

A

Audit Committee

Meeting at 17:30 on Thursday 9 February 2023

MS Teams

Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility and Date	Action Status
08/23 & 09/23	Anti-Bribery Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies to be discussed with Exec and improvements made.	VP F&CS	Revised policies on agenda, action complete
13/23	The Director of IT and Digital to enquire about online cyber security compliance rates.	The Director of IT and Digital	Complete - 209 staff have completed this in total.
15/23	Audit Recommendations monitoring – date the actions originated to be added in.	VP F&CS	Dates added, action complete
16/23	Audit Scotland Technical Bulletin to be shared with members.	VP F&CS / Board Secretary	Bulletin emailed 16 th March, action complete
17/23	Papers for Publication to be agreed and follow up email sent to advise.	Board Secretary	

Audit Committee

Meeting at 17:30 on Thursday 9 February 2023

MS Teams

MINUTES

A private meeting between Committee Members, Chair and Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Services was held at 5pm.	
ITEM	MINUTES
Present	<p>Carol Gillie (Chair) David Peace Ann McKerracher Vernice Key</p>
In Attendance	<p>Kirsty Robb (Vice Principal, Finance & Corporate Services) Ingrid Earp (Board Secretary) Scott Moncrieff, Director of IT & Digital Ray McCowan, Regional Board Chair Susan Brook, Wylie & Bisset Suzie Hartley (Minutes)</p>
01/23	<p><u>Chair's Welcome</u> The chair welcomed everyone to the first Committee meeting of the year.</p>
02/23	<p><u>Declaration of Conflict of Interest</u> There were no conflicts of interest noted.</p>
03/23	<p><u>Register of Members' Interest</u> Members did not have any areas of interest to raise.</p>
04/23	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u> No apologies were received.</p>
05/23	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 24 November 2022 (Paper A)</u> All were content to approve the minutes from the last meeting as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>The following updates to actions were provided;</p> <p>22/22 – all requested amendments have been made to the Annual Accounts and will be submitted to the Regional Board and SFC.</p>

	<p>26/22 – The requested amendment has been made to the Student Support Funds Internal Audit Assignment and has been reissued.</p> <p>28/22 – Payroll Internal Audit Assignment – updated to the financial regulations will be taken to the next meeting in May.</p> <p>30/22 - Cyber security update – the college can reapply at any time for Essentials Plus status. Members were content with this response.</p> <p>32/22 - Register of Corporate Gifts and review of the financial regulations around this – this is not yet complete but the relevant policies and financial regulations will be completed and taken to the next meeting in May.</p>
<p>06/23</p>	<p><u>Matters Arising</u> There were no matters arising.</p>
<p>13/23</p>	<p><u>Cyber Security Update (Standing Item - Paper H)</u> This item is for information and was brought forward to be heard first on the agenda.</p> <p>The Director of IT and Digital summarised the report and the key areas being worked on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technological enhancements on the network have been carried out over last two years to protect data for staff and students. - Improvements are required around end user awareness. - Staff training exercise to be launched. JISC are providing the college with a roadmap and The Director of IT and Digital will update at the next Audit Committee. - Internal processes – a lot of work has been carried out in terms of security. A poster with a step by step response in the event of an attack has been produced to help staff advising who to contact etc. - JISC Cyber question survey was released early 2022 and completed by April 22. The findings were presented and graded using a traffic light system. - Data classification – Work is due to begin soon on an information management project with the aim of storing all information in one area and cleansing to remove what is no longer needed. Business Critical Services will be linked with this. - The disaster recovery service is managed by Data Vita over two sites in Airdrie and Edinburgh. Time 4 hours but taken less than 1 hour which is positive. - System updates on firewalls reg, replaced network monitoring software, mon performance network, cumbersome and costly, new solution user friendly, immediately issues highlighted to our network technician. <p>The following questions were raised by members;</p> <p>A member felt the staff training exercise was a great idea and that the online training is good and asked if there are any figures on compliance rates. The Director of IT and Digital advised he didn't have these but D Kerr, People Services may have. The Director of IT and Digital will enquire and forward on to the Committee.</p>

