewed following the new Finance Director's appointment.

9. Anti-Fraud Policy and Response Plan

- 9.1. The Clerk noted the policy updates including clarifications made regarding protections for whistleblowers. The Anti-Fraud and Response Plan, Anti-Bribery and Whistleblowing Policies were taken together.
- 9.2. A proposal was made to rebrand Whistleblowing Policy as "Raising Concerns" to encourage reporting which would be considered.
- 9.3. Governor questions and answers:
 - 9.3.1. Q: Should anti-fraud and anti-bribery policies be merged?
A: This will be reviewed.
 - 9.3.2. Q: How is policy awareness promoted?
A: Policies are communicated to staff, but further work is needed to raise awareness.
- 9.4. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT:
 - 9.4.1. The Anti-Fraud Policy and Response Plan was approved.
 - 9.4.2. The Anti-Bribery Policy was approved.
 - 9.4.3. The Whistleblowing Policy was approved.

10. Data Protection Annual Report

- 10.1. The Clerk gave a report summary noting:
 - 10.1.1. Compliance with UKGDPR and statutory regulations.
 - 10.1.2. Subject Access Request response times remained strong.
 - 10.1.3. Staff training completion rate of 95.7%.

11. Data Protection Policy

- 11.1. The Data Protection Policy was carefully considered.
- 11.2. IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the Data Protection Policy be recommended to Board.

12. Review of Effectiveness of Meeting and Identification of Emerging Risk

- 12.1. Members found the meeting effective and noted the need to monitor cybersecurity response testing and the upcoming audit review.

12.2. The Chair noted that the next meeting of the Committee was to take place on 9 June 2025.

12.3. The Chair declared the meeting closed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NGA' with a stylized flourish underneath.

Signed..... Date 09.06.2025

Actions

No.	Minute	Details	Deadline	Responsibility
1	4.1.1	Address matters arising with new Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources	Before Next Meeting	Clerk
2	6.5	Circulate apprenticeship audit briefing paper	Next Board meeting	Clerk
3	7.2.1	Add due dates to audit recommendation tracker	Next Meeting	Clerk
4	8.1.2	Conduct full risk register review with new Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources	Next Audit Committee Meeting	Clerk
5	9.3.1	Review and consider merging Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policies and renaming Whistleblowing Policy	Next Review Cycle	Clerk
6	11.2	Recommend Data Protection Policy to Board	Next Board meeting	Clerk