

**Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 5pm in FO27 with participation by teams.**

Present: Denise Rollo (In the Chair); Lee Todd; Val Pallister  
Norma Boyes

By teams: Elaine Clinton

Apologies: Robert Milburn (Chair)

Also present: Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal); Jane Murray (Clerk)

By teams: Karen Rae; Marc Harvey

**01/24 Chair**

**Resolved** – (with the apologies tendered by Robert Milburn) that Denise Rollo chair the meeting.

**02/24 Minutes**

**Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**03/24 Declarations of Interest**

None received.

**04/24 Internal Audit: Apprenticeships and Delivery Model**

The internal auditor presented the report into apprenticeships strategy and delivery model which had provided reasonable assurance.

He noted that 214 reviews of progress were flagged as overdue at the time of the audit, 55 as amber and 149 as red. This could be contributing to out of funding issues. He continued to note that at the time of the audit, 120 learners were out of funding and was recommending analysis of those out of learning to ensure the most accurate picture (noting that some were connected to EPA

issues). The final recommendation was to ensure that there was audit sampling in the course of the learner journey to that any issues can be tackled in a timely manner.

The Deputy Principal concurred that reviews should not be going over and noted that 180 were over on the date of the meeting. She had been spending some considerable time reviewing the position with managers and there were a mixture of reasons.

Weekly monitoring meetings were taking place looking at apprentices overdue. It was the case that some managers had inherited issues from the care sector which continued to be covid related and there were legacy issues in other areas. Planning for EPAs was challenging as there were no guarantees that this could take place 'in time'.

In respect of sample auditing, there was a drive for greater efficiencies, which would release some resource for more auditing. It was asked whether the End of March 2024 deadline for this last recommendation was realistic and hoped that it could be following the latest round of review meetings.

The Deputy Principal also noted that a bid had been submitted with Kendal College for apprenticeship workforce development. Many colleges were in a similar position and it was hoped to have the work funded which she had wanted to carry out in any case.

The Committee acknowledged the work which was going on and looked forward to updates through the tracking report.

## **05/24 Risk Register**

The Committee considered revisions to the risk policy arising from a previous audit and agreed to recommend the revisions to the board.

The risks had been reviewed and noted by the committee, particularly increased and emerging risks.

The challenge of attracting appropriate staff, in spite of various strategies, continued to be a challenge, with a need to pay more to attract the right candidates.

Agreed –

To recommend the amendment to the risk policy to the Board

To recommend changes to the risk register to the Board

### **06/24 Fraud Risk**

The Deputy Principal presented a Fraud self-assessment which had been advised in a previous audit. This has been a very thorough exercise and complemented the Fraud Response Plan.

This was welcomed by the Committee, who noted some extreme (external and local) examples of fraud in recent months and the external auditor highlighted the potential of fraud through AI.

### **07/24 Audit Tracking Report**

The Deputy Principal noted progress against actions from previous audits. She was leaving apprenticeship sign up dates open until a mock funding audit for this year had been completed.

Other outstanding actions had either been cleared in the course of this meeting or had arisen from the internal audit report, with the exception of the Fixed Asset Register reviews which were due to be completed in February 2024.

### **08/24 Financial Recovery Plan**

The Financial Recovery Plan had been tabled and considered by the Board earlier in the month. It had been tabled to the Committee should there be any further reflections or questions. The committee had no more questions to ask.

**The meeting closed at 1815h.**