	<p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: SM</p> <p>A member asked if the College has consulted with Dundee College, who recently sustained a significant cyber-attack with business-critical implications. The Director of IT and Digital confirmed that the College has engaged in regular conversation with Dundee and that they have implemented a remote data centre as part of the lessons learned.</p> <p>A member acknowledged that results are always dependent on buy-in from the end user and asked about student engagement. The Director of IT and Digital highlighted that Students use Canvas and 365 and don't attach to the College network in the same way they used to. There is a risk of students spreading virus's through using their own devices, however there are things in place to mitigate this and is therefore not overly concerning. A member asked if students have training available to them. The Director of IT and Digital advised there is a cyber element to their on-boarding and that this could be developed further.</p> <p>Members were happy to note the report.</p> <p>The Director of IT and Digital left the meeting.</p>
--	--

SECTION A – ITEMS FOR APPROVAL

<p>07/23</p>	<p><u>Internal Audit Assignment – Complaints Handling (Paper B)</u></p> <p>S Brooks gave an overview of the Complaints handling Report.</p> <p>A strong level of assurance was provided and the following low priority actions raised;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions identified in last year's log have not yet been closed off and are still under investigation. It was suggested to have a narrative on the log to explain why they are still open. - Investigation timescales - a stage one complaint took longer to resolve than the recommended timescales although it had been given an authorised extension. Four complaints were out with timescales and didn't have extensions authorised. The rating is low and there is recognition that improvements have happened and the need for this to continue. No huge areas of concern were identified. <p>The following questions were raised by members;</p> <p>The Chair queried some statistics that appeared contradictory in relation to resolving complaints and the amount resolved in and out with timescales and whether extensions had been approved or not. S Brooks clarified that ten complaints were resolved out with timescales and six extensions were approved. The chair asked if ten is considered to be a high number. S Brooks reasoned that complaints can be responded to quickly but often a far better outcome is achieved when time is taken to thoroughly investigate, even if this means going over timescales.</p> <p>A member queried the amount of outstanding complaints and felt that the figures in the report are confusing. They also questioned the low risk rating, in light of the amount of complaints received. Thirty-seven stage one complaints were recorded and again it was queried if this was a large amount. A significant amount were received throughout Covid.</p>
---------------------	---

	<p>A member felt it would be useful to have a benchmark to be able to compare with other colleges and identify who is performing well and what could be learned from them. S Brooks suggested a year on year trend analysis.</p> <p>A member asked if grievances are welcomed and highlighted the learning opportunities these provide. Another member advised that college staff are encouraged to take student complaints further.</p> <p>Members were happy to approve the report on the basis that actions are followed up.</p>
08/23	<p><u>Anti-Bribery Policy (Paper C)</u> VP Finance and Corporate Services advised that both the Anti-Bribery Policy and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy are due to be reviewed every three years or when legislation or corporate governance required. The latest reviews were undertaken in January 2019 and the revised policies were approved by the Audit Committee in February 2019.</p> <p>Both policies have been fully reviewed by VP Finance and Corporate Services and minor adjustments made to bring them up to date and in line with changes to some legal requirements. The policies set out the colleges statement and zero tolerance approach and gives a brief overview of related acts and key parts. It also gives examples of bribery and sets out the colleges commitment to act and the what actions will be taken. Updates have been made in relation to public contract / procurement regulations and the policy also links into the Hospitality and Gifts Register.</p> <p>Members were invited to comment and ask questions;</p> <p>A member acknowledged that policy is important but that the College should also consider how to manage the way they are perceived as an organisation and the potential reputational impact. VP Finance and Corporate Services reasoned that the Colleges policy clearly sets out their zero-tolerance approach and that any related information they hold is transparent and available for public view. She would investigate any additional elements which could be added and agreed to take it back to the Executive Team.</p> <p>The Chair felt the policy is not user friendly, the language is not easy to understand and it is difficult to link it in with the Financial Regulations. She suggested that more work is needed before approval is given. VP Finance & Corporate Services highlighted that these policies are already in place and in use and that the updated Financial Regulations are due to be presented to the Audit Committee in May for approval. Both policies will be taken to the Executive Team for discussion along with the financial regulations and updates made accordingly.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p>
09/23	<p><u>Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (Paper D)</u> Discussed above.</p>
SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION	
10/23	<p><u>Strategic Risk Register (Paper E)</u></p>

