

WQE & Regent College Group

Minutes of an Audit Committee Meeting held at the University Road Campus

1 October 2019

Commencing at 5.00 pm

Governors Present:

Philip Parkinson, Chair
Wayne Allsopp & Alistair Lockhart-Smith

In attendance:

Carolyn Davies (Associate Principal - Finance, Operations & Resources),
Dawn Haywood (notes)

Apologies for absence

Sarah Fox & Peter Butcher (Clerk)

The Chair informed members of Simon Catchpole's resignation from the Corporation and consequently from the Audit Committee, and the Committee recorded its thanks for Simon's service. The Chair also informed members that Sarah Fox would very likely be stepping down from the Audit Committee due to conflicting demands, and this may be permanent or a leave of absence for one year. Members were happy to agree a leave of absence for Sarah, if that was her preference, on the condition that the other vacancy created by Simon's resignation could be filled.

1. Appointment of Chair for 2019-20

It was unanimously agreed that Philip Parkinson be appointed Chair of the Committee for the academic year 2019-20.

2. Declarations of interest with respect to any item on this agenda

None.

3. Minutes - Paper 001

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

STANDARD ITEMS

4. Ongoing Matters – Paper 002

- The Committee agreed to revisit/restart the Training & Development Plan in March.
- Carolyn noted that two pieces of work on the External Assurance Plan had been completed already and reports would be brought to the December meeting.

5. Governor Training & Development

No training needs were identified beyond those already included in the annual training & development plan.

OVERSIGHT OF FINANCE, RESOURCES AND ASSETS

6. Alerting the Corporation

a) Regularity Audit Return

Carolyn explained the purpose of the regularity audit and introduced the Self Assessment Questionnaire, noting that the first two columns were pre-populated by ESFA and that she had completed the others. The document had already been reviewed by ELT and this was the Committee's opportunity to challenge any of the responses before the Return went to Corporation. Carolyn noted that a major change in the questionnaire this year was the shifting of responsibilities to the Corporation and members discussed this particularly in relation to the prevention of fraud and financial irregularity 'of any sort'. Carolyn explained the College's internal controls in this respect, including the assurances that the Committee receives from the ELT each year, prior to the approval of the statutory accounts, in relation to the operation of the College's internal controls. Members were satisfied that robust processes were in place. Carolyn reminded members that the External Assurance Plan gave the Committee a chance to ask for external assurance on any matters of concern. It was noted that the questionnaire would be released to the Auditors in draft on commencement of their audit and would then go to Corporation in December. The Committee was satisfied with the College's responses and supporting evidence and

RECOMMENDED that the Corporation be **alerted** to this matter and the Corporation Chair be authorised to sign the document.

b) Latest Management Accounts

Carolyn introduced the accounts, noting that they were the same set that had been presented at the last Corporation meeting.

The draft Management Accounts for the year ended July 2019 were noted.

c) Annual Health & Safety Report

Carolyn introduced the report, which summarised activities in the area of Health & Safety over the last academic year. The report was discussed in depth, with particular reference to lockdown procedures and site security. Accidents and incidents continued to be few in number, with none being RIDDOR reportable. It was confirmed that staff and students were encouraged to report near-misses and that follow-up actions were taken in these cases where appropriate. Members also considered the proposals for 2019-20, noting that these were very comprehensive. The focus this term on occupational health and wellbeing was discussed and members were pleased to see that a package of support measures was being developed for staff at this time of enormous change and increasing pressures. The Committee congratulated ELT on this approach. Members thanked Carolyn for the report and

RECOMMENDED that the Corporation be **assured** that the Committee has reviewed the 2018-19 Health & Safety Annual Report and is satisfied that good progress continues to be made.

d) Update on External Assurance work

Carolyn informed members that the College had recently undertaken a mock phishing attack and intended to follow this up with some training. A report would be submitted to the next meeting. The schedule for the other external assurance work to be carried out this year would also be submitted to the next meeting.

ROUND-UP

7. Any other business

None.

8. Confidentiality

None.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 3 December 2019, 5.00 pm at the University Road campus.

The Meeting closed at 6.15 pm

Signed:.....Chair Date:.....