AQUINAS COLLEGE
AUDIT COMMITTEE

Meeting: 3 November 2025
Time: 4.30pm
Venue: College

GOVERNORS PRESENT

Mrs C H Dove and Mr A Martin.
Mr A Martin in the Chair

IN ATTENDANCE

Murray Smith LLP	Mrs N Tucker
Wbg Audit Ltd	Ms S Burton (via Teams)
Mr T P McGee	Chair of Governors
Mrs D Blackburn	Senior Assistant Principal (Finance)
Mr T Conlon	Clerk to the Governing Body

Although the meeting was not quorate it was agreed that the reports would be considered and noted and that any items that needed approval would go to the Governing Body meeting on 25 November 2025

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairperson welcomed Ms S Burton (Wbg) to her first meeting of the Audit Committee. For the benefit of Ms Burton everyone introduced themselves.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The meeting began with a prayer led by Mr A Martin.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received and accepted from Mrs J Miller.

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Governors and Staff were asked to declare any interest, which they may have in any items on the Agenda for this meeting. No interests were declared.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT PRESENTATION ON ILR

Ms Burton (Wbg) outlined the processes that they follow when undertaking an Individual Learning Record (ILR) audit at the college. Internal audit take a high level overview in confirming that the college data is correct, that student exists, qualify for funding and that the values are correct. Wbg get the ILR from the college after it has been run through the DfE software. They then choose a sample to audit. Their report to the college will identify any funding errors or recommendations.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the software that the college uses in an in house package. A great deal of work is undertaken to retain students. A student needs to be on role on the census date in October each year which is 42 days after the course commenced. The ILR will record any changes in courses that a student has made. All hours are gathered at an individual student level, 98% of the students at the college are classed as full time and are on a course of study of 580 hours or more and 16-19 DfE funding accounts for 95% of the college's income. The number of students on roll at the census date determines the funding for the following financial year. The college submits data to the DfE on a regular basis. Mrs Blackburn added that the college has only been subjected to a DfE audit once.

Mrs Tucker (Murray Smith) added that from an external audit point they test that the figures are true and fair to include in the statutory accounts. They also take a sample of students and check that the funding is correct and pass the 42 day qualification period. There is a cross over with the work undertaken by internal audit.

Mr McGee asked how did the college compare with other colleges. Ms Burton replied that Wbg has never found any material funding issues. Mrs Tucker (Murray Smith) added that external audit point of view they don't usually find anything that is material. Mrs Blackburn reminded Governors that funding is calculated each year and any change in student numbers affects the funding for the following year.

6. COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2025, copies of which had been circulated previously, were agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of the word "any" in Minute 7 (b) 3rd paragraph line 5.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MINUTES

There were no matters arising that were not covered by the agenda for the meeting.

8. DRAFT STATUTORY ACCOUNTS

Mrs Blackburn introduced the draft Statutory Accounts for 2024/2025 that had been circulated previously to Members. It was noted that the Audit Committee has a corporate governance role in approving the Statutory Accounts. The Resources Committee would also consider the draft Statutory Accounts at its meeting on 4 November 2025. Mrs Blackburn also outlined to Governors the Statement of comprehensive income and expenditure that showed a surplus of £983,000.

A discussion took place on the movements from the management accounts to the statutory accounts which showed the changes to reflect the valuation of the Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Fund. The valuation is actuarially reviewed every year, and has been in surplus for some years although the asset will never be realised and the college had to request a ceiling asset report. Pension disclosure in the Statutory Accounts are normally a liability, not an asset and as such the movement in the asset in the year of £2,215,000 had to be written off. There was an actuarial gain in the year of £2,033,000, and negative charges to interest and salaries of £182,000 which all netted out so that the final profit remains at £983,000.

All Governors were asked to check the draft Statutory Accounts for any mistakes, typing errors or any further clarifications and to advise Mrs Blackburn accordingly.

The accounts remain draft until they are approved by the Governing Body and signed by the Chairperson, Principal and the auditors.

RESOLVED: That the draft Statutory Accounts for 2024/2025, subject to any governor amendments be recommended to the Governing Body for approval.

9. EXTERNAL AUDIT COMPLETION REPORT

Mrs Tucker of Murray Smith LLP advised members that the college had been well prepared for the audit and that she had been impressed by its organisation.

Mrs Tucker advised members that the Audit Summary covered the Financial Statements of the College for the year ended 31 July 2025. The reporting framework had included the FRS102 Financial Reporting Standard.

