

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 18.30 BOTH IN THE DEMONSTRATION THEATRE, NEWRY EAST CAMPUS AND ONLINE VIA TEAMS.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs Hilary Singleton (Chair)
Mrs Geraldine Campbell
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey (via TEAMS)
Dr Eileen Stewart

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Raymond Sloan, Interim Chief Executive & Accounting Officer
Mrs Lee Campbell, Director of Finance and Planning
Mrs Heather Sampson, Dept. for the Economy (via TEAMS)
Mr Brian O'Neill, NI Audit Office
Mr Ryan Lunney, NI Audit Office (via TEAMS)
Mrs Catherine Keenan, RSM UK
Mrs Sinead Lavery, Boardroom Apprentice
Miss Lindsay Armstrong, Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting commenced at 18.28.

Mrs Singleton advised all parties that Members had conducted a pre meeting with Internal and External Auditors and the sponsor Department, without management present, as a matter of good practice and to allow auditors the opportunity to express directly to the Audit and Risk Committee any concerns experienced. No significant concerns were raised.

The Chair proposed an alteration to the running order of agenda items for fluidity of discussions.

A01. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Thomas Moore, Mr Ian McCartney, Ms Laura Murphy and Mrs Sharon O'Hare.

Mrs Singleton advised that Mrs O'Hare was unable to attend her first meeting of SRC's Audit and Risk Committee due to prior commitments.

The Chair expressed her thanks to Mr Matthew Turner for his contribution to the Audit and Risk Committee during his tenure as Staff Governor.

A02. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded Members to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interests held regarding any matters to be discussed.

For transparency, Mrs Singleton reminded the Committee of her declaration in the Register of Interests as Board Member of Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING 12 SEPTEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held on the 12 September 2023 were verified for accuracy and approved as an accurate record on proposal of Dr Stewart and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey.

ACTION BY WHOM

A04. MATTERS ARISING

- **Actions Log**

Members noted items to be closed off and on track for completion in the Audit and Risk Committee Action Sheet.

Mrs L Campbell informed that the NIFON Group have considered college commitments to climate change and ESG. She advised the exposure draft is not expected to be adopted until 2025 and stated that it may be premature at this stage to draft a roadmap.

A05. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Mrs Singleton confirmed that she attended the SRC Committee Chairs meeting on 26 October and had met with the Governing Body Chair, Interim Principal and Director of Finance and Planning to review the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) on 31 October.

The Chair confirmed that she participated in the Education workshop convened on 6 November facilitated by Ms Shackels and Mrs Davison. Members were advised that the papers will be made available in the Governance Common Materials site.

Mrs Singleton advised that she and the Governing Body Chair had met with the newly elected Staff Governors, Dr Finnigan and Mrs O'Hare on 9 November and had agreed committee membership.

Members were informed that the Chair had conducted several pre meetings with appropriate personnel to discuss items to be considered on the ARC agenda. Members were encouraged to review NIAO good practice guides and were informed that an Innovation and Risk Guidance document is currently being developed and will be released April 2024.

Mrs Singleton confirmed that there are additional spaces on the virtual DfE audit and risk training session on 12 December and asked that interested parties advise the Secretary accordingly.

A10. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

- **Trainee and Apprenticeship Management Report (TAMS)**

Mrs Keenan referred Members to the TAMS audit report and informed that the objective of the review was to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of procedures and controls of the current manual workarounds operating for the trainee and management system in place at SRC.

Mrs Keenan advised on one low priority finding and informed on no financial implication.

Mrs Singleton reminded Members that the TAMS audit was prioritised by Members due to the management recommendation to remove from the CRR. All parties expressed their contentment to remove as a risk on the CRR provided that it is appropriately defined within the operational risk register.

A06. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER 2023-2024

Mrs L Campbell advised that the CRR has not been provided to the Committee to allow Members to discuss recommendations and proposed changes for 2023-2024 arising from the September workshop. She informed that once approved, the CRR for 2023-2024 will be updated and presented at the February meeting along with a heatmap and a demonstration of the risk management system.

Mrs L Campbell presented options to merge risks, reword the risk descriptors and update the cause and effects under each category.

Members undertook a detailed review of the proposals which were approved subject to recommendations raised.

A07. DRAFT REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE

Mr O'Neill presented the draft Report to Those Charged with Governance and advised that it is proposed that the Comptroller and Auditor General will certify the 2022-2023 financial statements with an unqualified audit opinion, without modification. He thanked all staff involved for their assistance.

Mr O'Neill advised that there are no adjustments to financial statements, no uncorrected misstatements and no irregular expenditure was identified. He referred the Committee to actions required and advised on no finding of significant risk.

Members reviewed the findings of the audit and remarked on a clean audit. The Committee noted the recommendation in regard to reviewing depreciated assets and were advised that College management are accepting of the recommendation.

Members noted the great deal of work undertaken and thanked all parties. The Committee agreed to schedule an ARC meeting for 19 November 2024 to facilitate the laying of next year's Accounts.

A08. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

Mrs Singleton advised that the draft Annual Report and Financial Accounts for the year ended 31 July 2023 has previously been reviewed by the Governing Body and Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Mr Sloan advised that the Accounts have been further refined in presentation.

All Members provided their endorsement that the Accounts be presented to the full Governing Body for approval.

A09. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

Mrs Keenan referred the Committee to the key messages within the Internal Audit Progress Report and informed there are no findings to categorise and draw to the attention of Members at the time of writing.

Members noted the internal audit plan and other assurance activity.

A10. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

- **RSM Risk Radar July 2023**

Mrs Keenan presented the Emerging Risk Radar Report designed to inform horizon scanning and explained that this categorises risks, namely those that are more prevalent, those to keep monitoring and those worth watching.

Mrs Singleton spoke to a valuable report.

Mrs McCaffrey left the meeting at 19.35.

A11. DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS (DAC)

Mrs L Campbell referred Members to the DAC awarded 9 November 2023 for a contract value of £6,516. She explained that only one provider was identified to facilitate licences for two members of College staff to deliver accredited training programmes.

Members noted the report.

A12. DfE TFE/Apps COMPLIANCE AUDITS

Mrs L Campbell informed of two ongoing compliance audits which are yet to be finalised.

The Committee noted the report.

A13. HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT

Mr Sloan referred Members to the Health and Safety Annual Report, advising that it had been considered by Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee at their meeting in October 2023.

Mrs Singleton commented that it is pleasing that SRC is the first F&HE college in Northern Ireland to achieve the HASMAP standard.

Mr Sloan advised on the eight-year journey to achieve 100% accreditation.

Dr Stewart enquired if there was any scope to re-release the IOSH Leading Safely training to Members of the Board of Governors. Mr Sloan advised that he would progress a refresh of this training for Governing Body Members.

Mr Sloan

In a response to a query from Mr O'Neill, Mr Sloan advised on the Finance and General Purposes Committee Term of Reference to review the insurance history claims of the College.

A14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members agreed that where possible all meetings of the ARC be convened in person at the Portadown campus.

A15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 18.30 in the Boardroom, Portadown campus.

The meeting concluded at 19.51.

signature redacted

19th March 2024.
DATE