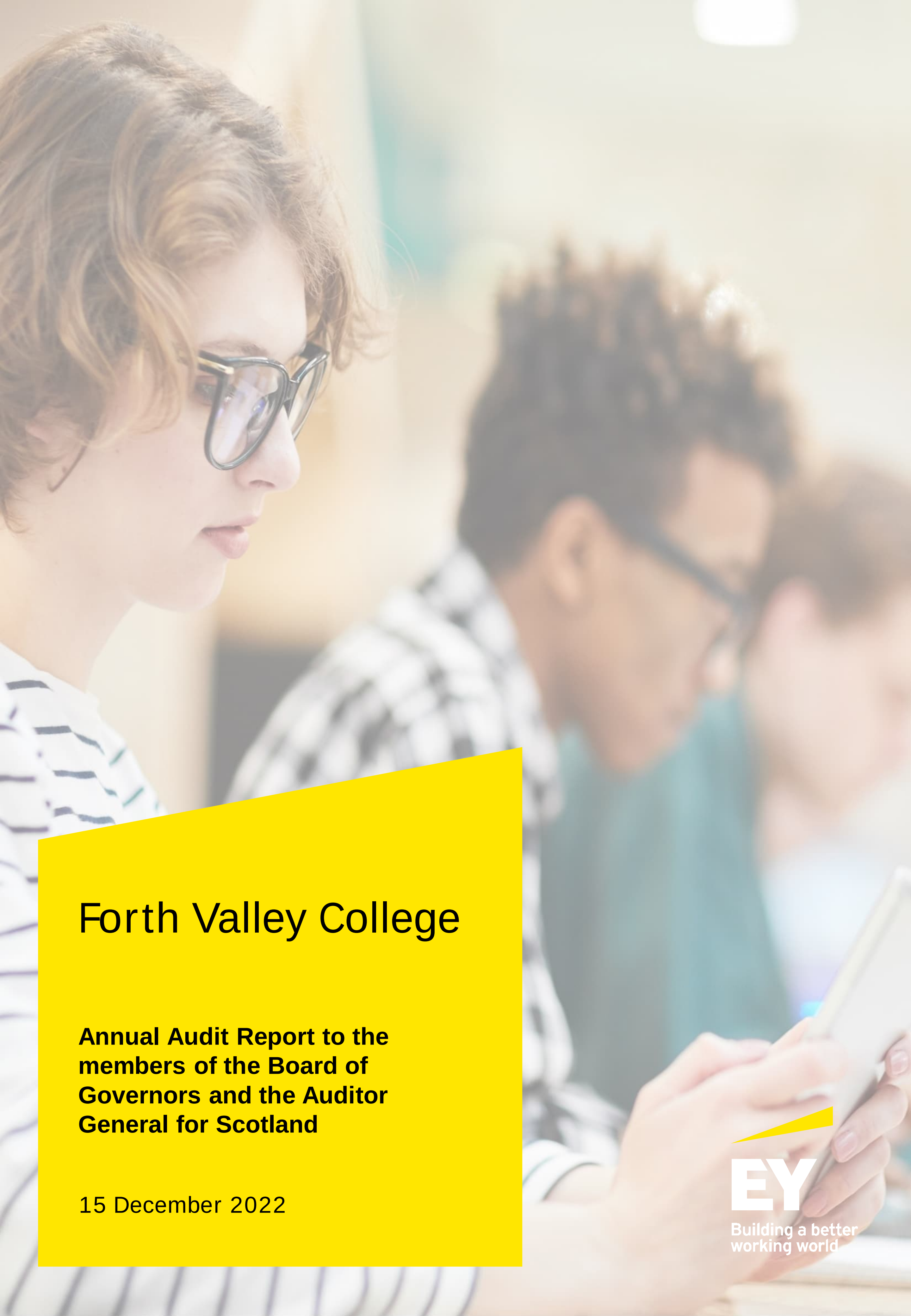


Forth Valley College

Annual Audit Report to the members of the Board of Governors and the Auditor General for Scotland

