

## MINUTES

---

Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee private pre-meeting with External and Internal Auditors held on Thursday 18 November 2021 at 1.45pm via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Susan Mitchell (Chair), Brian Fisher, Evelyn McPhail, Samantha Mowbray

**In Attendance:** David Eardley (Azets), Stephen Reid (Ernst & Young), Rachel Wynne (Ernst & Young), Marianne Philp

### 1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and reminded members that private meetings could be requested at any time by the auditors or by Committee members. Once a year a meeting was arranged to give a formal opportunity to discuss any issues that may have arisen.

### 2 External / Internal Audit Process

The external auditor was offered the opportunity to highlight any issues that may have arisen over the past year and in particular during the audit of the year-end accounts. The external auditor confirmed that there were no issues to raise that could not be covered in the open meeting. The external auditor confirmed that the audit process had gone very smoothly with proactive and positive engagement from all staff involved in the process. This was evidenced by the clean audit report included within the papers. The external auditor highlighted that if the Glenrothes New Build Project goes ahead, having this and the Dunfermline Project may impact on capacity within the finance team, and this should be monitored.

The internal auditor was invited to highlight any issues that may have arisen over the past year. The internal auditor commented that staff involved were consistently proactive and responsive and there were no issues to raise with the Committee.

It was confirmed that the follow-up of audit actions was very positive and the internal auditors had no issues with the approach and priority given by management to progressing with recommendations made.

The Chair commented that it was reassuring to once again hear such positive feedback, and thanked the auditors for their input.

## MINUTES

---

Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2021 at 2.15pm via Microsoft Teams.

**Present:** Susan Mitchell (Chair), Brian Fisher, Evelyn McPhail, Samantha Mowbray

**In Attendance:** Hugh Hall, Susan Dunsmuir, David Eardley (Azets), Stephen Reid (Ernst & Young), Rachel Wynn (Ernst & Young), Marianne Philp

### 1 **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

### 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 9 September 2021**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

### 3 **Matters Arising / Actions Outstanding**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted.

### 4 **Any Emerging Themes**

The Chair highlighted that this agenda item had been added following on from the performance and effectiveness review recently undertaken. It was explained that this was to ensure that the Committee was considering external events since the last meeting which might impact on risk. After discussion, it was noted that there were no emerging themes to consider.

### 5 **Strategic Risk Register Update**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The changes to the risks as detailed in the covering paper were highlighted and noted.

There was a discussion about risk 11. It was noted that whilst this risk was currently seen to be reducing, the situation was fluid and this may change, however it accurately reflected the current position. The Principal gave a brief update on the direction of travel within the sector with regard to Covid and it was agreed that the current approach was appropriate.

As had been agreed at the last meeting, the strategic risk register had been included in the papers, with a hyperlink to the individual risk sheets.

## 6 Internal Audit

### 6.1 Update on Internal Audit Actions: Exception Report

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that everything was on track for completion by the agreed deadlines. On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked all staff involved in this very positive position.

### 6.2 Credits Return 2020-21

The contents of the report that had been circulated were noted. It was highlighted that the report was prepared to meet SFC requirements, and attention was drawn to page 31 of the Boardpack where the sign-off certificate was provided.

It was highlighted that this report stated that the College had not fully met its credit target. This was due to the skills boost additional credits being targeted. The annual accounts stated that the credit target was met and this was based on core activity.

### 6.3 Student Support Funds 2020-21

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. The internal auditor confirmed that the reports for items 6.2 and 6.3 should confirm to the Committee that good levels of assurance that effective arrangements were in place.

### 6.4 Freedom of Information (FOI) and Complaints Management

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Good practice and areas for improvement were outlined on page 38 of the Boardpack. Three recommendations had been made and had been agreed by management.

There was a discussion about the recommendation to report on FOI requests at Board level and after discussion it was suggested it was more appropriate to report to Executive Team. Currently reporting was on an exception basis, but this could be done quarterly in a similar way to complaints. Members suggested that where there was an external impact, it might be useful to give context around this at Board level and it was agreed this could be done on an exceptional basis via an existing report.

A query was raised about the impact on costs or resourcing of subject access requests post GDPR. It was confirmed that the numbers of requests received was low and had not significantly increased post GDPR. However the complexity of requests was increasing. This was not currently posing any issue in terms of costs or resourcing.

**Decision:** To adjust the recommendation about reporting to the Board to include Complaints only, and for FOI activity to be reported to Executive Team and on an exceptional basis to the Board.

**Responsibility:** Internal Auditors

**Deadline:** 3 March 2022



# Fife College

## **7 Draft Audit Committee Annual Report to the Board of Governors**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. Members commented that the report was well written and no issues were raised.

**Decision:** To approve the draft Annual Committee Annual Report to the Board of Governors.

**Responsibility:** Chief Financial Officer

**Deadline:** 8 December 2021

## **8 Requests for Information: Annual Summary**

The contents of the paper that had been circulated were noted. As agreed in the earlier discussion, this report would now be considered and taken forward by the Executive Team and would not become an annual item for the Committee to note.

## **9 Review of Meeting**

Members commented that the reports showed a very positive position for the College and they were reassured that effective arrangements were in place.

## **10 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 3 March 2022 at 3.30pm