**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 8 MARCH 2023 AT 4.30PM.**

The meeting was held via teams.

PRESENT:
David Watt   Committee Chair
Fiona Godsman   Committee Member
Sunita McKenna   Committee Member
Clare Walker   Committee Member
James Olatoke   Co-opted Committee Member
IN ATTENDANCE:
Jon Vincent   Principal
Janet Thomson   Vice Principal, Resources & College Development
Tracy Elliott   Assistant Principal, Finance and Infrastructure
David Archibald   Henderson Loggie, Internal Auditor
Stuart Nugent   Audit Scotland, External Auditor
Graham Francis   Data Protection Officer (for Item 23.11 only)
Kirsty Mavor   Clerk to the Board (Minute Taker)

ACTION

23.01 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES
D Watt welcomed everyone including S Nugent, Audit Scotland who was attending his first GCC Audit Committee meeting. Apologies were noted from M Payne.

23.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were no declarations of interest.

23.03 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 23 NOVEMBER 2022
The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

23.04 MATTERS ARISING – ACTION GRID
The Committee noted the updates on the Action Grid with most of the actions either complete or on the agenda.

Items for Discussion/ Decision
Systems of Internal Control
23.05   INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2022/23 PROGRESS REPORT

D Archibald of Henderson Loggie spoke to this item and confirmed that the internal audit plan is on track. The first review which will be presented to the May Committee meeting commences next week and there will be three reports.

23.06   INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT/STUDENT ASSOCIATION

D Archibald spoke to this report which concludes there is a good level of assurance in this area with no recommendations. He confirmed that all areas were functioning well and recognised the unique approach of the College in including student Board members on Committees.

The Committee welcomed the positive internal audit report, noted the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the Student Association and acknowledged the efforts made by all to ensure this happens. The Committee was also satisfied that a variety of approaches were taken by the Student Association to try and engage with all students.

STUDENT FEES AND CONTRACTS/REGISTRY

This report concluded that there is a good level of assurance in this area meaning that the system meets control objectives and no control weaknesses were identified. There were no recommendations in the report.

The Committee discussed whether there was scope for more automation in the process. It was noted that the College is always looking at ways of being more efficient but this area can be complex with staff knowledge playing a vital role. The Committee also recognised that the human side of the process helps maintain a positive relationship with students.

CYBER SECURITY

The Cyber Security internal audit report concludes that there is a satisfactory level of assurance in this area meaning that the system meets control objectives with some weaknesses present. There are two low and two medium priority recommendations in the report.

D Archibald confirmed that overall it was a positive report with recommendations made in relation to cyber security training for both staff and students and ensuring that suppliers meet the minimum standards expected in relation to cyber security.

It was noted by the Committee that steps were being taken to include cyber security training in student induction and training would be provided to staff at the learning development days held in June.

T Elliott advised that the supply chain is being looked at by APUC within framework agreements. It was agreed that an update should be provided to the Committee on how this was progressing.   **TE**

23.07 **BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEWS: TEACHING STAFF AND ROOM UTILISATION UPDATE**

J Rafferty presented the second update to the Committee in this area following the Business Process Reviews in 2022. He advised that the College first approached this by improving existing processes and the

communications in both areas. Training has been delivered to staff including on the behaviours expected around booking rooms etc to ensure that the existing approach works as efficiently as it can.

The College has also looked at different automated products and shared knowledge with different Colleges on what is available within the sector. There is no 'off the shelf solution' and any system will require a degree of development work to ensure it delivers what the College needs.

The Committee thanked J Rafferty for this helpful update, noted progress and agreed that one further update should be provided to this Committee before the deadline of December 2023.

JR

Governance and Risk Management

23.11   DATA PROTECTION UPDATE

This item was brought forward to allow G Francis to join the meeting and provide his first data protection report to the Committee. G Francis introduced himself to the Committee, provided details of his background and an overview of the work he has been carrying out for the College since commencing his role.

It was noted by the Committee that it had be a slightly quieter period in relation to data activity but it was satisfied from the report that the appropriate processes were in place with regard to subject access, right to be forgotten and third-party requests and that deadlines were being met. The Committee asked for an update in the next report on DP related issues across the sector.

GF

23.08   COLLEGE STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

J Thomson presented this report and advised the risk profile of the College remains the same as reported at the last meeting with three areas with a high residual risk score after mitigating actions, five have a medium residual risk score and five have a low residual risk score.

The only change being that the highest-ranking area of risk is now (i) failure to manage financial sustainability through the period of the financial plan followed by (ii) implications of national bargaining and possible negative impact on employee relations and (iii) failure to achieve SFC credits target and clawback of funding

With regard to risks (i) and (iii) specific papers will be presented at the next Board meeting. The Principal will also provide an update in his report on the position in relation to pay awards.

The Committee asked J Thomson to consider whether the risk register adequately captures the risks associated with Anniesland campus and whether risk 4 should be updated to refer to cyber security training.

JT

The Committee thanked J Thomson for the update.

23.09   CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

J Thomson presented this item and updated the Committee on progress up until 27 February 2023. The emissions data included in the papers has been simplified in response to the Committee's request.

J Thomson confirmed that when the College signed up to the Scottish FE sector Net Zero Commitment in October 2021 there were four elements to the commitment (Pledge, Plan, Proceed, Publish). A fifth element has now been added: 'Persuade' which set out the commitment "within 12 months of joining, align external policy and engagement, including membership in associations, to the goal of halving emissions by 2030 and reaching global (net) zero by 2050".

The Committee noted the update and thanked J Thomson.

23.10   COLLEGE ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE

J Thomson presented the College Assurance Framework which included the updated College Assurance Mapping. The Committee previously suggested that the framework could also include a mapping process against the quality framework produced by Education Scotland of "How Good is Our College?" J Thomson confirmed that this has now been completed and is shown under assurance areas 17 to 19 in the assurance mapping.

The Committee considered that the financial regulations should move to **JT** first line. It was agreed that this update should be made before this was discussed further at the November meeting.

23.11   DATA PROTECTION UPDATE

This item was considered earlier in the Agenda.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION AND NOTING

23.12   INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT ROLLING ACTION PLAN

The Committee noted the report which provided an update on the implementation status of previous internal and external audit recommendations.

23.13   AUDIT SCOTLAND FEES

The Committee noted the external audit fees increase of 57%. The Committee expressed its concern and disappointment with the timing of this significant increase when the College sector is facing considerable financial challenges. J Vincent is to check with the Principals' Group **JV** whether there has been any sector wide response to this fee increase.

23.14   AUDIT COMMITTEE SCHEDULE OF WORK 2022/23

The Committee noted the schedule of work. The Schedule of Work for **KM** 2023/24 will be provided at the next meeting.

23.15   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
There was no other business.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING
4.30pm on Wednesday 31 May 2022.
via teams.