

Board of Management

MINUTES of the MEETING of the AUDIT COMMITTEE held in the Boardroom, Main Campus, on Tuesday 1 March 2016

PRESENT: Hazel Allen, Elaine Harris, Louise James, Lindsay Mitchell
CHAIR: Hazel Allen
APOLOGIES: Steve Walsh
ATTENDING: Principal
Depute Principal
Interim Director of Corporate Services
Director of Organisational Development
Stuart Inglis, Henderson Loggie
College Secretary

1. MINUTES

a) Audit Committee held on 24 November 2015

The minute was **AGREED** as a correct record and was approved and signed.

b) Joint Audit/Finance and General Purposes Committee – 3 December 2015

The minute was **AGREED** as a correct record and was approved and signed.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT

The health and safety policy statement required to be reviewed by the Board annually and signed by the Chair and the Principal. There were no changes to the current statement.

The Audit Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Board of Management the annual health and safety policy statement for approval.

3. WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

A covering report by the Quality Officer assured the Committee that the Waste Management Policy had been progressed in line with the college requirements for new policies. The policy was necessary to ensure that Inverness College UHI was meeting (and exceeding where possible) legislative requirements on waste management. It was noted that the annual sustainability report would include information on the monitoring of waste.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the waste management policy to the Board of Management for approval.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - STUDENT EXPERIENCE – QUALITY / STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

A report by Henderson Loggie provided the committee with the findings of their audit on Student Experience – Quality / Student Recruitment and Retention. The review focused on the controls in place to mitigate the following risks on the College's risk register

- Failure to meet activity targets and

- College fails to maintain improvement in performance against national targets and outcomes

There were two parts to the scope of the review, namely,

- Quality, which looked at the college's preparations for the March 2016 Education Scotland inspection and
- Student recruitment and retention, which reviewed the policies and procedures in place relating to student recruitment and retention, covering the role of Student Services, Marketing, MIS and Academic Schools.

The overall level of assurance gained in both objectives was Good and there were no recommendations in the action plan.

The Committee were pleased to note the clean audit report and congratulated the Principal and her team on this achievement.

The Committee considered the two very distinct areas which had been reviewed as part of a single audit.

It was **AGREED** that Henderson Loggie would split the report into the two distinct audit areas and reissue as two separate audit reports. The two reports would be circulated to the Committee and with an action for the Chair to approve the two documents.

There was also a request that the annual audit plan be issued to the College at an earlier date than had been the norm so that the SMT could consider the proposed audits and the scopes therein in advance of the plan being submitted to the September Audit committee meeting.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services provided an update of risk management and business continuity within the college. The most recent version of the risk register which had been agreed by the SMT at their meeting in February 2016 identified 11 strategic risks, with the two highest risks (red) being the reduction in HE unit of resource and the financial instability of UHI.

The Committee **REQUESTED** that an additional sentence be added to the actions to mitigate risks column under the item "Financial Instability of UHI" so as to make reference to the monitoring of performance of other colleges.

A copy of the UHI Corporate risk register had been included in the report for information. As at December 2015 there were 53 red risks across the partnership.

The Interim Director of Corporate Services advised that the business continuity plan for the college was in the process of being revised in recognition of the move to Beechwood, as well as the move from the old Balloch buildings to the new building.

One of the key changes was in terms of the new ICT infrastructure and this was shown in schematic form within the report. The college was now in a much stronger position in terms of connectivity and the next steps would be to improve this even further with the move of the JaNET connection from Ness Walk and to facilitate

automated switchover. Further work was also being undertaken at Balloch to ensure that it too had better connectivity and improved capacity.

The committee **NOTED** the report.

6. ICT SERVICES REPORT

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services provided an update on the activities of the ICT Services department. The core ICT services were functional, at both the Inverness Campus and the School of Forestry, but work was still on-going to provide a fully working and stable ICT. Key works carried out within the last quarter, as well as a number of issues still outstanding were highlighted within the report.

The report also made reference to the procurement of a UHI Intranet solution, or student portal, the UHI wide initiatives which were ongoing to improve the ICT services and student experience across the partnership as well as the current position with regard to shared services and records management.

The Committee **NOTED** the report and **REQUESTED** that the SMT review the content of the report with only the key ICT risks to be included for the next Audit committee meeting in May.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

A report by the Health and Safety Manager provided the Committee with a quarterly update on matters pertaining to health and safety for the period 1 November to 31 January 2016.

During Quarter 2 there were 25 reported Accidents/Incidents/Near Misses compared with 26 for the same quarter last year. There were 4 near miss reports, 6 incidents and 14 accidents. Of the Accidents/incidents and near misses reported, 2 were of a serious nature with one RIDDOR reportable injury.

The review of the Health and Safety Matrix had been put on hold pending the start of the new permanent Health and Safety Manager towards the end of March.

Quarter 2 had seen some ongoing issues with the new Campus but these were becoming fewer. Work had started to develop the Health and Safety Management System with updates to the Fire Management Plan and First Aid Procedures. Improvements had been made to the system where templates for Accident Reporting and Risk Assessment were now being shared on IConnect and further improvements to this were planned.

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

8. STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT 2014/15

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services highlighted the main issues relating to the 2014/15 financial statements for the Student Association.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Student Association Accounts for 2014/15.

9. OUTSTANDING AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

A report by the Interim Director of Corporate Services provided an update of the progress made on the outstanding internal audit recommendations since the previous Audit Committee in November 2015. Only 1 outstanding recommendation remained from the total number for 2014/15

Of the follow-up report on outstanding recommendations, 14 were fully implemented, 8 partially implemented, there was little or no progress made on 1 and 1 recommendation had been considered but not implemented.

The Committee **NOTED** the position and **REQUESTED** that the report be included in the "for Discussion" section of future meetings.

10. DATA PROTECTION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, COMPLAINTS AND PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

A joint report by the College Secretary, Quality Manager and Information Development Manager provided an annual update on activity relating to data protection, freedom of information, public interest disclosure and complaints at Inverness College.

The Committee **NOTED** the report

11. MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEES

The Committee **NOTED** the minutes of the meetings of the following academic committees: -

- a) Health and Safety Committee - 15 December 2015
- b) ICT Steering Group – 2 November 2015
- c) New Campus Steering Group – 8 December 2015

12. UHI AUDITS

The Principal referred to a previous discussion regarding the alignment of the college audits to the UHI audit programme. She was disappointed to have to report that UHI were still sending auditors directly into the college without first advising any member of the SMT of the audit process. In addition, the college was not receiving a copy of the final audit report.

The Committee **AGREED** that the Chair would write to the Chair of the UHI Audit Committee stating that the college was disappointed that the agreement to both inform the College of audits to be carried out and to provide a copy of the audit report was not being honoured.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 24 May 2016 at 8.30 a.m.

Signed by the Chair: _____



Date: _____

24/5/16