

**Pre-Meeting with Auditors**

Governing Body members of the Audit & Risk Committee met with representatives from NIAO, GT and DfE at 5.00pm, prior to the full Committee meeting.

**Minutes of the unreserved business meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 6 November 2019 in Farm Lodge, Ballymena commencing at 5.20pm.**

**Present:** Mrs I Allison, Dr K McCambridge, Mrs J Eve, Mr W McCluggage (Chair)

**In Attendance:** Mr D Conliffe (DfE), Ms K Doey (NIAO), Mr M Higgins, Mr S Lavery, Mr K Leckey (item 62.5), Mr C McCavana (GT), Prof T Scott, and Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

**62.1 Apologies/Welcome**

Mrs Donnelly, Mr Hutchinson and Mr Taggart.

Mr McCavana was welcomed to the meeting.

**62.2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

**62.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 19 September 2019 were approved.

Proposed: Ms Allison                      Seconded: Mrs Eve

It was agreed to take the Health and Safety presentation as the next item.

**62.5 Health and Safety**

Mr Kyle Leckey, Health & Safety Coordinator spoke to his report and highlighted a reduction in accident and incident trends, and key actions being taken to reduce insurance claims.

Committee welcomed the high levels of staff engagement on health awareness training events being run in conjunction with NI Ambulance Service.

The Chair thanked Mr Leckey for the work being carried out on health and safety across the campuses.

Mr Leckey left the meeting at 5.40pm.

**62.4 Matters Arising**

None.

**62.6 Chair's Communication**

None.

#### **62.7 Correspondence**

None.

#### **62.8 Internal Audit**

Mr McCavana presented the updated Annual Audit Plan 2019/20 and noted members' comments in relation to removal of 'Substantial' assurance from the report.

Members noted that 3 Audit reports would be brought to the next meeting of Committee.

#### **62.9 NRC Outstanding Audit Issues**

Mr Lavery updated Committee on progress on outstanding audit issues to 31 October 2019 and advised that these would be monitored throughout the year and addressed on a timely basis. Members noted that all issues from 2016/17 had now been cleared.

The extended target dates for implementation of student services issues were noted and it was agreed that these should be revisited.

**ACTION:** The Head of Quality, Exams & Student Experience will be asked to review target dates and provide an update on the current status of issues and when they will be closed, for the next meeting of Committee.

Mr McCavana noted a number of suggested amendments to the Curriculum Planning report from 2018/19.

#### **62.10 External Audit Update**

Ms Doey reported that only final checks on the audited accounts remained to complete and it was proposed to certify the 2018-19 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modifications.

Ms Doey thanked the Head of Finance and his team for their help in enabling the audit to proceed swiftly. The Chair welcomed the collaborative working evidenced by both parties.

In response to a query by Mr Conliffe, Ms Doey clarified the NIAO's rationale for stating the continued reduction of NRC's income and expenditure reserves was not sustainable in the longer term.

#### **62.11 Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements**

Mr Lavery presented the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements along with a summary of the key points and changes. He thanked the NIAO team for all their diligent work over the past few weeks. Committee noted the published version of the report would be presented to the Governing Body on 13 November, before being lodged with the Department on 29 November, after final NIAO certification.

**Action:** The Audit & Risk Committee to recommend approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements 2018/19 to the Governing Body.

Proposer: Mrs Eve

Seconder: Mrs Allison

The Chair thanked the finance team for their work on this document.

#### **62.12 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report**

Mr Lavery talked members through the draft Audit & Risk Committee annual report and detailed a change which would be made to the final version.

Mr Conliffe highlighted an amendment to the assurance rating detailed for the Sector Wide Review of Hardship, ASF, Care to Learn, which would also be incorporated into the final report.

The report was approved subject to the amendments.

#### **62.13 Risk Register**

Mr Higgins drew members' attention to changes made to the risk register following review on 31 October, in particular in relation to risk 2 – SER/QIP; risk 7 – STS; and risk 8 – Property Division. Committee also noted that the recruitment process for the vacant VP position was currently underway and would be kept under review.

**ACTION:** Mr Higgins would arrange for a heat map of risks to be incorporated into future reports.

#### **62.14 Registers**

Updates to the FOI, Information Governance and Whistleblowing registers were highlighted.

#### **62.15 Any Other Business**

None.

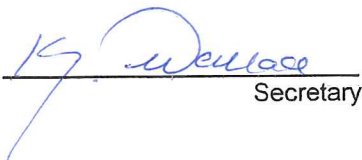
#### **62.16 Date of Next Meeting**

20 February 2020 in Newtownabbey campus.

The meeting ended at 6.50pm.

Mr W McCluggage   
Chair

Date 27 FEB 2020  
27 February 2020

Mrs K Wallace   
Secretary