15 December 2022

EY
Building a better working world

Contents

About this report

This report has been prepared in accordance with Terms of Appointment Letter from Audit Scotland dated 31 May 2016 through which the Auditor General for Scotland has appointed us as external auditor of Forth Valley College (the College) for financial years 2016/17 to 2020/21. As a result of the impact of Covid-19 our appointment was extended by a further 12 months to include the financial year 2021/22. We undertake our audit in accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 and our responsibilities as set out within Audit Scotland's Code of Audit Practice. This report is for the benefit of the College and is made available to the Auditor General for Scotland and Audit Scotland. This report has not been designed to be of benefit to anyone except the recipients. In preparing this report we have not taken into account the interests, needs or circumstances of anyone apart from the recipients, even though we may have been aware that others might read this report.

Any party other than the Recipients that obtains access to this report or a copy (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, through a Recipient's Publication Scheme or otherwise) and chooses to rely on this report (or any part of it) does so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Ernst & Young LLP does not assume any responsibility and will not accept any liability in respect of this report to any party other than the Recipients

Complaints

If at any time you would like to discuss with us how our service to you could be improved, or if you are dissatisfied with the service you are receiving, you may take the issue up with Stephen Reid who is our partner responsible for services under appointment by Audit Scotland, telephone 0131 777 2839, email sreid2@uk.ey.com. If you prefer an alternative route, please contact Hywel Ball, our Managing Partner, 1 More London Place, London SE1 2AF. We undertake to look into any complaint carefully and promptly and to do all we can to explain the position to you. Should you remain dissatisfied with any aspect of our service, or with how your complaint has been handled, you can refer the matter to Audit Scotland, 4th Floor, 102 West Port, Edinburgh, EH3 9DN. Alternatively you may of course take matters up with our professional institute. We can provide further information on how you may contact our professional institute.

Executive Summary: Key Conclusions from our 2021/22 audit

We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the College's 2021/22 financial statements.

We continued to review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit, including the materiality level applied. Our materiality levels were amended to reflect the increase in expenditure in 2021/22.

Financial Statements

We have concluded our audit of the College's financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2022. One audit adjustment was required to be made and there was one unadjusted difference that we were required to communicate in relation to the 2021/22 financial statements.

The draft financial statements and supporting working papers were provided in line with the agreed audit timetable and were of a good standard. We worked with the finance team to update the financial statements disclosures, including in relation to areas where streamlining could occur to support the understandability of narrative sections and ensure focus on key areas.

We concluded that the other information subject to audit, including the applicable parts of the Remuneration Report and the Annual Governance Statement were appropriate. We were satisfied that the disclosures reflect the College's compliance with the *Code of Good Governance for Scotland's College*s.

Going Concern

In accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual ('the FReM'), the College prepares its financial statements on a going concern basis unless informed by the Scottish Government of the intention for dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity.

Under a revised auditing standard, ISA 570, we are required to undertake greater challenge of management's assessment of going concern, including testing of the adequacy of the supporting evidence we obtained. The College has concluded that there are no material uncertainties around its going concern status, however it has continued to include enhanced disclosures around its future financial position in the financial statements to reflect the impact of Covid-19 and inflationary pressures. We have no matters to report in respect of our work around going concern or the conclusions reached by the College.

Wider Scope

We summarise the conclusions we reached in response to our work on the wider scope dimensions below.

Financial Sustainability

The financial environment in which the College operates was already challenging, and the Covid-19 pandemic alongside the impact of the economic and geopolitical environments, including supply chain challenges, has resulted in further, significant financial pressures, and creates a risk that the College will not be able to develop viable and sustainable financial plans.

