

Audit Committee Meeting

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| Date of Meeting | Monday 18 December 2017 |
| Paper Title | Disclosure of GCRB Board Papers |
| Agenda Item | 9 |
| Paper Number | BM3-I |
| Responsible Officer | Paul Buchanan, Audit Committee Chair |
| Status | Non-Disclosable |
| Action | For Decision |

1. Purpose

1.1 For members to consider proposed actions in response to the unauthorised disclosure of confidential GCRB Board papers.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is invited to:

- **note** that the Interim GCRB Chair asked the Chair of the Audit Committee to consider the unauthorised disclosure of confidential GCRB Board papers and for the Audit Committee to provide a report back to the Board;
- **note** that the Audit Committee discussed the unauthorised disclosure and considered potential actions which would mitigate against further disclosures; and
- **agree**, subject to any amendment, the proposed actions.

3. Disclosure of GCRB Board Papers

3.1 Members will be aware that in September 2017, information contained in a GCRB Board paper marked as non-disclosable was published by the Glasgow Herald.

3.2 The Interim GCRB Chair asked the Chair of the Audit Committee to consider the matter and for the Audit Committee to provide a report back to the Board.

3.3 The Audit Committee discussed the unauthorised disclosure at its meeting on 5 December, and considered potential actions which would mitigate against further disclosures.

3.4 The following courses of action are proposed as means by which GCRB can lessen the likelihood of further breaches:

- Undertake Board development activity – within the Board development action plan for 2017-18, there is a commitment to hold an externally facilitated session on respective roles, governance styles and collective responsibility. It is proposed that this session highlights the importance to strong governance of ensuring all viewpoints are heard and considered.
- Review and improve current Board paper distribution arrangements – it is proposed that GCRB requests the Internal Auditor to review current GCRB board paper distribution arrangements with a view to recommending improved processes which utilise more effective digital functionality. This review should be informed by good practice and in addition, should consider any relevant data protection issues.
- Enhance GCRB’s paper publication policy – it is proposed that GCRB enhances its paper publication policy to include a policy statement on GCRB’s agreed approach to disclosure of information, alongside reviewing its guidelines for the sharing and publication of Board information.

3.5 The Board is asked **agree**, subject to any amendment, the proposed courses of action.

4. Risk assessment

4.1 The leaking of confidential information in the press has the potential to increase the likelihood and impact of *GCRB Risk 003: The reputation of the college sector in Glasgow is damaged as a result of adverse publicity*. The actions proposed in this report are intended to mitigate these risks.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 Unauthorised disclosure of confidential board papers is a breach of the Board’s code of conduct, established under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 and enforceable by the Standards Commission for Scotland.

6. Resource Implications

6.1 Use of a digital platform to distribute and access Board papers will require additional expenditure. However, a digital approach would lead to less administrative workload and environmental benefits from reduced paper use.

6.2 Any training or event costs would be managed within GCRB’s budget.

7. Strategic Plan Implications

7.1 Delivery of regional strategic goals is contingent on effective governance arrangements.