

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee of Lakes College West Cumbria, held on Monday, 8 February 2010 at 12.30pm in the Boardroom.

Present: Paul Pharaoh (Chair); Norma Boyes; Andrew Oldham

Also present: Rick Wylie; Sarah Graham; Sue Turner (Internal Auditor Manager, RSM Tenon); Martin Ward (External Auditor, Partner, Dodds & Co).

Staff present: Cath Richardson (Principal); Karen Wilson (Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services); Jane Murray (Clerk to the Governors).

01/10 New Governors

New Governors Rick Wylie and Sarah Graham were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair. It was hoped that they would be willing to formally join the Committee meeting following the March Board meeting.

02/10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The Deputy Principal informed Governors that the petty cash reconciliations in the annual accounts had been to the cashbook and not to the nominal ledger. This had been added to the reconciliation process.

Drawing attention to the Internal Audit Annual Report, the Clerk reminded Governors that the contract for the internal auditors was due to expire in July 2010 and that a tender process would be required. Governors were asked to confirm that they were content to carry out a joint process on a collaborative basis with Kendal and Furness Colleges (Carlisle had elected to extend their contract with their existing provider).

The efficiency savings the joint procurement process was expected to realise were estimated as being in the region of £8,000 per annum based on previous experience.

Resolved – that a joint tender process with Kendal and Furness Colleges be carried out.

03/10 Declarations of interest

None received.

04/10 Imageproof Annual Accounts 2008-09

The annual accounts were received and noted. While there had been some discussion previously as to whether the company should be wound up, it was generally agreed that there was merit in holding on to the company pending deliberations on the future of CCL.

05/10 Internal Audit Progress Report

The Internal Audit Manager advised that RSM Bentley Jennison had merged with the Tenon Group plc on 30 December 2009. Other than cosmetic changes, the service delivery to clients would remain unchanged.

Two reports had been finalised thus far, and there were no issues which required to be brought to the Committee's attention.

A further audit was in progress and the next visit was to commence in March 2010, which would complete the audit plan for 2009/10 as agreed.

Agreed – to note the report

06/10 Internal Audit Report : Human Resources – 'Staff Productivity'

The Internal Audit Manager advised that the Committee could take substantial assurance that the controls are effective and there were no recommendations made.

The Committee noted that the ambitious target of 99% for staff productivity this year and wondered whether this was not overly ambitious, particularly as the previous year's achievement of 94% was considered high.

It was accepted by staff present that this was perhaps an ambitious target and this would be reviewed at the end of the year.

It was questioned why staff productivity measures were only for academic staff. It was explained that software and timetabling enabled productivity to be measured this way in the sector, and that there were other ways in which staff productivity in the support areas could be measured.

Agreed – to note the report

07/10 Internal Audit Report: Student Records – “Recruitment to Enrolment”

The Internal Audit Manager also advised the Committee that they could take substantial assurance from the audit carried out on the recruitment to enrolment process.

There had been two recommendations made which merited attention: a few gaps in the recording of information and that the Higher Education data was not recorded in line with that for Further Education. An action plan had been put in place to remedy this.

The committee was also reminded that the admissions policy for the coming academic year was being revised. The key objective of the changes to the policy were to ensure that those enrolling were on the right course at the right level with the right support.

Two instances of good practice had been identified during the audit, which included the way regular reporting on conversion rates to Senior Management Team and the use of consultants to survey those prospective students where conversion had not taken place.

Agreed – to note the report

08/10 Audit Recommendations Tracking Report

The Deputy Principal reminded the Committee that her tracking report was more detailed than in previous years taking account of the minor shifts in emphasis in the this year’s audit plan.

In particular she informed the Committee that CIS were subject to spot checks to ensure the timely return of changes to student data and smarten the process further. The use of PCs in the Learning Resource Centre continued to be monitored and it was being investigated whether the a link could be developed between the LRC bookings and the EBS System.

An online process was being developed for the return of staff induction materials and this was now closed off. With the assistance of the external auditor, it was felt that the process could be smartened up and revised processes had been agreed with respect to the cut off and close down procedures on SAGE.

Agreed – to note the report

The meeting closed at 2.00pm.