

**Minutes of the meeting of the South Bank Colleges Audit Committee
held at 4pm on Tuesday 4 February 2025
in Board room, Clapham campus, Gateway College**

Present

Steve Balmont (Chair)

Mee Ling Ng

In attendance

Ben Baker (item 11 &12)

Chris Knell

Fiona Morey

Jacqueline Mutibwa

Jack Stapleton, KPMG Internal Auditors

Taryn Bester, KPMG Internal Auditors

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No member declared an interest in any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising

The Committee noted the update on matters arising from the previous meeting and that most actions were on the agenda for discussion or were being progressed.

On the assessment that the College is a going concern for the next 12 months, the ESFA College Financial Forecast Return (CFFR) 10-year budget would be shared with the Committee and would also be included in the 2025/26 budget report.

On the action for the Audit Committee to consider an audit review of the effectiveness of the internal controls and purchase ordering processes around

staff/ agency expenditure to ensure that the control environment is sufficiently robust. The procurement controls would be reviewed as part of the Financial Controls internal audit review in April/May 2025.

5. Internal Audit Progress Report

The Committee received an update on progress made on the 2024/25 internal audit plan since the last meeting in November 2024.

The Committee discussed:

- the audit review of operational risk management which was in progress. On the audit review of the strategic projects, there would be further discussion about the scope and timing of the review.
- the assessment of the completeness and accuracy of the Single Central Register in relation to Safeguarding Compliance at SBC had been completed (additional work outside the internal audit programme) and was on the agenda for discussion (item 6).
- On internal audit action tracking, the Committee reviewed the internal audit action tracker and progress made on implementing management actions agreed in previous audits. There were 8 overdue management actions against the agreed implementation dates (3 medium priority and 5 low priority). The actions needed to be prioritised, and some deadlines brought forward.

The Committee was provided with details on the responsibilities and requirements of both Internal Audit and the Audit Committee and reporting up to the Board (based on the Good Practice Guide in line with the requirements of the post-16 audit code of practice) which was requested by the Committee at its last meeting in November 2024.

6. Internal Audit Single Central Record Report

The Department for Education sets out expectations of a School's responsibilities in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, most recently updated on 4 September 2024). The statutory guidance sets out the requirements that providers of education under 18 must have regard to when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This guidance requires Schools and colleges to maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of pre-appointment checks for all staff, agency supply staff, members and trustees.

The Committee received the audit report on the assessment of SBC's Single Central Record's against the expectations and requirements defined in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 – Statutory guidance for schools and

colleges’.

The Committee was concerned about the auditors findings that had overall identified that there was ineffectiveness in the compliance with the relevant Paragraphs of the Statutory guidance i.e. the accuracy and inconsistencies in the completeness of the underlying records. The management actions would have target dates, a responsible/lead officer and would be included in KPMG’s internal audit action tracker to monitor progress made.

7. ESFA Funding Audit Report

The Committee was not able to discuss the report as it was published late. The Committee’s comments would be shared with the Executive.

8. 2023/24 Year-end External Audit Findings Recommendations

The report had not been published and was not available at the meeting. The Committee noted that most of the internal control recommendations relate to the funding assurance work undertaken by RSM, external auditors. The Executive gave an update on progress being made on the management actions.

The Committee’s concerns on the external audit recommendations included the reference to the payment of creditors taking longer and the reputation issues, the control issues related to the suspense accounts and that a stronger management response was needed on the actions. The report would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in June 2025.

9.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

10. Updated Corporate Risk Register and Appetite

The Committee reviewed the updated risk register especially the areas that remained high and critical.

The Committee discussed and supported the changes on the risk register. The risk score on apprenticeship provision withdrawn had been downgraded (from red to amber). This was due to the positive outcome of the Further Education Commissioner's inspection (November 2025). The provision would remain on the risk register due to the Ofsted assessment that it "Requires Improvement" until achievement levels return towards national averages.

