

Minutes of the 11th Audit & Risk Committee meeting

Date: Friday, 6th September 2024

Time: 11am, via MS Teams

Chairperson: Mr Jim Bergin

Attendees: Mr Kevin Lewis
Mr Sean Quigley
Ms Kathleen Holohan
Dr David Dempsey (Observing)

Apologies: Ms Nora Widger
Ms Imelda Buckley

In attendance under the Code of Governance:

Ms Elaine Sheridan, VP Governance/University Secretary

In attendance for Agenda Items, 3, 4 &:

Ms Sarah Morrissey, Risk & Compliance Officer

In attendance for Agenda Item 3.3:

Mr Cormac O'Toole, VP Finance/Financial Controller

In attendance for Agenda Items 3.1 & 3.2:

Ms Brenda Nelson, Deloitte

In attendance for Agenda Item 6:

Ms Mary O'Doherty, H&S Manager
Mr David Buckley, Estates & Facilities Manager
Mr Paul Quirke, Capital Projects Manager

Secretariat: Ms Annette Byrne

Item Title	
1.	<u>Chairperson's Opening:</u>
1.1	<u>Welcome & Approval of Agenda</u> NOTED The Chairperson welcomed all in particular Dr Dempsey, noting his attendance in an observing capacity pending upcoming changes to the structure of the Audit & Risk Committee. Following brief introductions and confirmation that the meeting was quorate the Chairperson commenced the business of the meeting.

<p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p> <p>1.4</p>	<p><u>Conflict of Interest</u> NOTED The Chairperson asked members if they had any conflicts of interest to declare particularly associated with items on the meeting agenda. No members present declared a conflict for this meeting.</p> <p><u>Approval of Minutes</u> AGREED It was agreed to approve the minutes of 13th June 2024 and publish them on the website.</p> <p><u>Matters arising (Action Log)</u></p> <p>NOTED Action Log, minor amendment regarding tender for risk management software package and to remove items that have progressed or been closed out.</p> <p>NOTED Ms Sheridan referred to the existing Terms of Reference for the committee noting that it would be more appropriate to review same and amend where necessary once a new Chairperson is in place.</p> <p>NOTED Ms Sheridan updated the committee regarding progress on the appointment of an Internal Auditor and plans to develop an Internal Audit unit for the University noting a transition period from the current external provider.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><u>Risk Matters:</u></p> <p>NOTED In the absence of Ms Green, Ms Sheridan updated the committee regarding the above focusing on matters as reviewed and discussed by the Executive Management Team at their meeting earlier in the week. She outlined the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk appetite reviewed in detail and some areas re-scored; work is ongoing in this regard and amendments will be brought back to the ARC in due course; • If scores of risk are not in line with appetite these are referred back to the relevant department for mitigating controls or actions; • Functional risk registers have indicated serious/extreme risks for specific departments however these have not necessarily been deemed serious in terms of the strategic risk register by EMT. <p>Training on Risk Management is being arranged for the Executive Management Team. Ms Sheridan also outlined changes since the last review including new and closed risks, the risk management plan for 2024/25, emerging risk regarding state aid which has been added to the Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p><u>Internal Audit:</u></p> <p><u>ESG Governance</u> NOTED Ms Morrissey and Ms Nelson joined the meeting. Ms Nelson commenced by outlining the audit scope, findings, recommendations, and management responses pertaining to a review of governance and oversight over ESG initiatives. Mr Lewis noted that although the report is quite beneficial, the overall area is at an infancy stage and therefore some observations are not necessarily relevant at this time. Ms Sheridan referred to the recent appointment of an Associate VP for Sustainability who is currently putting plans and reporting in place. The committee indicated their satisfaction will same particularly the comprehensive nature of the management responses and approved report as presented</p> <p><u>Facilities contract management</u> NOTED Ms Nelson drew attention to the above report noting the possibility of changes pending management responses. She outlined a number of moderate and minor recommendations to assist in enhancing the existing approach to facilities contract management across all campuses. The committee noted this particular report indicating that it will be reviewed once again once management responses are included. The Chairperson thanked Ms Nelson and she left the meeting.</p>

