AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Audit Committee, held on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 4.30pm via teams

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Lindsey Paterson	Committee Chair
Rena McAdam	Committee Member
Stuart Porteous	Committee Member
Michael Payne	Committee Member

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jon Vincent	Principal
Niall MacPherson	Chief Operating Officer
Tracy Elliott	Interim Vice Principal, Resources & College Development
John Rafferty	Deputy Principal
David Archibald	Henderson Loggie, Internal Auditor
Stuart Nugent	Audit Scotland, External Auditor
Dafydd Jones	Audit Scotland, External Auditor
James Nock	Hefestis (Data Protection) (Left after item 24.43)
Jennifer Hunter	Clerk to the Board

ACTIONS

24.35	Welcome and Apologies L Paterson welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
24.36	Declarations of Interest There were none.	
24.37	Draft Minute of the Audit Committee meeting 29 May 2024. The date-of-next-meeting details on the draft minutes of the previous meeting requires to be updated. Otherwise, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record.	Clerk

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24.38   Matters Arising – Action Grid

Committee members considered the matters arising grid.
All actions have been completed.

J Vincent confirmed that, having discussed the matter of
the certificate of assurance with Glasgow Colleges
Regional Board, there is no need to qualify the certificate.

Items for Discussion/Decision
Systems of Internal Control

24.39   Updated Internal Audit Plan 2024/25

L Paterson invited D Archibald to present the internal
audit plan.
D Archibald having presented his report asked the
committee if they were still comfortable with the scope of
the internal audit plan? S Porteous responded by asking
how the national fraud initiative will be developed.
D Archibald confirmed that Audit Scotland consider wider
fraud risk and that there is a need to understand and
communicate how fraud happens, which the national
fraud initiative will support. The National Audit Scotland
Report will feed into the Glasgow Clyde Report. L
Paterson asked if D Archibald felt that one day was
enough time to undertake the Fraud Prevention,
Detection and Response review? D Archibald confirmed
that he is comfortable with one day as it's a high-level
report. T Elliot added that if any issues arise from the one-
day review, more time could potentially be allocated as
part of the management follow up.

T Elliot offered to share some previous internal audit
reports with the committee members, which may provide
some assurance on the internal controls already in place
at the College. L Paterson agreed.

T Elliot

The committee approved the updated audit plan.

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24.40   Internal Audit Reports (Follow Up & Progress Report)

L Paterson invited David Archibald to present the follow up report and the progress report.

The Follow Up Reviews Report 2023/24 concludes that the College has made some progress in implementing recommendations with sixteen of the twenty-three recommendations which are past the due date being categorised as 'fully implemented'. Five recommendations have been categorised as 'partially implemented' and two were 'consider but not implemented'. The remaining seven recommendations were not past their agreed completion date. The recommendations that have not been fully implemented will be subject to follow up in the next formal Follow Up Review exercise.

Also attached to this report is the 2023/24 Internal Audit Progress Report which summarises the position for the year where all the planned 2023/24 audits have been undertaken with only the annual year end audits remaining which cannot be completed until November.

The committee discussed the follow up report. T Elliot noted that as regards recommendations on page two, it should be either-or, rather than one and two. T Elliot requested one recommendation in future, to stop any confusion and confirmed that the action was implemented.

M Payne asked about the room-bookings software solution. J Vincent confirmed that the management team are continuing to work on a solution. Several options have now been ruled out. L Paterson thanked J Vincent for the update. D Archibald confirmed that he did not think there was a gap in the control environment, there was no control risk, though it was right to continue to follow up the booking software issue.
J Vincent will keep looking for a solution.

J Vincent

The committee considered the follow up report and for context T Elliot offered to circulate the last report that J Rafferty circulated in relation to the Teaching Space Management and Room Utilisation Business Process Review follow-up report. L Paterson to confirm if useful for J Rafferty to attend the next Audit Committee to discuss. J Vincent added that the issue is more around timetabling than it is about lecturer utilisation.

T Elliot
L Paterson/Clerk

D Archibald noted the progress report and concluded that everything is on-track and should complete on time and offered to take any questions. There were none.

L Paterson thanked David for his reports.

Governance and Risk Management

24.41   College Strategic Risk Register

N Macpherson presented the Risk Register and highlighted that it was updated in August and that the format and process have also been updated. Furthermore, N Macpherson has engaged with the insurers and is comfortable that the framework is robust.