Mrs Tucker went through the Audit Completion Report and drew member's attention to the key points in the report. The report covered the following areas i) Executive Summary, ii) Audit Findings, iii) Financial highlights, iv) Other communication requirements, v) Internal controls, vi) Unadjusted misstatements, vii) Regularity, viii) Independence and ethics and ix) Communication of audit matters with those charged with governance.

A discussion took place on the draft Financial Statements Audit Summary that had been prepared by Murray Smith LLP for the year ended 31 July 2025. Copies of the report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Members' attention was drawn to the Executive Summary section of the report and it was noted that there were no unresolved disagreement with management of the College regarding items that could be material to the accounts. The report indicated that subject to carrying out a post balance sheet events review there will be an unqualified opinion, without modification on both the Financial Statements and Regularity Audit for the year ended 31 July 2025.

It was agreed that the unadjusted misstatements identified during the audit were immaterial. It included purchase invoices dated pre year end but the costs relate entirely to 2025/2026.

Mrs Tucker of Murray Smith LLP thanked Mrs Blackburn and other college staff for their assistance in carrying out the audit.

RESOLVED: That the Audit Completion Report that had been prepared by Murray Smith LLP on the college for the year ended 31 July 2025 be received.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT/RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The draft Annual Risk Management Report for 2024/2025 and the Risk Management Policy had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. Mrs Blackburn advised members that the draft Annual Report summarised the following:

a) The risk management approach during the year
b) Summary of performance against the College's Risk Management Plan identifying:
i) Any issues in each of the significant risk areas and how these were addressed.
ii) Details of Key Performance Indicators
iii) Changes to the Scope of the Register
iv) Actions and Deadlines
v) An overall summary and conclusion on the adequacy of the process in discharging the Governing Body's duties.

It was noted that the risk management process is well established with regular reports to senior management and Governors. It is considered that the College is well managed and that there are few significant risks.

The main significant risk is due to external factors e.g. funding. Student recruitment remains a risk as any fall in student numbers impacts on funding for the following year. The risk environment within College is considered well controlled. The College has had clean audit reports from the both Internal and External auditors. The risk management process is sufficient to provide adequate assurance of sound systems of internal control.

Mrs Blackburn advised Governors that the Risk Management Policy had not changed from last year and would be circulated to Governors for approval at the Governing Body meeting on 25 November 2025.

RESOLVED: i) That the draft Annual Risk Management Report for 2024/2025 and ii) the Risk Management Policy be recommended to the Governing Body for approval at the meeting on 25 November 2025.

11. RISK REGISTER

A copy of the updated Risk Register (October 2025) for the college had been circulated to all members of the Committee prior to the meeting. Changes to the Risk Register had been highlighted and Mrs Blackburn identified the high risk areas and updated the Committee on the latest position. Changes were highlighted in red in the revised Risk Register.

The college priorities for 2025/2026 are as follows:

a) to sustain overall outcomes, whilst improving performance in essay based subjects and at the A grade boundary.

b) To enhance recruitment, ensuring that the projected growth is realised.

c) To adapt the college SAR and QIP processes to support future Ofsted readiness in light of the new framework.

d) To navigate the academisation landscape, in the first instance exploring the possibility of a horizontal MAT.

e) to respond and adapt to national decisions around curriculum reform.

f) To strengthen the college's provision in key areas, Pathways, Adult Education, Inclusion, Skills and Destinations.

RESOLVED: That the updated Risk Register be noted.

12. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

A discussion took place on the draft Audit Committee Annual Report that had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. The report covered all work carried out in the 2024/2025 financial year including concluding work relating to 2023/2024. The Committee's Annual Report should advise the Governing Body when they are approving the College's Statutory Accounts and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2025. It is also sent to the DfE as part of the statutory account's submission.

RESOLVED: That the report be submitted to the Governing Body for approval at the meeting on 25 November 2025.

13. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

A copy of the current Audit Committee Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. After a full discussion it was agreed that no changes were needed.

14. FRAUD LOG BOOK/WHISTLE BLOWING

Mrs Blackburn advised members that there were no incidents of fraud, corruption or whistle blowing to report.

15. CO-OPTED GOVERNORS

Governors noted that the term of office for the Co-opted Governors Mr A Anwar and Ms M Garratt finishes on 31 December 2025. The Clerk to the Governors was asked to contact them to see if they wished to continue in their role as Co-opted Governors.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no Any Other Business.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9 February 2026 at 4.30pm.

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair of the Audit Committee