

**UNIVERSITY OF ROEHAMPTON
COUNCIL
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the 72nd meeting held on Monday 1 November 2021
Meeting held in Mandela 002, Digby Stuart College**

Present: Kevin Thomas (Chair),* Vince Paine,*¹ Sheena Pindoria,* David Sharkey

Secretary: George Turner

In attendance: Jean-Noël Ezingear, Anna Gough-Yates, Mike Hall,² Dennis Hone,³ Baljit Kaur, Stuart Kemp (KCG), Andy Lamb,⁴ Tom Rowson, Laura Ward (BDO),* Paula Willock (BDO)*

Apologies: None

** attended remotely via MS Teams*

MINUTES AND BUSINESS MATTERS

In camera session between Committee members, the Secretary and the internal and external auditors

Noted: The External Auditors confirmed that the University's Finance Team had worked effectively in preparation for the 2020-21 audit and that the time pressures that had arisen in the previous year had not been repeated. In terms of best practice, the external auditors noted that it would be ideal to have a draft set of accounts slightly earlier, but did not consider that this was material to overall audit progress.

The Internal Auditors confirmed that they had a good working relationship with University management, including the new Chief Operating Officer who started at the beginning of 2021. The Internal Auditors noted that the overall position in relation to follow up was improving after a new process was introduced by management.

RAC72.1 Welcomes, introductions, apologies, conflicts of interest

The Committee agreed that items RAC72.6 to RAC72.9 would be taken at the beginning of the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared by those present. The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, who was attending for Items RAC72.6 to RAC72.9, was welcomed.

¹ For items RAC72.1 to RAC72.10 only

² For items RAC72.1 to RAC72.9 only

³ For items RAC72.1, RAC72.6 to RAC72.9 only

⁴ For items RAC72.1 to RAC72.9 only

RAC72.2 Minutes

Approved: The minutes of the 71st meeting as set out in Paper RAC72/1.

RAC72.3 Matters arising

Noted: The matters arising as set out in Paper RAC72/2.

In relation to the internal audit recommendation around maintenance contracts (Minute 71.6), the Committee noted that progress had been made in identifying the relevant suppliers and prioritising them for tendering. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000. A further update would be provided at the February 2022 meeting.

Action: Chief Operating Officer

In relation to the Strategic Internal Audit Plan (Minute 71.6), the Committee noted that a review had been undertaken which had identified additional coverage of Risk E1 that was already present in the plan. The Committee also noted the intention to expand the scope of the University Planning Processes Audit to more effectively consider risk E1. It was noted that the Appendix provided at p. 27 of the pack would be updated prior to the next meeting of the Committee.

In relation to the Committee’s TOR, it was noted that the Secretary would prepare a paper for the February 2022 meeting to explain how the Committee could ensure it gives sufficient coverage to its expanded TOR.

Action: Secretary

RAC72.4 Additional Business

Agreed: The Committee considered how often it would like to receive updates on value for money and agreed that an annual report should be provided by management, but that it may request additional updates if necessary.

MATTERS FOR DECISION AND RATIFICATION

RAC72.5 Risk management

Noted: Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Committee agreed that the next deep dive exercise should focus on Risk E1, defined as ‘If there are further substantial reductions to the Government funding we receive, then it will be increasingly difficult to maintain our current operating model’.

Action: Secretary

Approved: The strategic risk registers as set out in Paper RAC72/3b for submission to Council.

Approved: The Annual Management Report (2020-21) on the Effectiveness of the University's Internal Control Systems, as set out in Paper RAC72.3c, for submission to Council. **Action Secretary**

Noted: The Cyber Security update from the Director of Campus Operations as set out in Paper RAC72/3d. Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Committee noted the roll-out of cyber awareness training for University staff.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

RAC72.6 Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

RAC72.7 **Audit Completion Report and Letter of Representation to the External Auditors**

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/5. The Committee noted that there were a number of outstanding matters to be concluded, but that the External Auditors did not anticipate that these would impact on their opinion, which at the date of the meeting they anticipated would be unqualified.

The Committee discussed the assumptions made in relation to debt recovery, which the External Auditors had given attention to in their report. The Committee confirmed that they were content the assumptions put forward by management were appropriate given the high level of uncertainty in the external environment.

The Committee noted that the University's pension assumptions were in line with the typical range of assumptions. The Committee further noted that there were no new provisions in the letter of representation. The Committee noted that an updated version of the report would be provided at the additional meeting in advance of Council.

RAC72.8 **Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021**

Received: The Committee received the draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021, as set out in Paper RAC72/6. The Committee noted that the report had been scrutinised by the Finance and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

The Committee proposed a number of minor amendments to the Risk and Uncertainty section, the Statement of the University's Structure of Corporate Governance and the Statement of Internal Control. The Committee noted that a new note had been added to the report in relation to US student loans.

Approved: Subject to the comments made by the Committee, and the need to consider going concern further at its additional meeting, the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July was endorsed for submission to Council.

Action: Director of Finance

RAC72.9 Audit Committee Annual Report 2020-21

Received: The draft Audit Committee annual report for 2020-21, as set out in Paper RAC72/7. The Committee noted that there were a number of outstanding actions to be completed before submission to Council.

Minute exempt from publication under s.43 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Subject to the above amendments, the Committee endorsed the Annual Report for submission to Council.

Action: Secretary

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

RAC72.10 Internal Audit Annual Report

Noted: The Committee received an updated version the report (Paper RAC72/8). The Committee was pleased to note that significant progress had been made with follow up, but agreed with management that it was important that momentum was maintained in resolving the remaining outstanding historic recommendations.

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

RAC72.11 University Management Report on data quality management

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/9.⁵

RAC72.12 External Audit Letter of Engagement

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/10.

RAC72.13 Draft RCIL Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC71/11.

RAC72.14 Draft RCSL Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021

⁵ Vince Paine provided feedback via email after the meeting, which has been incorporated prior to submission to Council

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/12.⁶

RAC72.15 Draft RHSL Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2021

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC71/13.

RAC72.16 OfS Risk Register

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/14. It was agreed that a copy of the report on compliance with the OfS quality and standards conditions would be circulated to members of the Committee after it had been submitted to Council.

Action: Secretary

RAC72.17 Minutes and reports from Council

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/15.

RAC72.18 Standing Item: Public Interest Disclosures and Reportable Events

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/16.

RAC72.19 Committee terms of reference, composition and membership for 2021-22

Noted: The contents of Paper RAC72/17.

Date of next meeting: Monday 21 February 2022

*Dr George Turner
University Secretary
November 2021*

⁶ Vince Paine provided feedback via email after the meeting, which has been incorporated prior to submission to the RCSL directors.