The College submitted a financial forecast return in September 2022 to the Scottish Funding Council which outlines a cumulative modest underlying operating surplus over the five years of £0.05 million. This demonstrates the reactive steps management are undertaking to combat the continued financial challenges that the College faces in an ever-changing external environment. However, we recognise that the lack of confirmed allocations for future years, and ongoing uncertainty, means that the financial outlook for the College is uncertain.

Financial Management

The College reported an adjusted operating surplus of £0.5 million, representing a decrease of £1.7 million compared to 2020/21.

We were satisfied that the College’s financial monitoring and reporting was clear and consistent throughout the year. The College has an established budget setting and monitoring framework which includes presentation of financial updates to the Board and Finance Committee throughout the year.

We are satisfied that the core financial management arrangements were not materially impacted as a result of Covid-19 or other external pressures with clear financial reporting continuing throughout the year.

Governance & Transparency

The key features of good governance have remained in place at the College and have been operating effectively throughout the year. A hybrid meeting structure has been implemented after seeking the views of members.

We are satisfied that the College has rectified the prior year issue identified with the regularity of compensation to the Chair of the Board, and no such issue arose this year.

Value for Money

The College has a strategic plan for the period 2022-2025, ‘making learning work’. The College has continued to report its performance against its strategic plan, including key measures within the financial statements. The College Board consider regular updates against the Strategic Plan throughout the year. The College’s arrangements for considering value for money have not been significantly changed from the previous year.

The College should continue to closely monitor performance and assess what steps can be taken to improve student engagement and experience.

We have no matters to report in respect of the College’s arrangements around procurement or staff severance.

1 Introduction

> As a result of the impact of Covid-19, Audit Scotland agreed to extend our appointment as external auditor of the College to 2021/22.

Purpose of this report

In accordance with the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 ("the Act"), the Auditor General for Scotland appointed EY as the external auditor of Forth Valley College ("the College") for the five year period 2016/17 to 2020/21. Our appointment term was extended by a further 12 months, to financial year 2021/22. We undertake our audit in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice (the Code), issued by Audit Scotland in May 2016; Auditing Standards and guidance issued by the Financial Reporting Council; relevant legislation; and other guidance issued by Audit Scotland.

This Annual Audit Report is designed to summarise our key findings and conclusions from our audit work. It is addressed to both members of the Board of Governors and the Auditor General for Scotland, and is presented to those charged with governance. This report is provided to Audit Scotland and will be published on their website.

We draw your attention to the fact that our audit was not designed to identify all matters that may be relevant to the College. Our views on internal control and governance arrangements have been based solely on the audit procedures performed in respect of the audit of the financial statements and the other procedures performed in fulfilling our audit plan.

A key objective of our audit reporting is to add value by supporting the improvement of the use of public money. We aim to achieve this through sharing our insights from our audit work, our observations around where the College employs best practice and where practices can be improved. We use these insights to form our audit recommendations to support the College in improving its practices around financial management and control, as well as around key aspects of the wider scope dimensions of audit. Such areas we have identified are highlighted throughout this report together with our judgements and conclusions regarding arrangements, and where relevant recommendations and actions agreed with management. We also report on the progress made by management in implementing previously agreed recommendations.

Our independence

We confirm that we have undertaken client and engagement continuance procedures, which include our assessment of our continuing independence to act as your external auditor. Further information is available in Appendix B.

We updated our assessment of materiality based on the 2021/22 financial performance of the College for the year. Planning materiality was increased from £0.8 million to £0.89 million.

Scope and responsibilities

The Code sets out the responsibilities of both the College and the auditor (summarised in Appendix A). We outlined these in our Annual Audit Plan, which was presented to the audit committee in May 2022.

Our review and reassessment of materiality

Our Annual Audit Plan explained that our audit procedures would be performed using a materiality of £0.8 million. We considered whether any change to our materiality was required in light of the College's 2021/22 financial performance. Our materiality levels were amended to reflect the increase in expenditure in 2021/22.

