

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 1700h in the Room FO27 of the College and with participation by Teams.

Present: Robert Milburn (Chair); Norma Boyes (co-opted member); Lee Todd  
By Teams: Elaine Clinton

Apologies: Denise Rollo

Also present: Karen Rae (External Auditor); Jonathan Creed (Internal Auditor);  
Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)

### **08/22 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **09/22 Declarations of Interest**

None received.

### **10/22 Internal Auditor's Report: HE Strategy**

The internal auditor noted that Substantial assurance had been received, with three low level recommendations. This included a more in-depth review of the external environment, coupled with clear pathways and targets to be added to the refreshed HE strategy; more specific marketing activity; and further strategies and KPIs to increase learner voice.

It was noted that all recommendations had been accepted and the Deputy Principal added that although marketing activity did take place for HE (and probably the best it had been for some time) that better clarity of the market and planned activity would assist with growth. It was accepted that survey rates were low and the Board was aware of efforts to increase participation including HE student meetings (in addition to surveys).

The Committee felt that overall it was a good report, that recommendations were constructive and that the implementation dates demonstrate that the College is taking the recommendations seriously.

### **11/22 Digital Learning Strategy**

The internal auditor noted that there had been substantial assurance for this report with two medium and one low recommendation. The two medium reservations had been around the design framework, which had received an adequate grading.

These had been about KPIs being cross-referenced between the strategic plan and the Teaching and Learning Strategy and the development of measurable outcomes in the digital learning action plan.

It was asked how the more 'reluctant' member of staff was engaged. It was felt that there were very strong members of staff who were keen on digital that could take a lead and support some teachers. Each area should have a digital learning coach alongside a TLA coach, but it was not always easy to recruit the right person to the role. The staff governor suggested that there may be a need to look at a cross-departmental role.

The Deputy Principal added that where there was a lack of in-department expertise, there was further support in the digital services team, with other staff offering surgery sessions. People had no choice but to operate digitally during lockdown, but there were some who would revert back and it was important to maintain a consistent approach.

From the learner point of view, they normally ask their tutor or parents first, before seeking further advice, but they can also access support from the digital services team.

It was noted that there was a good positive response to the recommendations and that actions would be tracked through regular reporting.

#### **12/22 Internal Audit Report: Compliance with Recommendations**

It was noted that this report gave substantial assurance with all recommendations fully implemented and audit of the tracking report showed that it reflected the issues and was consistent. The Committee noted that they couldn't have asked for anything more.

#### **13/22 Internal Audit Strategy**

This was developed as part of a process which involved talking to senior staff and consideration of the risk register. The plan for the coming year was to give consideration to the risk register, that management processes were adequate and effective. In regular auditing of the key financial controls, it was felt timely to look at the main financial sales ledger and journals. Consideration of the MIS reporting framework would consider the effectiveness of the framework in supporting decision-making and a review of the learner journey will consider the effectiveness of the careers' strategy. The final proposed audit was to review T-Level industry placements and compliance with ESFA requirements.

The Committee considered that it was a good blend and were content to recommend the audit plan to the Board.

**Resolved** – to recommend the Audit Plan 22-23 to the Board.

## **14/22 Audit Tracking Report**

In consideration of the report, it was asked about cyber training and acknowledged that 88% had completed their refresher training. It was felt that there needed to be a review of the training plan. It was asked about what sanctions for those who had not completed their training. It was felt that this should be mandatory training and that responsibility should rest with their line manager to ensure that training is completed.

A deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> July had been set for the review of old assets as raised in the last external audit.

## **15/22 Risk Policy and Register**

Following their risk training session at the previous meeting, the Committee considered a refreshed risk policy. They noted that there had been a significant change to the policy and it was felt that it was a big improvement. The Committee was content to recommend the policy for approval at the Board.

In consideration of the risk register, some success was being had in growth in the apprenticeship market. It was asked about areas of concern within the curriculum. It was felt that there was an overall improving picture that the drive was still to get consistency across provision in the goal for outstanding. If there was one area for concern, this was transition learners and this was being addressed in a rapid improvement plan.

Some concern was expressed that staff recruitment and retention was an issue and pleased to see that this was acknowledged in the report and that actions were being taken. The same was said about the impact of pace of change and regulatory framework, noting that three funding bids had been required in the past three weeks.

### **Resolved –**

- 1) that the Risk Policy be recommended to the Board for approval;
- 2) that updates to the Risk Register be approved and noted.

## **16/22 Financial Regulations**

The changes proposed centred around the increasingly short turnaround required on capital projects and the pressures on the capital programme. The Committee were content with a relaxation of some of the reporting requirements provided that they had an annual report of the impact of capital programmes and projects and it was agreed that this should be added into the financial regulations for the Board.

It was also accepted that where every effort had been made to secure a viable tender (under £50,000), but that insufficient interest had been received

(often due to a lack of resources or geographical challenges), that this scenario be added to the list of waivers of the Principal.

**Resolved** – that the Financial Regulations be recommended to the Board for approval.

**17/22 Post 16 Audit Code of Practice**

The Committee considered revisions to the Audit Code of Practice and noted the inclusion of propriety in the regularity section. The External Auditor noted that she would be providing a wider briefing note.

**The meeting closed at 1845h.**