

## West Lothian College

28 November 2019

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### Audit Committee

Minute of Meeting of the Audit Committee held on **Thursday 12 September** at 9.30am in the Principal's office.

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)  
Simon Ashpool  
Colin Miller  
Claire Probert

In attendance: Jackie Galbraith (Principal & Chief Executive)  
Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services)  
Alex Linkston  
David Eardley (Scott-Moncrieff, Internal Auditors)  
Ruth Holland (Mazars, External Auditors)  
Emily Purdie (Health & Safety Officer) to item 19.34 only  
Karine McNair (Board Secretary)

### Campus Visit

The meeting began with a visit to the areas of the Street Building which had been renovated over the summer break. The Committee were impressed with the changes and pleased that staff were finding the changes an improvement.

#### 19.30 Welcome/Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Claire Probert as it was her first meeting of the Audit Committee. Apologies were received from Simon Earp.

It was also noted that Norman Ross had resigned from the Board and as a result, was no longer attending the Audit Committee meetings. The Committee formally noted their thanks to Norman for his contribution to the Audit Committee over the years.

#### 19.31 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 19.32 Minute of Meeting of 6 June 2019

The Minute of the meeting of the Audit Committee of 6 June 2019 was approved as a correct record.

**19.33 Matters Arising from Minute of Meeting of 6 June 2019**

All actions were duly completed and noted.

**19.34 Health & Safety Quarterly Report**

The Health & Safety Officer presented Paper 3 highlighting that the number of incident reports had slightly increased from the same period last year but no actions arose at the most recent Health & Safety Committee meeting.

It was reported that the College had been put on a 'watch list' by the Fire Service as a result of a number of false alarms. The Fire Service visited the College and approved all areas and procedures of the College with no actions arising.

The Committee were concerned that the company in charge of overnight security had not informed the College of any false alarms sounding while under their responsibility. The Health & Safety Officer confirmed that the Facilities Manager has since met with the company and ensured that all parties are aware of the procedure to inform College staff and that more regular meetings will be scheduled to reiterate the message. The Committee were reassured that the company were fulfilling the essential aspects of their contract by checking the buildings were safe and resetting the alarm and welcomed the assurance that the communication issues to the College were being resolved.

It was acknowledged that there was not a process whereby a false overnight alarm could be set to test the processes with the external company without alerting the Fire Brigade and putting the College on a black list. The Health & Safety Officer undertook to ensure that communication with the security company was reviewed as part of the normal meeting process with the company.

**Action 1: Health & Safety Officer**

The very first All Site evacuation had been tested with staff and was reasonably successful. It was treated as a training exercise for staff without the responsibility of students being present and was an important learning exercise for all involved. The Health & Safety Officer delivered training to all staff and the information is included in the HR induction for all new staff.

Training has been delivered to staff involved in 'Lone Working'. The Health & Safety Officer agreed to speak to the Student Association and library staff to see how the alarm system was working within the Student Association office and if they would benefit from de-escalation training.

**Action 2: Health & Safety Officer**

The Health & Safety Officer undertook to contact Epilepsy Scotland to discuss possibilities for further workplace training for first aiders and relevant staff.

**Action 3: Health & Safety Officer**

The Committee welcomed the news that a silver 'Healthy Working Lives' award had been applied for and thanked the Health & Safety Officer and colleagues for their hard work over the summer to finalise the submission.

The Committee thanked the Health & Safety Officer for a very interesting report.

**19.35 Internal Audit Reports**

**(i) Workforce Planning**

The Internal Auditors presented paper 4a noting that good assurance had been gained for workforce planning and they were impressed with the work on succession and future work profile.

The Committee noted that the number of completed Personal Learning Plans ("PLP") fell short of 100% and the Principal noted that this was tracked through the Quality Report at the Learning & Teaching Committee. The deadline for 2019-20 PLP completion is mid-October and the Committee requested an update to the number of completed PLPs at the November meeting.

**Action 4: Head of Quality & Learner Services**

**(ii) Commercial Strategy**

The Internal Auditors presented paper 4b noting that the College had a robust strategy which was subject to regular monitoring.

The Committee discussed the limited opportunities for Colleges to secure 'true' commercial contracts and the circumstances in which a sales margin of less than 40% would be acceptable.

