

West Lothian College

1 December 2022

Audit Committee Meeting of 15 September 2022

Present: Sue Cook (Chair)
Jackie Galbraith (Principal)
Richard Lockhart
Vee Toyi (Staff Representative)
Seonaid Crosby

In Attendance: Jennifer McLaren (Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services)
Simon Earp (Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement)
Sarah-Jane Linton (Vice Principal, Learning and Attainment)
Bill Dunsmuir (Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure)
Emily Purdie (Health and Safety Officer)
Beth Brownlee (Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources)
Ruth Holland (Mazars, External Auditors)
Gillian Callaghan (Azets, Internal Auditors)
Jenny Stalker (Board Secretary and Governance Advisor)

1 Committee Administration

An on-line pre-meeting was offered between 12.30 and 13.00 pm to allow committee members to informally meet members of the college Enquiries and Admission Team. However, due to a technical issue, committee members could not link into this meeting.

The Chair asked that any future presentations are included in the agenda and conveyed apologies to the staff team. The pre-meeting will be scheduled for the next meeting.

Action 1: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor to re-schedule meeting for 1 December 2022

The Chair discussed the need to recruit additional committee members to ensure meetings are quorate. The Principal noted that the Learning and Teaching Committee has more committee members than required and it may be possible to move members onto other committees.

Action 2: Board Secretary and Governance Advisor to review membership

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1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the first formal Audit Committee meeting of 2022-23. Ruth Holland (Mazars External Auditors) and Gillian Callaghan (Azets Internal Auditors) were also welcomed. The meeting was held on line to facilitate member attendance.

Apologies were received from Alex Linkston and Colin Miller.

1.2 Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations of Conflicts of Interest.

1.3 Minutes of Meeting of meeting of 23 June 2022

The minutes were approved as accurate.

1.4 Matters Arising

The committee noted that all actions are complete.

2 Matters for Board Attention

Risk Register 2022-23:

The Board will see the new format Risk Register for 2022-23, including management scoring, for the first time at the meeting on 20 September 2022. It was agreed that Richard Lockhart will present the Risk Register at this meeting.

Action 3: Richard Lockhart to present Risk Register at Board meeting on 20 September 2022.

3 Matters for Attention

3.1 Infrastructure and Cyber Security Update

The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure gave an overview of the key projects and developments that have been taking place and highlighted key points detailed in Paper 3.

In particular, the committee's attention was drawn to the level of investment made in the college digital infrastructure, resulting benefits for staff and students and improvements to cyber security.

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3.1 (i) Infrastructure and Cyber Security Report

The large scale, digital infrastructure server replacement project was successfully completed over the summer holiday period. The project was completed smoothly and with no reported negative impacts for end users.

The committee was asked to note the deadline for complete Disaster Recovery at the Whitehill Service Centre has been pushed back to 31 October 2022 due to required firewall amendments. The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure informed the committee that local backups at the Civic Centre and within the IT team are in place and college security is assured.

The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure reported on work done to develop a revised Cyber Security Risk Register and the challenges this has presented. Progress has been good and a further report will be brought to the next Audit Committee meeting on 1 December 2022.

The Committee commented favourably on the report and praised the whole team for this important work. The Committee also commented on the importance of maintaining our Cyber Essentials accreditation.

Action 4: The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure to further report on progress at the 1 December 2022 Audit Committee meeting.

The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure discussed developments being carried out to the current Power BI data analytics tool.

The committee discussed information currently gathered through Power BI and whether data analytics would be improved for equalities monitoring and reporting. The Principal reminded the committee that we do currently gather equalities data but that presentation of the data will be improved through development of the dashboard. The Head of Information Systems and Digital Infrastructure confirmed that staff will be consulted on requirements during the development phase.

3.2 Health and Safety Update – Quarterly Report

The Health and Safety Officer presented the Health and Safety quarterly report.

The Health and Safety Officer informed the committee that we did not achieve the Healthy Working Lives award. Our submission was not considered as this award will no longer exist from April 2023.

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The committee flagged a concern that our Zurich Employer Liability Insurance expired in July 2022. The Health and Safety Officer confirmed that the college has new Liability Insurance in place which expires July 2023.

The committee noted the report.

3.3 Internal audit

Progress against plan and reports:

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 6 and highlighted key points from the paper. The committee was asked to note completion of the Student Support Services review. The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services discussed the revised Internal Audit programme for 2022-23 and explained the rationale for the change to the programme agreed in September 2021.