Our evaluation requires professional judgement and so takes into account qualitative as well as quantitative considerations. Factors which we consider include the perspectives and expectations of users of the financial statements as well as our risk assessment as to the likelihood of material misstatements arising in the financial statements.

Overall Materiality	Tolerable Error	Nominal amount
£890,000	£670,000	£44,000
2% of the College's operating expenditure	Materiality at an individual account level	Level that we will report to committee

As outlined in our Annual Audit Plan, based on considerations around the expectations of financial statement users and qualitative factors, we apply lower materiality levels to the audit of the Remuneration Report and Related Party Transactions.

Financial statement audit

We are responsible for conducting an audit of the College's financial statements. We provide an opinion as to:

- whether they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the College as at 31 July 2022 and the deficit for the year then ended;
- whether they have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- whether they have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Funding Council, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, and regulation 14 of The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

We also review and report on the consistency of the other information prepared and published along with the financial statements. Our findings are summarised in Section 2 of this report.

Wider Scope audit

Our responsibilities extend beyond the audit of the financial statements. The Code requires auditors to provide judgements and conclusions on the four dimensions of wider scope public audit:

- Financial management;
- Financial sustainability;
- Governance and transparency; and
- Value for money.

Our findings are summarised in Section 3 of this report.

2 Financial Statements audit

Introduction

The financial statements provide the College with an opportunity to demonstrate accountability for the resources that it controls, and report on its overall performance in the application of those resources during the year.

This section of our report summarises the audit work undertaken to support our audit opinion, including our conclusions in response to the significant and other risks identified in our Annual Audit Plan.

The plan highlighted two areas that we identified as a significant risk of material misstatement or fraud risk:

- the risk of fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition (significant risk); and
- misstatements due to fraud or error (fraud risk).

Compliance with Regulations

The draft financial statements and supporting working papers were submitted for audit in line with planned timescales.

As part of our oversight of the College's financial reporting process, we report on our consideration of the quality of working papers and supporting documentation prepared, predominantly by the finance team, to support the audit.

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and directions made thereunder issued by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act and regulation 14 of The Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Management provided draft financial statements at the start of the audit, in line with the agreed timetable. The financial statements had been updated for the new requirements as outlined in the SFC's 2021/22 Accounts Direction for colleges.

Audit Outcomes

One audit adjustment was required to be made and there was one unadjusted difference that we were required to communicate in relation to the 2021/22 financial statements.

Our overall audit opinion is summarised on the following page.

Our audit opinion

Element of opinion	Basis of our opinion	Conclusions
Financial statements The financial statements provide a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the College at 31 July 2022 and of the surplus for the year then ended. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the financial reporting framework	We report on the outcomes of our audit procedures to respond to our assessed risk of misstatements, including significant risks within this section of our report. We did not identify any areas of material misstatement. We are satisfied that accounting policies are appropriate and estimates are reasonable. We have considered the financial statements against the financial reporting requirements, and additional guidance issued by the SFC and Audit Scotland.	We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the 2021/22 financial statements for the College.
Going concern We are required to conclude and report on the appropriateness of the use of the going concern basis of accounting	We conduct core financial statements audit work, including management's assessment of the appropriateness of the going concern basis. Wider scope procedures, including financial forecasts are considered as part of our work on financial sustainability.	In accordance with the work reported in this report, our audit opinion is unqualified in this respect.
Other information We consider whether the other information in the financial statements is materially inconsistent with other knowledge obtained during the audit	We conduct a range of substantive procedures on the financial statements. Our conclusion draws upon: • Review of committee minutes and papers, regular discussions with management, our understanding of the College and the sector.	We are satisfied that the annual report materially meets the core requirements set out in the Accounts Direction.
Report on regularity of income and expenditure We are required to consider whether in all material respects the income and expenditure in the financial statements were incurred or applied in accordance with any applicable enactments and guidance issued by Scottish Ministers	Our procedures include: • Understanding the applicable enactments and guidance issued by the Scottish Ministers • Performed detailed testing of income and expenditure testing to ensure transactions are in line with enactments and guidance	We are satisfied that in all material respects income and expenditure are regular.
Matters prescribed by the Auditor General for Scotland Audited part of Remuneration Report has been properly prepared. The Performance Report and Annual Governance Statement are consistent with the financial statements and have been properly prepared.	We are required to report on whether the sections of the Remuneration and Staff Report, and Accountability Report have been properly prepared in accordance with the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 and directions made thereunder by the Scottish Funding Council.	We have no matters to report.
Matters on which we are required to report by exception	We are required to report on whether: • adequate accounting records have not been kept; or • the financial statements and the audited part of the Remuneration and Staff Report are not in agreement with the accounting records; or • we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit	We have no matters to report.