3.3	<p><u>Cash Handling report - Update</u></p> <p>NOTED Mr O’Toole was welcomed to the meeting and provided a verbal update regarding progress on the above matter. He indicated that there have been a number of meetings conducted with relevant people in recent days and he awaits a formal report on same from Deloitte. The Chairperson thanked Mr O’Toole and proposed that a meeting might be dedicated to the matter once findings and recommendations are finalised rather than waiting for the next scheduled meeting of the committee.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Follow-Up Report (In-house)</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms Morrissey provided an update in relation to the above noting items open and due for implementation as at 31 August 2024. In doing so she provided an overview of open recommendations, the status of implementation and areas where management have deemed items implemented however are subject to review by Deloitte in their upcoming Follow up assignment. Ms Morrissey also presented details of processes being developed to assist the implementation of open items. It was proposed to invite individual VP’s and senior management to meet with the committee at future meetings, in particular the recently appointed VP for People, Culture and EDI.</p>
4.	<p><u>Internal Control Framework:</u></p>
4.1	<p><u>ICF 2023/24</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms Morrissey continued by outlining the process that has been undertaken regarding the annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control noting the participation and input from 26 managers who have identified action plans to address internal controls and to implement improvements. This has also been reviewed and agreed by the Executive Management Team. In providing detail related to the process, Ms Morrissey requested that the committee notes the report as outlined which will assist them in reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control later in the year in order to provide an opinion to the Governing Body on the effectiveness of the system of internal control.</p>
4.2	<p><u>Internal Control Questionnaire</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms Morrissey referred to a paper outlining the responses and comments received to the above questionnaire. The matter has been reviewed in detail by the Executive Management Team and information relating to the matter of cash handling has been included. This process and documentation will assist in capturing the requirements of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Statement of Internal Control (SIC) in due course.</p>
5.	<p><u>Protected Disclosures Update:</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms Morrissey provide a report on the status of Protected Disclosures which indicates that two matters remain ongoing. The Chairperson thanked Ms Morrissey and she left the meeting.</p>
6.	<p><u>Health & Safety (Safety Statement):</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms O’Doherty, Mr Buckley and Mr Quirke were welcomed to the meeting. Mr Buckley commenced by updating the committee on the annual review of the Safety Statement which has comprised of an extensive review and consultation with staff groups and unions. A number of comments and observations have been put forth and therefore incorporated as appropriate. He then requested recommendation of same prior to submission to the Governing Body for final approval.</p> <p>AGREED The Audit and Risk committee recommended submission of the updated Safety Statement to Governing Body for approval.</p> <p>NOTED Ms O’Doherty continued by presenting details of the development and progress of local safety statements which have been issued to all departments across the university. This particular initiative has led to the monitoring of KPI’s and full implementation and reporting on same will be forthcoming by the</p>

	<p>end of the academic year. Training has been extended out to all management with positive feedback, a new webpage has been launched, an integrated safety software package has been purchased which will lead to effective management of accidents and assessments and a draft crisis management plan is in progress to identify key people. The committee welcomed the development and progress being made in terms of Health and Safety across the university. The Chairperson in assisting with achieving KPI's, offered to facilitate a session with an external representative group that have expertise in this field and have been through similar processes. He thanked all for their attendance and they left the meeting</p>
7.	<p><u>FOI/GDPR update:</u></p> <p>NOTED Noting the contents of the report but due to a time constraint it was agreed to defer this matter to a future meeting.</p>
8.	<p><u>AOB:</u></p> <p>NOTED Ms. Sheridan updated the committee on the appointment of a dedicated Internal Auditor for the university.</p> <p>NOTED In concluding the meeting, the Chairperson thanked all for their contribution and support to date extending his gratitude to all and wishing Dr Dempsey well with his upcoming role as Chairperson of the Audit & Risk committee pending approval by Governing Body.</p> <p>There being no other matters to attend to he closed the meeting at 13.04pm.</p>

Approved: 18th November 2024