

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL COLLEGE HELD ON MONDAY 09 MARCH 2026 AT 17:30 IN CONFERENCE SUITE PORTADOWN CAMPUS OR VIA TEAMS

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mrs Hilary Singleton, Chair
Mrs Geraldine Campbell
Mrs Patricia McCaffrey (TEAMs)
Mr Andrew Sloan
Mrs Sharon O'Hare (TEAMs)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Thomas Moore, Governing Body Chair (TEAMs)
Mrs Lee Campbell, Principal/Chief Executive & Accounting Officer
Miss Joanne McGuigan, Interim Director of Finance & Planning
Mrs Pauline Wilson, Dept. for the Economy (DfE) (TEAMs)
Mr Tomas Wilkinson (NIAO)
Ms Fiona Cullen (NIAO)
Mr David Archibald (Henderson Loggie) (TEAMs)
Mrs Emma Foster Secretary to the Governing Body

The meeting commenced at 17.30

Mrs Singleton welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Actions

A01. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were made for this meeting.

A02. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The Chair reminded Members to declare at the commencement of the meeting any conflict of interests held regarding any matters to be discussed. There were no declarations of conflict of interests. Dr Moore stated he attends this meeting as an observer as agreed by the Chair of the Committee.

A03. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2025

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) held on 18 November 2025 were reviewed for accuracy and approved as an accurate record, subject to the proposed amendments suggested by Mrs Singleton. The minutes were approved by Mrs O'Hare and seconded by Mrs McCaffrey.

A04. MATTERS ARISING

Mrs Singleton took members through the each of the matters arising within the action log.

- Members to be updated on current climate change guidance/best practice, College actions and any associated risks
This action will remain open until the report has been submitted at the end of March 2026. Until that date a verbal update will continue to be provided to members of this

committee. An annual sustainability report will continue to be presented to the Governing Body

- Members to undertake Raising Concerns training
Once training has been fully approved staff and members of the Governing Body will be able to complete this training. This action remains open until the training course has been issued.
- A skills audit to be issued from the secretary to all members for completion by Friday 20th March.
The Secretary has issued the skills audit to members on 05 March 2026. This action is now closed
- Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) members are to be updated in respect of recent procurement legislative changes
This was covered by Ms McGuigan at the recent Governing Body Strategy Day in February 2026. This action is now closed
- Management to update ARC on the Risk and Control Environment encompassing services outsourced to external providers.
This date for completion has now been extended to September 2026 when an update will be provided to the Committee
- A sector AI framework to be shared with the ARC members.
This date has now been extended by one year to June 2027 to allow the framework to be drawn up and agreed.

A05. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Mrs Singleton informed members she recently met with the Principal/Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Secretary to the Governing Body to discuss this meeting's agenda. Since the previous meeting Mrs Singleton also met with the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss Governing Body business.

Mrs Singleton also welcomed Mr Wilkinson and Ms Cullen to their first Audit and Risk Committee meeting with the College.

On 17 February 2026 Mrs Singleton attended the Governing Body Risk Workshop and Strategy Day at the Portadown campus, which she found to be very informative.

She also attended on 4 March 2026 a Government Internal Audit Agency webinar which covered topics including managing public money, risk management and the role of the internal and external auditors.

Mrs Foster will upload the resources from this event to SharePoint for all ARC members.

A06. POLICY APPROVAL

Mrs Foster

- a) Risk Management**
- b) Gifts and Hospitality**

Members approved these policies, subject to a number of amendments, as part of the policy review cycle. Members' attention was drawn to revisions made to the Risk Management Policy to reflect discussions at the recent Governing Body Strategy Day and Risk Workshop.

Approval of these policies were proposed by Mrs G Campbell and seconded by Mr Sloan.

A07. Corporate Risk Register and Heat Map

Ms McGuigan took members through each of the risks on the risk register, discussions took place and members were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Ms McGuigan informed members of a recent meeting of the Risk Management Group within the college on 02/02/26 in which they reviewed the corporate risk register. Additional controls and new Horizon scanning risks have been added. Members noted this.