Significant and fraud audit risks

Risk of Fraud in expenditure recognition

As we outlined in our Annual Audit Plan, ISA (UK) 240 requires us to assume that fraud risk from income recognition is a significant risk. In the public sector, we extend our consideration to the risk of material misstatement by manipulation of expenditure.

As outlined in our audit planning report, we rebut the risk of improper recognition of Scottish Funding Council ("SFC") core grant funding because there is no judgement in respect of this income stream. With regards to expenditure, we rebut the risk of improper recognition of payroll expenditure.

Specific procedures relating to significant risks

We undertake specific, additional procedures over income and expenditure streams where we identified a significant risk, including:

- Review and test all relevant income and expenditure policies against the relevant accounting standards and SORP;
- Review, test and challenge management around any accounting estimates on income and expenditure recognition for evidence of bias;
- Develop a testing strategy to test all material income and expenditure streams;
- Test all material grant income with performance conditions to ensure income is recognised correctly in line with the outlined requirements;
- Review and perform focused testing on income and expenditure around the year end to ensure correct recognition around cut-off between financial periods;
- Perform testing for any evidence of clawback of income where conditions for entitlement have not been met;
- Review and develop a testing strategy for Covid-19 related income streams, including furlough income and additional Covid-19 related grant income; and
- Assess and challenge manual adjustments or journal entries by management around the year end for evidence of management bias and evaluation of business rationale and evidence.

Our conclusions

- Our testing did not identify any material misstatements relating to revenue and expenditure recognition in the financial year under audit.
- We did not identify any differences in respect of our detailed testing of income and expenditure.
- We have assessed the treatment of Covid-19 related income streams, including furlough income and additional Covid-19 related grant income. We concur with management's accounting treatment for these revenue streams.

Risk of management override

Our Annual Audit Plan recognises that under ISA (UK) 240, management is considered to be in a unique position to perpetrate fraud in financial reporting because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively. We respond to this risk on every engagement.

Risk of Fraud

We considered the risk of fraud, enquired with management about their assessment of the risks of fraud and the controls to address those risks. We also updated and developed our understanding of the oversight of those charged with governance over management's processes over fraud.

Testing on Journal Entries

We tested the appropriateness of manual journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.

We obtained a full list of journals posted to the general ledger during the year, and used our bespoke data analysers to identify potentially unusual journals based on posting patterns, amounts or areas of greater risk of judgement or incentive for management to adjust according to our identified risk areas for the audit. We evaluated the business rationale for any significant unusual transactions. In particular we considered:

- Journal entries made directly into the general ledger of a material nature to key accounts which are considered more likely to have an incentive to be manipulated;
- Journals entries made around year end; and
- Journals adjusting between income and expenditure accounts and capital accounts.

We identified no unusual journals which could not be explained by management or which indicated any additional risk of fraud.