The committee discussed the format and agreed that some more information is required for clarity including inserting criteria around some of the wording.

N Macpherson

N Macpherson reported that the Financial Plan Working Group is underway; and that the senior leadership team realignment is now complete.

As there is no additional funding support from the Scottish Funding Council, Glasgow Clyde have chosen the less expensive solution (of the two) to deal with the issue of RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete). The committee should note that a climate change fund that had been available has also recently been closed by Scottish Government.

L Paterson requested information as regards the risk appetite level, which is set as open. N Macpherson provided background and agreed that having only one level of risk could be a struggle and noted that we may move away from one overall level. L Paterson asked for risk appetite levels to be discussed at the next meeting. D Archibald noted that HM Treasury have guidance on risk appetite, there are thirteen risk topics to choose from.

Clerk

L Paterson asked N Macpherson to let the Board know that Audit Committee will be looking at Risk Appetite in November.

N Macpherson

24.42   Climate Change Action Plan Update

L Paterson invited T Elliot to provide an update on the Climate Change Action-Plan. T Elliot provided a detailed report and noted that the team are currently considering mapping the curriculum to Sustainable Development Goals and are weighing up the merits of applying for a Green-Gown award.

T Elliot noted that a key development during 2023/24 was the submission of a Scottish Government Energy Efficiency Grant scheme pre-capital funding application for £60k to progress the feasibility stage to enable the College to plan for future sustainability projects.

This funding application was successful, and the resultant Feasibility Study has since been completed and was presented to the Executive Management Team in March 2024. The College has been working with the related agency, GEP Environmental, to prepare a capital bid for circa £2.6M to progress proposed plans for the decarbonisation of the ancillary buildings on the Langside campus.

However, on 21 May 2024, the Scottish Government announced that they were closing the fund due to high demand.

Therefore, the College will submit a capital application as soon as the Scottish Government reopens the application process.

Since the original Climate Change Action Plan was created, significant progress has been made on most of the actions in the plan and, as such, it is now time for the College to reflect on what has been achieved to date and what actions it should now seek to take forward. The plan will continue to be developed as new actions are identified.

Clerk

24.43

L Paterson requested that the annual report should cover this item.
The committee noted the report.

Data Protection Update

L Paterson invited James Nock to present his report on data-protection.
J Nock noted progress and learning around Artificial Intelligence. A resource has been developed to include a new AI Information and Training Resource, it contains a wealth of knowledge and is available to all staff on Canvas. The eLearning team have also created a bespoke course for students - this will enable students to understand what AI is, how they can use it ethically, and provide a shared understanding of the college's approach to using AI.

N Macpherson

It is recommended that the college considers the information in place on the JISC AI Tools website (see AI Tools - Artificial intelligence (jiscinvolve.org)) which provides concise information about a wide range of AI applications currently in use. The college should be aware that many of these applications have age restrictions in place which limit use to those over the age of 18 years which could limit their use by students.

N Macpherson

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| | N Macpherson |

L Paterson asked if we should add AI to the risk register?
J Vincent agreed AI should be added.

J Nock reminded the committee that staff should be trained to spot a data breach regularly.

J Nock left the meeting.

24.44

Review of Policy 2.4 Anti Bribery Fraud and Corruption
N Macpherson highlighted proposed changes which are shown as tracked changes. L Paterson asked if everyone was happy to accept the tracked changes? The tracked changes were approved. T Elliot noted that all policies were previously on a five-year cycle for review, and as such N Macpherson may need to gain Board approval to increase the regularity of policy reviews.

N Macpherson

Items for Information/Noting

24.45 Internal and External Audit Rolling Action Plan
There were no questions, the action-plan was noted.

24.46 Audit Scotland Report: The National Fraud Initiative 24
T Elliot noted that this report should be included every two-years on the Committee schedule of works.

Clerk

24.47 Audit Committee Schedule of Work 2024/25
M Payne asked J Hunter to cross reference the schedule of works with the remit document agreed in March 2024.

Clerk

24.48

External Audit Progress Report 2023/24 (Taken at item 20:40).
S Nugent reports no significant issues. Assessment have come up Green under national fraud initiative. S Nugent is currently considering how the college fulfils its requirements under the equalities act, and how it reports on equalities outcomes.
L Paterson thanked all for inputs to the meeting.

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24.49   Any Other Business:

There was none.

Date of next meeting: 20 November 2024 at 4.30pm