In respect of Corporate Risk 13 "Inability to respond to Trade Union Industrial Action", Mrs L Campbell informed members that the senior staff pay offer has not progressed since the last summer. This has now been escalated with the Department and may be reflected in an increase in the risk score at the next review by the Risk Management Group. Any further updates will be brought to the next meeting.

Ms McGuigan noted there have been no changes in the residual risk score from August 2025. Members agreed to add an additional risk to the horizon scanning regarding the recent increase in energy costs. Mrs L Campbell reassured members that all risks stated are within appetite.

A08 Report to Those Charged with Governance 2024-2025 Final

Members noted the report.

A09. NIAO UPDATE AUDIT STRATEGY

This item has been deferred to the next meeting.

A10. Internal Audit Report Progress Report

Members noted the report.

A11. Internal Audit Reports

- **Procurement & Creditors/Purchasing**

Members noted the (good) assurance rating in respect of this internal audit report. Auditors identified a number of areas of good practise and provided assurance that procurement arrangements and contracts are working well. Effective controls were also noted to be in

place in relation to approvals of purchase orders, payments of invoices and controls in respect of changes to supplier bank details.

Members agreed the layout of the report was easy to follow. Everyone thanked Mr Archibald for his work in this report. Further audit progress reports on areas including payroll, room utilisation and curriculum planning and quality of teaching and learning will come to the next ARC meeting on 05 May 2026 once completed.

A12. DfE Group Reporting Instructions 2025-2026: Correspondence for Year Ending March 26

Members noted the contents of this letter from the Department setting out the information required from the College for the DfE group accounts for 2025-2026. Members noted the deadline for submission of year end requirements is 30 April 2026.

A13. Audit Recommendations Monitor

Members noted progress in respect of implementation of audit recommendations. Only two recommendations remain outstanding, and these are on track for completion by the agreed dates.

A14. Cyber Incident Report January 2026

The committee was informed that all staff have recently been retrained in mandatory cyber and data security courses.

Cyber Essentials was re-certified on 11 February 2026 and the College is working towards Cyber Essentials plus being re-certified in March 2026. The College holds the Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation which is the result of continuous improvement to processes and work practices relating to Cyber Security. Achievement of this accreditation is underpinned by a range of security initiatives, including updated policies and processes

A15. National Fraud Initiative (NFI) Oct 24 Report

Ms McGuigan noted that a 100% check on matches has been carried out. All records are now closed with no incidents of fraud identified.

The committee noted that the college will be participating in the next NFI exercise, due to start in October 2026.

A16. Direct Award Contracts

There has been no Direct Award Contracts since the committee last met.

A17. DfE Compliance Audits

Ms McGuigan confirmed that the latest report had been received the previous week, no issues nor concerns were raised.

A18. Climate Control Update

Mrs L Campbell informed members that the data required for the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs portal is ready for inputting once the portal opens. Staff were thanked for their work in compiling the information.

A19 DAO Correspondence

a) DAO 06/25 Judicial Review Process Guidance

Members noted this letter which highlights the good practice identified in the NIAO's 2023 report on 'Judicial review process in Northern Ireland' with regards to the oversight of legal challenges.

A20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Singleton thanked Ms McGuigan for all her work with the Audit and Risk Committee and for her valuable contributions to the College. Dr Moore also expressed his thanks to Ms Mc Guigan for her dedicated service and wished her all the best for a happy and well-deserved retirement.

A21. REVIEW OF MEETING

Members were content with how the meeting was conducted and thanked the staff and Mr Archibald for the papers presented at this evening's meeting. Members passed on best wishes to Ms McGuigan

The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 05 May at 17:30 Hybrid meeting either in the Conference Suite Portadown Campus or via TEAMS

Mrs O'Hare, Mr Wilkinson and Mrs Cullen left the meeting at 19.30

The meeting concluded at 19.30



CHAIR

16.06.26

DATE