The committee approved the removal of review of poverty funding and replacing this with a review of quality assurance processes.

The committee was content to approve the revisions to the Internal Audit programme for 2022-23 and noted the reporting timeline.

3.3 (i) Student Support Services

Gillian Callaghan (Azets Internal Auditors) presented the Student Support Services Report which confirms the college has satisfactory arrangements in place for student support. The report is a positive one overall. Gillian Callaghan discussed the identified areas for improvement to:

- develop a Student Support Policy
- develop a plan for mental health and wellbeing projects to take account of emerging change with regard to funding

The Principal informed the committee that the Student Support Policy was taken to the Learning and Teaching Committee of 7 September 2022 and had been approved. This action was now complete. The Principal also confirmed that the recommendation on funding was being embedded through funding allocated to supporting student mental health and resilience. The Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources highlighted the Wellness Recovery Plan and Mental Health Plan which will be mainstreamed through the work of the existing student support team.

The committee commented favourably on funding being allocated to mental health work and the positive manner in which this was being used. The

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Head of Quality, Student Support and Learning Resources flagged the early and high uptake of student support relating to mental health issues.

3.3 (ii) **Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-22**

Gillian Callaghan (Azets Internal Auditors) discussed the report findings, positively noting the college has achieved the highest possible outcome of “reasonable assurance” from the audit. Any recommendations made are of a minor nature and 75% of follow-up recommendations have now been fully completed.

The committee commented positively on the report and acknowledged the outcome of “reasonable assurance” was an excellent result for the college.

3.4 **College Rolling Audit Action Plan**

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 7 detailing progress made on the rolling action plan. The committee was asked to note the actions that are on target for completion.

The committee noted the paper and was content with progress made to September 2022.

3.5 **External Audit Progress Report**

Ruth Holland (Mazars External Auditors) presented Paper 8: External Audit Progress Report. The committee was asked to note the Audit Plan and progress detailed on page 3.

Ruth Holland (Mazars External Auditors) informed the committee that a revaluation of land and buildings would normally be carried out within a 5 year period and that it is appropriate to carry out an interim revaluation of land and buildings as at July 2022. The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services agreed that an interim revaluation is appropriate and would address current material value uncertainty.

Ruth Holland (Mazars External Auditors) informed the committee that audit work would commence on 17 October 2022 through a mix of remote and on site work with a reporting timeline of December 2022.

The committee thanked Mazars for the explanation on revaluation and, on this basis, agreed the revaluation is appropriate.

The committee queried the college position with regard to possible lack of capital funding for backlog maintenance. The Vice Principal, Finance and

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Corporate Services confirmed the college does not have any backlog maintenance.

The committee was content to note the paper.

3.6 **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Freedom of Information (FOI) update 2021-22**

The Vice Principal, Finance and Corporate Services presented Paper 9 detailing comparative figures for 2021-22. The committee was asked to note the numbers.

The committee noted the paper.

3.7 **Key Performance Indicators**

3.7 (i) Complaints Report

The Vice Principal Performance and Improvement presented Paper 10 which was presented using an updated format. The committee was asked to comment on the format for future reporting.

The committee felt the content presented a useful snapshot but would like to see more contextualization around numbers presented to include identified trends and comparisons between West Lothian and other colleges.

The committee was concerned that the use of the term “staff behaviours” in reporting categories was too negative. The Principal stated a complaint is related to negative behaviours so the use of the word is appropriate but that we could examine the wording used by other colleges. The committee noted that staff and students should be held to the same account so whatever word is used should be used for both staff and students.

Action 5: The Vice Principal, Performance and Improvement to explore wording used across the sector to inform any necessary change to our reporting.

The committee noted that future reports should contain trend analysis.

The committee was content that this report format should be used for future reports.

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4 Matters for Information

The committee flagged the report published from College Development Network – Pathways from Poverty: Colleges for Communities September 2022, for information.

Gillian Callaghan flagged the Scottish Funding Council deadline of 7 October 2022 for audit reporting.

5. Any Other Business (AOB)

The Chair requested that Richard Lockhart present the Risk Register to the Board meeting of 20 September 2022 as she will not be in attendance. Richard Lockhart agreed.

6. Review of Committee and Supporting Papers

The committee noted that the meeting was chaired well and had gone very smoothly despite time constraints. The Chair noted the need to review the number of committee members to ensure we are quorate.

The committee was content that papers were well presented and sufficiently detailed.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is on 1 December 2022

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

Signed
Chair, Audit Committee

Date