It was noted that the Internal Auditors had recommended more 'SMART' targets for schools activity in a previous report and the same recommendation was made for the commercial strategy. It was acknowledged that the College will try to implement more 'SMART'

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targets where possible and that generally more specific targets underline the policies being reviewed by the Internal Auditors.

### 19.36 External Audit Progress Report 2018-19

The External Auditors presented Paper 5 commenting that the fieldwork was due to start on 3 October. The Committee were also updated with any relevant reports and changes to the Audit processes. One significant change is the requirement to pre-submit the adjusted operating position before the draft accounts and it is hoped that resources have been allocated to the new process to avoid any significant delay for finalising the accounts.

It was felt that some of the Committee were uncomfortable with the technicalities of pension liability valuations and corresponding adjustments in the accounts. On balance, the Committee felt that there was sufficient expertise across the group of Committee members to share collective responsibility for the scrutiny of the figures and assurance was to be gained from using a reputable professional actuary firm.

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services offered to circulate a guidance note from the professional actuary firm.

#### **Action 5: Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services**

The Committee suggested that the College may wish to send test spam emails to staff to check who was in need of further cyber security training.

#### **Action 6: Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services**

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services confirmed that the College have a register of high value and low value/high desirability assets which is checked annually.

### 19.37 College Audit Rolling Action Plan

The Committee were satisfied that good progress was being made against the College Audit Rolling Action Plan.

### 19.38 Review of IT Service

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented Paper 7 noting that the improvements to the Wi-Fi had been particularly well received by staff and students.

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The Committee considered the advantages and possible disadvantages of linking with Napier University for disaster recovery and back-up. It was thought that the project had some promising aspects and the College should consider the potential complications of extracting West Lothian College from the arrangement if required in the future.

### 19.39 2019-20 Strategic Risk Register

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services, presented paper 8 and the Committee hoped that the Risk Appetite Workshop on Tuesday would also inform the Risk Register.

In the meantime, the Committee considered that the currently identified risks were appropriate and they did not think it was necessary to add any additional risks. Some adjustments to the ratings were agreed;

Strategic Risk 1 – Likelihood reduce to 2

Strategic Risk 2 – no changes recommended

Strategic Risk 3 – Likelihood reduce to 3, Impact increase to 5

Strategic Risk 4 – Likelihood reduce to 2

Strategic Risk 5 – Impact increase to 5

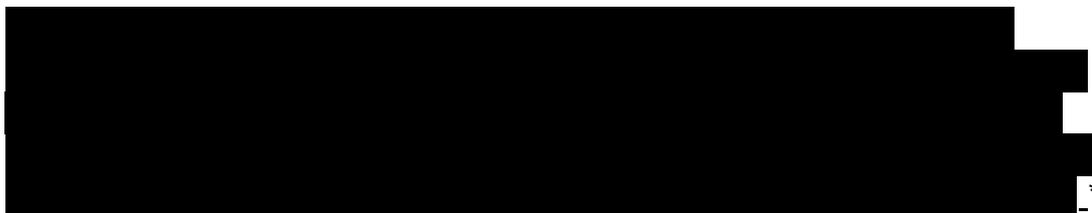
Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services undertook to make the changes to the Strategic Risk Register.

#### **Action 7: Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services**

### 19.40 College Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2018-19

Vice Principal, Finance & Curriculum Services presented paper 9 noting that the final figures will be subject to some minor adjustments.

### 19.41 College Sector Intelligence



### 19.42 Any Other Business

The Principal announced that the College were nominated for a number of Green Gown Awards, Diversity Awards and the CDN Awards.

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There were no items of other business.

### 19.43 Review of Meeting, Supporting Papers and Training Needs

The Committee requested a visit to the Motor Vehicle centre at the start of the next meeting since this was the area with the new instructor role and investment had been made in an electric car.

The Audit Committee was content with the meeting and supporting papers

### 19.44 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 28 November at 9.30am.

Note: There were no matters discussed during the meeting, during which Members declared any conflict of interest, or the Secretary to the Board was aware from the Register of Interests that discussion could give rise to such a conflict.

Signed .....  
Chair, Audit Committee

Date .....

\* Redacted under s.33 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act