Our conclusions

- We have not identified any material weaknesses in the design and implementation of controls around journal processing. We did not identify any instances of evidence of management override of controls.
- In the final days of the 2021/22 financial year management finalised a decision to donate £1.5 million of the College's surplus funds for the financial year to the Forth Valley College Foundation, the independent Arms' Length Foundation, with the cash transfer occurring early in 2022/23. The College Board approved the donation prior to the 31 July yearend. The 2021/22 financial statements reflect an accrual for this item, following management's determination that the public decision to approve the donation, in line with confirmation to the SFC and third parties before 31 July 2022 constituted a constructive obligation to pay the funds. This is subsequently evidenced by the physical transfer post yearend for the same amount. Following receipt of the approval of the donation and evidence of the board minutes in the year, we concured with management's assessment of the treatment.

Judgements and Estimates

ISA (UK) 540 on accounting estimates was issued in December 2019 and is applicable to the 2021/22 audit. In particular, risk factors relevant to the public sector included the following examples for consideration by auditors:

- a very high degree of estimation uncertainty caused by the need to project forecasts far into the future, such as liabilities relating to defined benefit pension schemes; and
- areas where there may be a lack of available comparators for estimates that are unique to the public sector, such as the valuation of important public assets, such as property, plant and equipment.

Our procedures included:

- Testing management's process method, key assumptions, data;
- Testing management's process-estimation uncertainty;
- Considering evidence from events up to the report date; and
- Developing our own point estimate of the appropriate valuation.

We reviewed each significant accounting estimate for evidence of management bias as outlined above, including retrospective consideration of management's prior year estimates.

Management disclosed its assessment of the critical accounting judgements and key estimates in the financial statements.

Accounting Policies

We considered the consistency and application of accounting policies, and the overall presentation of financial information. We consider the accounting policies adopted by the College to be appropriate. There were no significant accounting practices which materially depart from what is acceptable under the Further and Higher Education SORP 2019.

Our conclusions

- We did not identify any areas of significant estimation or judgement as part of our audit work where we disagreed with management over the accounting treatment.
- There were no significant accounting practices which materially depart from what is acceptable under the College's financial reporting framework.

Other Inherent Risk Areas

Our Annual Audit Plan highlighted additional areas of inherent risk. We identified no further areas of risk as part of our audit procedures. The results of our procedures on inherent risk areas are summarised below.

Valuation of net pension liabilities

The College participates in two pension schemes: the Local Government Pension Scheme (Falkirk Council Pension Fund) and the Scottish Teachers Superannuation Scheme (STSS). At 31 July 2022, the College's share of the pension scheme was originally a net asset totalling £2.640 million (2020/21: liability of £27.310 million). The actuary however had not allowed for the 2023 pension increase order which increases pensioner payments by CPI and a subsequent allowance of £3 million was made, resulting in a net liability of £0.335 million. The present value of the unfunded obligation for early retirements agreed previously was £5.2 million (2020/21: £7.2 million).

Accounting for both schemes involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages an actuary to undertake the calculations on their behalf. The information disclosed is based on the FRS 102 report issued to the College by the actuary. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates.

Our approach included:

- obtaining an actuarial report at the year end date for the scheme and considering the reasonableness and consistency of actuarial assumptions underpinning such reports in conjunction with our internal specialists;
- performing substantive testing on the verification of the pension assets. Specifically, we engage with the auditor of Falkirk Council Pension Fund in line with the assurance protocols laid out by Audit Scotland. We also analysed the fund's estimated asset position at 31 July 2022 from the prior year end against expectations based on equity and other market movements;
- developing our own point estimate for the College's liabilities in the Fund and comparing to the actuary's assessment;
- assessing the work of the actuaries in considering the impact of legal rulings impacting the liabilities in the fund; and
- reviewing the calculation of the College's valuation of future early retirement liabilities at 31 July 2022, including the integrity of the underlying pensioner data used by the actuary and College.

