

## **NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE**

### **AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 8 November 2017 at Farm Lodge, Ballymena Campus commencing at 5.15pm.

#### **Pre-Meeting with Auditors**

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

**Present:** Dr D Lennox (Chair), Mrs I Allison, Mr W Hutchinson, Mr W McCluggage

**In Attendance:** Dr S Brankin, Mr D Conliffe (DfE), Ms H Hagan – item 54.3, Mr D Hewitt, Mr M Higgins, Mr S Lavery, Mr K Leckey – item 54.4, Ms M McAleer (DfE), Ms C O'Hagan (NIAO), Prof T Scott, Mr N Taylor (GT) – item 54.12, Mr V Taggart – items 54.1 - 54.3

Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

**Non Attendance:** Mrs K Reilly

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and, in particular, Mr Conliffe to his first meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. With members' agreement, the Chair moved item 54.12 to the beginning of the meeting to allow Mr Taylor to leave the meeting early.

#### **54.1 Apology**

Mrs Eve.

#### **54.2 Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

#### **54.12 Internal Audit Work Programme**

Mr Taylor outlined the content of the report that detailed the programme of work in the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 and highlighted the key areas to be addressed in the coming year along with reporting dates.

Mr Higgins proposed that a training programme for internal accountancy staff would be developed by GT following approval by NIFON members. Members were agreeable. Members also noted that a response from NIFON on the STS project was awaited as a potential sector-wide audit.

Committee noted the Internal Audit Work Programme for 2017/18.

Mr Taylor left the meeting at 5.40pm.

It was noted that Ms Hagan would be a few minutes late and Committee agreed to bring item 54.4 forward.

#### **54.4 Health and Safety**

Mr Kyle Leckey, Health and Safety Coordinator, presented an update of Health and Safety as at October 2017. He highlighted a number of issues advising that, although the numbers of work based accidents showed a slightly increased trend, the overall frequency of accidents was well below industry standards.

Members noted that the outcome of audit by the Prince's Trust had returned a score of excellent and audit of Business Continuity had scored as Satisfactory.

Mr Leckey answered a number of members' questions in relation to reporting to the Health and Safety Executive and preparations for decant relating to the capital build project. Members noted that formal risk assessments would be carried out on all proposed decant buildings.

The Chair thanked Mr Leckey for the presentation and he left the meeting at 5.50pm.

Ms Hagan entered the meeting at 5.50pm.

#### **54.3 Complaints**

Ms Hilary Hagan, Quality Assurance Manager, presented an update of Complaints received by the College for the period 2016/17.

In response to members' questions, Committee noted reasons for extended resolution timelines of some complaints and were reassured on procedures for protection of sensitive data.

The Chair acknowledged the marked improvements which had been made in terms of response times and thanked Ms Hagan for her useful report.

Ms Hagan and Mr Taggart left the meeting at 6.10pm.

#### **54.5 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The draft minutes of the last meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 27 September 2017 were considered. Ms McAleer drew attention to an amendment under item 53.13 advising that this item referred to how the format of risk information by individual Colleges was reported.

Committee agreed that the draft minutes would be amended. The minutes were approved subject to the amendment.

#### **54.6 Matters Arising**

The Chair referred to the list of actions raised from the previous meeting and Committee noted that these had all been completed.

#### **54.7 Chair's Communication**

The Chair drew members' attention to the Performance KPI Summary Dashboard and advised that the Governing Body Chair had asked for a view from the Audit & Risk

Committee on its role in monitoring the College's KPIs. The responsibility of relevant Committees in monitoring progress of individual KPIs was noted by members, along with the need for the Audit & Risk Committee to have an oversight role and be advised where progress is flagged red.

Prof Scott referenced the move to MS Office 365 within the College, which would enable a more dynamic and accessible system of reporting.

Committee noted the KPI Summary Dashboard. The Committee's comments were noted and it was agreed that an amendment proposed by Mr McCluggage to reflect changes since the previous report would be incorporated.

#### **54.8 Correspondence**

Committee considered the following correspondence:

- CIPFA Northern Ireland Public Sector Leaders' Conference - members were asked to notify interest in attendance to the Secretary.

#### **54.9 Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements - Audited**

The Chair complimented staff on the final draft version of the Annual Report and financial statements.

##### **i. Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements 2016/17**

This report was taken as read.

Mr Lavery reported that at its October meeting the Resources Committee had discussed and approved the draft financial statements. The draft accounts had since been audited by the NI Audit Office and a revised draft was being presented to the Audit & Risk Committee.

Mr Lavery reported that amendments suggested by members and minor changes suggested by the auditor had been included.

Committee accepted the Draft Annual Report & Financial Statements 2016/17 and agreed to recommend approval to the Governing Body.

##### **ii. Draft Report to those Charged with Governance**

Ms O'Hagan spoke to the draft report circulated which summarised the key issues arising from the audit of the 2016/17 financial statements. She indicated that the audit was complete and the recommendation to the Comptroller and Auditor General would be a clean opinion without modifications.

Ms O'Hagan provided a summary of the four sections of the report.

Section 1 Audit Risks – no significant risks had been identified.

Section 2 Audit Findings – no matters had been raised.

Section 3 Misstatements – details of adjusted misstatements outlined in the report were noted.

Section 4 Other Matters – no issues had been identified.

Committee's attention was drawn to Annex D of the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General which concluded that recommendations in the Tribal Report had been acted on and drawing this matter to a close.

Committee noted the draft Report to those Charged with Governance which would be considered by the GB.

### iii. Draft NRC Annual Report and Financial Statements – design version

Committee considered the initial design of the draft report.

The Chair referenced the excellent achievements of staff and students during the year and Committee noted the awards events which had taken place to recognise these. Members welcomed the opportunity to be involved with the awards and noted that future dates of events would be included in the calendar.

#### 54.10 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report

The Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report for 2016/17 was considered and the Chair referred to a number of minor amendments.

Subject to the amendments, Committee approved the annual report which would be forwarded to the Governing Body.

#### 54.11 Governance and Accountability Notice 17/17 – DfE Whistleblowing Guidance

Committee considered the guidance documents provided by DfE.

Mr Higgins confirmed that NRC's Whistleblowing Policy would be reviewed to ensure compliance with the Departmental guidance.

#### 54.13 Any Other Business

Committee noted that the DfE mid-year Accountability Review had been rescheduled to 9 November 2017.

#### 54.14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee would be held at Newtownabbey campus on 28 February 2018 at 5.15pm.

The meeting concluded at 6.45pm.

Dr D Lennox David Lennox

Date 28/2/2018.

PS M McKeag Chair  
Mrs K Wallace

28 February 2018

Secretary