

NORTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE

Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 7 September 2026 on MS Teams at 10.00am

Present: Mrs Carla McGovern (CMG), Chair; Dr Philip Graham (PG); Mr Brendan Devlin (BD); Mr Sam Snodden (Sam);

In attendance: Mr David Archibald (DA), Henderson Loggie; Mr Mel Higgins (MH); Mr Ian Murphy (IM); Mrs Sinead Scannell (SS); Mrs K Wallace (Secretary)

102.1 Apologies

Mr D MacAuley.

102.2 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were recorded.

102.3 Internal Audit Plan 2026/27

The Committee received and considered the proposed Draft Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2026/27. DA introduced the item and referred members to the proposed changes outlined within the plan. He highlighted that the revisions reflected previous discussions with management and the Committee.

The Committee discussed the planned allocation of audit days and the balance of coverage across key assurance areas. Members queried whether additional audit resource should be directed towards non-financial audit areas and sought clarification regarding areas that had not been audited in previous years. DA explained that where no previous audit date was shown this related to the programme undertaken by the previous internal auditors and acknowledged the areas may have been covered in previous years. MH confirmed the position in respect of previous internal audit reviews. MH and DA advised that additional days can be added at the later point of the year depending on the opinions from the 26/27 internal audit reviews and this will be reassessed during the year.

Curriculum Planning Audit

Members explored the rationale for including Curriculum Planning within the annual plan. Management advised that although curriculum activity is subject to significant scrutiny through Departmental processes, ETI inspections, self-evaluation reports, quality improvement planning, higher education reviews and awarding body oversight, an internal audit would provide additional assurance regarding future curriculum planning arrangements. It was noted that curriculum provision continues to be reviewed regularly in response to changing educational priorities and employer needs.

Discussion also considered how curriculum planning aligns with regional industry requirements. Management outlined the extensive engagement undertaken with employers and provided examples of programme adjustments made in response to industry feedback. Members were assured that evidence of employer engagement and responsiveness would form part of the audit review.

Payroll Audit

The Committee considered the proposed Payroll audit. DA advised that payroll represents the College's most significant area of expenditure and that the review would examine all key payroll processes, including starters and leavers, contractual changes, pension contributions, payroll calculations and associated controls.

MH referred to the forthcoming sector-wide payroll system replacement and whether readiness for implementation should form part of the review. It was agreed that an assessment of preparedness for system migration should be incorporated into the audit objectives where practicable.

CMG raised matters relating to data migration and information security. DA advised that review of migration activity could be added pre-transfer as an objective to finalise the plan.

General Ledger Follow-Up

The Committee considered the scope of the General Ledger Follow-Up audit. CMG sought assurance that the review would address fraud risk, abnormal transactions and the effectiveness of financial controls. DA confirmed that the work would assess journal processing, exception reporting, authorisation arrangements and implementation of previous recommendations. It was noted that some fraud-related testing and transaction analysis would also be addressed through other planned audits.

MH advised that the audit formed an important part of the College's ongoing programme of improvement following previous external audit findings. The objective was to obtain independent assurance that corrective actions had been fully implemented and embedded before the 2026/27 year-end audit process. Members welcomed this approach.

CMG queried implementation of systematic changes and controls. SS provided details of improvements to month-end and journal processing and outlined work to be undertaken by additional resources, to ensure that all processes are embedded.

Procurement Follow-Up

DA outlined that the Procurement Follow-Up review would examine the full procurement cycle from sourcing activity through to contract management. Particular attention would be given to governance, contract management arrangements and any outstanding recommendations from previous audits.

Cash and Bank Follow-Up

The Committee noted that the Cash and Bank Follow-Up review would focus on confirming that previously agreed improvements had been implemented and were operating effectively. Members emphasised the importance of completing this review early in the audit year to support the external audit process. DA agreed to work with management to schedule on-site fieldwork during September or early October.

Follow-Up Reviews and Internal Audit Charter

The Committee noted the inclusion of routine follow-up reviews to monitor the implementation of recommendations arising from previous audits. Members agreed that this remained good practice despite the relatively small number of outstanding actions.

The Internal Audit Charter was also discussed. PG noted that the Charter provided useful guidance regarding the respective responsibilities of IA, SLT and the ARC. DA confirmed that the Charter had been updated to reflect current requirements and would continue to be reviewed annually.

Action: The Committee agreed the proposed Internal Audit Plan 2026/27 and recommended it for presenting to the full A&R Committee on 21 September 2026

102.4 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 21 September 2026.

The meeting closed at 10.52am.



Mrs C McGovern, Chair

Date: 21 September 2026



Mrs K Wallace, Secretary