The risk related to failure to achieve Good at next Ofsted visit had been removed from the risk register due to the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection in January 2025.

On the risk concerning failure to discharge safeguarding duties, management would verify that the actions had been undertaken and would be closed. The RAG rating would remain amber.

On the cyber risk, despite action following a recent incident, there remains a material cyber risk and the risk score should remain amber.

There were no new risks since the last meeting in November 2024.

Ben Baker joined the meeting

11. Business Continuity Plan Update

The Committee discussed the 2024/25 annual business continuity plan (BCP).

The Board discussed:

- the role of the SBC Board in the business continuity management and its oversight of related activities as requested at the meeting in February 2024. The LSBU group business continuity policy which was adopted by SBC, alignment with group objectives, shared resources and collaboration was noted.

- a progress update on the recent departmental business impact analysis (BIA) and BCP completion data. The challenges were noted and there were concerns about the incomplete BCPs which were due to changes in department leadership and would be addressed by the end of the academic year. The programme of tabletop exercises planned for 2025 to further strengthen SBC's resilience was noted.
- an update on the cyber incident in November 2024 which tested SBC's resilience, emphasising the importance of robust BCPs and rapid escalation processes. The impact on operations and lessons learnt were noted. The cyber incident report would be shared with the Committee prior to its next meeting in June 2025.

The Committee supported the recommendations presented in the report.

12. Health & Safety Matters - 2024/25 Term 1 Health & Safety Incidents

The Committee received an update on Health and Safety Accident and Incident reporting for 2024/25 Term 1 (July – December 2024). The report included the incident trends, areas of concern, and actions recommended to improve safety and well-being across SBC.

The Committee discussed the analysis of the incidents reported during the period which were 49. The high impact incidents relate to violence/aggression (13 incidents) and medical emergencies (15 incidents). On the performance break down by site, most of the incidents were at LSBTC (26). The high-frequency departments included estates responsible for the multiple fire alarm activations at both colleges triggered by vaping.

The Committee noted that SBC's Health and Safety Policy had been updated to reflect the following:

- Estates Responsibilities: The policy now clearly references the new Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) contract with Mitie.
- Reporting Lines: Executive Principal is accountable for reporting on H&S performance and ensuring timely updates to Trustees via the Audit Committee.
- Alignment with LSBU Group: The policy references the new LSBU Group Health and Safety Policy Statement.

The Committee discussed the key areas of concern which included aggressive/violent behaviour, fire alarm misuse (vaping) the multiple triggers caused significant disruption and mental health & well-being i.e. a broad spectrum of health emergencies. On knife incidents and assaults, SBC was working closely with an external security organisation and the police to address the matter. Students should take lead on the education and awareness work/

initiatives that would address the aggressive/violent behaviour incidents that had increased. Keeping safe would be a workshop at the annual student conference. More proactive work needed to be undertaken to mitigate the risks that could lead to serious incidents. The Committee supported the recommendations that would address the areas of concern.

Ben Baker left the meeting

13. Value for Money Update

The Committee received an update on the Value for Money (VfM) performance since the last discussion in February 2024.

The Committee noted the improvement actions/initiatives that had been undertaken during the year to drive and improve VfM. A Tribal benchmarking exercise would be undertaken to compare the College's VfM performance against other FE colleges and assess SBC's performance in this area of work. The report would be shared with the Committee and Board at the meetings in June/July 2025.

14. Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Report

The Committee noted that no incidences of fraud, bribery or corruption had been identified since the last meeting in November 2024.

15. Speak Up Policy and Report

The Committee noted that there were no matters that had been raised under the Speak up policy since its last meeting in November 2024. The Committee also noted the report on the speak up issues raised via the other channels within the College such as the grievance procedure and employment tribunals. It also received a verbal report on the details of the individual cases i.e. the process and the outcomes.

16. Any other business

There was no other business.

**Date of next meeting
4pm, Tuesday 24 June 2025**

Confirmed as a true record



.....(Chair)