Our conclusions

- In calculating the scheme assets as at 31 July 2022 the actuary performs a roll forward technique using investment returns and cash flow data since the last triennial valuation. We have considered the reasonableness of the reported asset position and note that the actuary's estimated investment returns were consistent with actual investment returns for Falkirk Council Pension Fund.
- We assessed the reasonableness of the calculation of the College's share of the Fund's liabilities and concluded these are consistent with our expectations.
- Assumptions used by the actuary and adopted by the College are considered to be generally acceptable. The sensitivities surrounding these assumptions have been correctly disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.
- One corrected audit difference has been identified impacting pensions net liabilities position reflecting the impact of Pensions Increase Order. Please see Appendix D for further details.

Inherent Risk – Valuation of Property, Plant & Equipment

Given the size of this balance and the number of assumptions that are made in the valuation of the College estate, we assign a higher inherent risk to property, plant and equipment. The impact of the pandemic on the use of assets and future plans means that we place significant scrutiny on management's assessment of impairment.

The College is required to consider annually that the valuation of the College estate remains appropriate outside of formal revaluation cycles. The latest full valuation was performed as at 31 July 2020. For 2021/22 no desktop valuation exercise was performed. The College provided a letter from their external valuer confirming there were no impairment indicators for the valuation of property, plant and equipment at 31 July 2022.

Our approach focused on:

- assessment of the potential for impairment across the College estate that has not been reflected in the financial statements or most recent formal valuation;
- consideration of the appropriateness of disclosures made by the College in the financial at 31 July 2022.

Our conclusions

- We concluded that there were no material audit differences in the approach and conclusions around management's valuation of the College's estate at 31 July 2022.
- We concluded that all disclosures in respect of the valuation of assets were appropriate in the financial statements.

Going concern

Under the revised auditing standard, ISA 570, we are required to undertake greater challenge of management's assessment of going concern, including testing of the adequacy of the supporting evidence we obtained.

International Auditing Standard 570 Going Concern, as applied by Practice Note 10: *Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom*, requires auditors to undertake sufficient and appropriate audit procedures to consider whether there is a material uncertainty on going concern that requires reporting by management within the financial statements, and within the auditor's report. In accordance with the FReM, the College shall prepare its financial statements on a going concern basis unless informed by the relevant national body of the intention for dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity.

However, under the revised auditing standard, ISA 570, we are required to undertake greater challenge of management's assessment of going concern, including testing of the adequacy of the supporting evidence we obtained. In light of the unprecedented nature of Covid-19, the ongoing cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures, we placed increased focus on management's assertion regarding the going concern basis of preparation in the financial statements, and particularly the need to report on the impact of financial pressures on the College and its financial sustainability. Management's going concern assessment and associated disclosures cover the period to December 2023, being twelve months from the date of signing the financial statements.

After completing its going concern assessment in line with the information and support provided through earlier discussions in the audit process, the College has concluded that there are no material uncertainties around its going concern status. We have outlined our consideration of the College's financial position going forward in the financial sustainability section of this report. We considered this in conjunction with management's assessment on going concern, focusing on:

- the completeness of factors considered in management's going concern assessment;
- the integrity and robustness of the underlying cash flow forecasts supporting future financial projections, in particular if the College projects to require financial support during the going concern assessment period; and
- the completeness of disclosures in the financial statements in relation to going concern and future financial performance in line with the requirements of the SFC 2021/22 Accounts Direction.

Our conclusions

- We reviewed and challenged the going concern assessment provided by management. We verified the assessment to supporting information, including key College reports and financial forecast returns. We concur with management's assessment that there are no material uncertainties in relation to the going concern of the College. Letter of Support from SFC has been obtained stating that it will continue to make payments to the College to manage cash flow requirements for the period of 12 months from the date of approval of College`s balance sheet.

3 Wider Scope dimensions

Introduction

We are required to reach conclusions in relation to the effectiveness and appropriateness of the College's arrangements for the four wider scope audit dimensions.

We apply our professional judgement to risk assess and focus our work on each of the wider scope dimensions. For each of the dimensions, we have applied a RAG rating, which represents our assessment on the adequacy of the College's arrangements throughout the year, as well as the overall pace of improvement and future risk associated with each dimension.

