

MINUTES OF THE FIFTY NINTH MEETING OF THE AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2021, COMMENCING 1130.

PRESENT;

Mr S Gillespie, Committee Chair
Ms M Breslin
Mr P Canavan
Mr G Killeen
Prof M Ó Néill
Mrs L Taggart

IN ATTENDANCE;

Mr L Murphy (Principal & Chief Executive)
Mr P McKeown (Director of Finance)
Mr I McCartney (Internal Auditor, RSM)
Ms E Mahon (PwC)
Mr D Conliffe (DfE)
Ms K Beattie (NIAO)
Mrs É Doherty (Governance Secretary)

Due to restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic all members and attendees were joining the meeting via video conference.

59.1 WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Committee Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting had full attendance.

59.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS/DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no declarations of any other business. Mr P Canavan noted reference within the papers of Invest NI, FinTrU and Learning Cities that he is involved with, however he considered there was no conflict.

59.3 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 26 MAY 2021**➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Draft Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 26 May 2021

The Draft Minutes were taken as read and agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

PROPOSED; Ms L Taggart

SECONDED; Mr G Killeen

59.3.1 MATTERS ARISING – May 2021 Committee Meeting

58.4 Whistleblowing Policy – The Committee Chair reported that some of the Sector Colleges had retitled their Whistleblowing Policies. He recommended a change to the College Policy to, 'Raising Concerns Policy'.

For clarity a suggestion was made to reference the Policy for a period of time to, 'Raising Concerns Policy' (formerly known as the Whistleblowing Policy). Members were in agreement with this.

PROPOSED, Mr G Killeen

SECONDED, Mr P Canavan

58.5 Training Workshop – National Cybersecurity Centre – The Committee Chair advised he will follow up on this matter.

Risk Model – The Finance Director will provide a verbal update on the risk model under Agenda item 59.5, Report 4.

58.7 External Audit – The revised timetable is provided within the papers for this meeting (Ref 59.7, Report 1, page 6)

58.4 The completed Self-Assessment Exercise 2020/21 was sent to members on 8 July 2021.

59.4 COMMITTEE CHAIR'S BUSINESS

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1 Review of Committee's Terms of Reference

Report 2 Internal Audit review – Summary of Recommendations – Cyber Security Update Report

Members were content to approve the Committee's Terms of Reference with no amendments.

PROPOSED; Mr P Canavan

SECONDED; Mr G Killeen

Report 2 Internal Audit review – Summary of Recommendations – Cyber Security Update Report

The Director of Finance confirmed that since the Report was issued the remaining action had now been completed.

The Committee Chair then invited Mr P McKeown, Director of Finance to present his report to members.

59.5 MANAGEMENT REPORT, Mr P McKeown, Director of Finance

➤ **PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS**

Report 1 Draft Annual Report & Accounts to 31 July 2021

Report 2 Direct Award Contracts Report

Report 3 Prompt Payment – verbal report

Report 4 Draft Risk Model – verbal report

Report 5 NIAO National Fraud Initiative Self-Assessment Checklist

Report 5.1 NFI Exercise 2020-2021

Referring to the Annual Report & Accounts Year Ended 31 July 2021 the Director of Finance stated that these were in draft form. The final draft will be submitted to the Department (DfE) on 24 September 2021. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Accounts Direction and relevant accounting standards. The Resources Committee will review an updated draft at their Committee meeting on 20 September 2021.

The Director of Finance reported on further developments to the ongoing matter relating to the Working Time Regulations/holiday pay matter and the provision of this within the Financial Statements.

Continuing on, the Director of Finance reported that there were no Direct Award Contracts. Prompt Payment figure for 30 days to 31 August 2021 was 97% and for the year ending 31 July 2021 was 95%.

The Director confirmed that the Risk Management Report 2021/22 (1) is due with the Committee at their November meeting. Detail on the proposed new risk model will be included within this paper.

Referring to Report 5 and 5.1, NIAO National Fraud Initiative Self-Assessment Checklist and NFI Exercise 2020-2021. The College is a member of this biennial exercise to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. The report showed 207 data matches (Report 5.1). Following an investigation no issues were noted.

In concluding, the Director of Finance reported that following a Departmental (DfE) request an additional internal audit review will take place in respect to the COVID-19 Student Disruption Funding Scheme.

The Committee Chair thanked Mr P McKeown and invited Mr I McCartney, Internal Auditor to report to the Committee.

59.6 INTERNAL AUDIT

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

- Report 1 Annual Internal Audit Report & Opinion – Year Ended 31 July 2021
- Report 2 Internal Audit Plan 2021-2022

The Internal Auditor referred to the Annual Internal Audit Report & Opinion – Year Ended 31 July 2021 and confirmed that no further changes had been made to the draft Report that was presented to members at the May 2021 Committee meeting (Ref 58.6, Report 4). This report stated that overall, there is a satisfactory system of governance, risk management and control within the College.

In reference to the Internal Audit Plan 2021-22 the Internal Auditor reported that the only amendment to the Plan for 2021-2022 was the addition of the Review on COVID-19 Student Funding Initiatives, previously mentioned by the Director of Finance (Ref Item 58.5). This extra piece of audit work added an additional five days to the Plan plus additional fees. This review will be brought to the next Committee meeting. The Internal Auditor reported that the Internal Audit Service is required to

have an external quality assessment every five years. This will take place in November 2021 and any issues raised in this assessment will be brought to the Audit & Risk Committee. Members were content with the Plan.

The Committee Chair thanked Mr I McCartney and welcomed Ms E Mahon, External Auditor (PwC) to report to the Committee.

59.7 EXTERNAL AUDIT

➤ PREVIOUSLY ISSUED TO ALL MEMBERS

Report 1 Audit Strategy 2020/21 Revised Timetable

Discussion took place on the Timetable which had been revised to allow the timely issue of the RTTCWG to the Audit & Risk Committee and the Governing Body meetings in November.

59.8 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to note.

59.9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no any other business to discuss.

The Committee Chair thanked everyone and the meeting ended at 1155.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 2 November 2021

Signed;



Mr S Gillespie, Committee Chair

Date; **2 November 2021**