

1. PRESENT

Andy Atkins, Chris Pett and Sandra Williamson.

Also in attendance: Janet Hemmant (Clerk to the Corporation), Debbie Holland (Vice Principal: Finance & Corporate Services), Charlotte Robinson (Head of Finance) and Jonathan Creed (ICCA).

Apologies for absence were received from Heather Lee.

Attendance: 60%

2. PRESENTATION – ANTI FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

Jonathan Creed of ICCA gave a presentation which included information of the responsibilities of members of the Audit committee and Corporation as well as identifying key areas of risk.

It was noted that the Anti Fraud checklist in the Audit Code of Practice will be helpful as the college develops its strategy and it was agreed that a link to this should be shared with members. It was also agreed that an item for reporting any fraud or corruption should be added to the Audit committee's meeting agendas.

3. ACTION LOG AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKING

Members reviewed the committee's action and recommendation tracking logs and noted progress made.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 were reviewed and approved as a correct record.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT

Jonathan Creed presented reports to the committee:

a) Safeguarding including the Prevent Duty

Jonathan explained that the audit gave Substantial Assurance with two recommendations, one low priority and one advisory, which had positive management responses.

Chris Pett asked about the effect of staff changes in this area and Jonathan advised that these seemed to be well covered. A discussion took place about governors' DBS checks. Whilst not technically required, they are carried out on appointment and it has recently been agreed that checks will be repeated at the time of any reappointments.

b) Apprenticeship Delivery Model

Jonathan identified that this audit also gave Substantial Assurance and made three recommendations, two low priority and one advisory. All had positive management responses.

Members were advised that learner progress was better than for most providers in the circumstances. It was noted that the 16 week review period was longer than most, this is typically 10-12 weeks. Timely achievement has generally been affected by the pandemic. The number of learners out of funding is low.

It was noted that there was no staff incentivisation to reach apprenticeship targets. The model could be reviewed to see if it is the most suitable. ●

Sandra Williamson asked how the learner progress checking and reviews impacted on finance and whether the risk of learners being out of funding was an issue. Andy Atkins queried how performance was tracked over time. It was agreed that the Standards committee should be asked for confirmation that it is monitoring apprenticeship performance. ●

Chris Pett asked whether the fluctuating value of apprenticeship work was an accurate reflection of volume and it was confirmed that it was. Andy commented that it was good to see that achievement rates had remained consistent.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Members received a report from the Vice Principal: Finance and Corporate Services on Risk Management which highlighted changes in risk ratings.

Members reviewed the contents of the Risk Register and detailed information on the most significant risks.

Andy Atkins asked whether risk management was reviewed by auditors regularly and Jonathan confirmed that it had been looked at relatively recently. It was noted that there are many common risk factors across colleges and staff recruitment is a particular issue for the sector at present.

Sandra Williamson asked if the risk register could be cross-referenced to identify changes and how connections are made with overall strategic risks. Jonathan Creed pointed out that the risks are not cross-referenced to the college's strategic objectives. It was agreed that Jonathan would provide some examples to Debbie Holland which could address these points. ●

7. NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would take place on 16 June 2022.