	<p>The following risks are assigned to the Audit Committee and updates were given on the positive work undertaken to implement actions:</p> <p><u>3a Information management</u> Prometrix has been fully implemented and integrated into the course planning and budgeting process. HALO, a Service Desk solution was launched on 14 November 2022.</p> <p><u>3b Internal Financial Controls</u> There has been a breakdown in internal financial controls in the College and Auditors have given strong recommendations. The monitoring of Audit recommendations is now back on agenda for every meeting and a plan of action is in place to complete a number of recommendations by July. Updated financial procedures are due to come to the next Audit Committee meeting.</p> <p><u>3c Cybersecurity</u> – the JISC report has identified some areas for improvement and these are being discussed with the Executive Team.</p> <p>Members responded with the following questions;</p> <p>The chair requested an overview of all identified risks, including financial. VP Finance & Corporate Services explained that some risks are assigned to the Finance & Resources committee who are responsible for reviewing the monitoring of the financial position and as part of this would be reviewing the budget planning process at their next meeting. All risks are however included in the Appendix to ensure the Audit Committee has site of all risks and these are also reported the Board. The chair suggested the Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring there are appropriate financial management processes in place.</p> <p>The chair thanked The Director of IT and Digital for a helpful and informative update on Cyber Security and queried why this is not reflected in the Risk Register. VP Finance & Corporate Services took this on board and suggested a review of the register.</p> <p>The Risk Register was noted, pending update.</p>
11/23	<p><u>Committee Review (Paper F)</u> The Board Secretary highlighted that it is best practice for all committees to self-assess their performance and has devised a questionnaire to assist with this. Members were asked to suggest other areas to include.</p> <p>A member noted that recent discussions with SLT members revealed areas of concern that they wouldn't have previously considered, which gave a valuable insight into the college. Board Secretary agreed it is useful to share ideas and that this helps with board interactions with SLT.</p> <p>The chair asked if members are content with the questions proposed so far. A member queried if all of the questions are generic and/or if each committee will get the opportunity to agree on questions more appropriate to their specific committee. Board secretary confirmed there are generic questions and proposed to agree an amount of questions specific to each committee. Once agreed, the Board secretary</p>

	<p>will circulate these and report back at future committees with the responses.</p> <p>Members were content to note the committee review process.</p>
12/23	<p><u>Audit Committee Workplan (Paper G)</u> The Board Secretary introduced the updated workplan document. S Hartley and L Sulo will feedback with suggestions for further improvements. Members were invited to comment.</p> <p>The Chair felt it links in well with the ToR which will help with compliance.</p> <p>Members were happy to note the workplan.</p>
SECTION C – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION	
14/23	<p><u>Register of Corporate Gifts (Paper I)</u> No gifts/hospitality have been received in the time since the last meeting.</p>
15/23	<p><u>Audit Recommendations Monitoring (Paper J)</u> This will be a standing paper going forward which will list outstanding recommendations and progress made. Discussion with internal and external auditors has taken place and good progress has been made to begin to address and resolve any longstanding actions. There is now an action plan in place.</p> <p>The chair approved of the format and suggested also noting the date the actions originated.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS</p> <p>Members were happy to note report.</p>
16/23	<p><u>Information Update (Paper K)</u> VP Finance & Corporate Services noted the purpose of the information update is to provide Committee with an update on areas being monitored and where work is progressing. The areas included in this update are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Audit Scotland Survey. This has been completed and results will be shared once received. - Audit Scotland Technical Bulletin. The latest bulletin was issued on 14 December 2022. Relevant information, for example training opportunities will be highlighted by VP Finance & Corporate Services and the Board Secretary and will be shared with members. <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: VP F&CS / Board Secretary</p> <p>Members were happy to note the paper.</p>
17/23	<p><u>Papers for Publication (Standing Item)</u> This will be agreed out with this meeting and Board Secretary will send a follow up email to advise.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">ACTION: Board Secretary</p>
18/23	<p><u>Any Other Business</u> No other business was raised.</p>
19/23	<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> Thursday 11 May 2023 via Teams.</p>

--	--

Signed.....
Chairman

Signed.....
Board Secretary

DRAFT