- Financial Sustainability: Considers the medium and longer term outlook to determine if planning is effective to support service delivery.
- Financial Management: Considers the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including whether there is sufficient financial capacity and resources, sound budgetary processes and whether the control environment and internal controls are operating effectively.
- Governance and Transparency: Considers the effectiveness of scrutiny and governance arrangements and the transparent reporting of financial and performance information.
- Value for Money: Considers whether value for money can be demonstrated in the use of resources and the focus on continuous improvement.

Financial Sustainability

Our overall assessment: Red

The financial environment in which the College operates was already challenging, and the Covid-19 pandemic along with the rising inflationary rates and the cost of living crisis, has resulted in further, significant financial pressures, and creates a risk that the College will not be able to develop viable and sustainable financial plans due to external factors. While additional funding was awarded during 2021/22 which helped ease immediate pressures, the future outlook remains unclear.

The College submitted a financial forecast return in September 2022 to the Scottish Funding Council using the SFC scenario which outlines a cumulative modest underlying operating surplus over the five years of £0.05 million. This demonstrates the reactive steps management are undertaking to combat the continued financial challenges that the College faces in an ever-changing external environment. However, we recognise that the lack of confirmed allocations for future years and ongoing uncertainty means that the financial outlook for the College is uncertain. As a result, the College updated their financial forecast return using more appropriate assumptions for their going concern cashflows.

The context for financial sustainability in the College sector

The Scottish Government's 'Resource Spending Review' was published on 31 May 2022 and sets out the high level parameters for resource spend within future Scottish budgets up to 2026-27. The plan is focused on how the Scottish Government will allocate funding to achieve their strategic outcomes and priorities:

- Tackling child poverty;
- Addressing the climate crisis;
- Securing a stronger, fairer, greener economy; and
- Delivering excellent public services.

The review sets out that there will be no increases to the Scottish Funding Council budget, who in turn provide funding to the College sector. While the spending review is not a finalised budget, it provides the sector with an indication of likely funding allocations. Colleges Scotland estimates that Colleges are facing a real terms budget cut of £51.9 million in 2022/23.

The Scottish Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee, as part of its pre-budget setting scrutiny for 2023/24, launched a call for views on Scotland's public finances and the impact of both the cost of living crisis and public service reform in August 2022. This consultation has included seeking views on the priorities within the Resource Spending Review and how the Scottish Government should respond to inflationary pressures and the cost of living crisis within its 2023/24 budget.

The Scottish Funding Council published their report, 'Financial Sustainability of Colleges and Universities in Scotland' in March 2022.

The Covid-19 pandemic led to increased reliance on SFC income across the College sector, which will create further challenges if flat cash settlements occur in future financial years.

This paper set out that the sector had managed the impact of Covid-19 more positively than originally anticipated however the longer term financial sustainability remains challenging. The sector collectively was expected to deliver a combined surplus of £16.7 million for 2020/21 with two colleges expected to report adjusted operating deficits.

However, colleges remain heavily dependent on SFC grant funding with this income accounting for 79% of total income at a sector level in 2020/21. This illustrates the reliance that colleges have on funding which is expected to reduce in real terms moving forward. For colleges to remain financially sustainable, growth in other income as well as reductions in their cost base will be required. The continued impact of Covid-19 has resulted in challenges for colleges to achieve their student recruitment and retention targets as well as other income targets.

The Scottish Government and SFC are starting to take forward the recommendations within the SFC review on the provision and sustainability of further and higher education and research across Scotland, published in June 2021. The current financial outlook stresses the importance of the recommendations within this review being implemented as early as possible. A further update is expected in 2023 when the Scottish Government is due to set out the future role of the college and university sectors.

The turbulent financial environment creates significant challenges for college's to be able to prepare robust financial plans.

Medium term financial forecasting

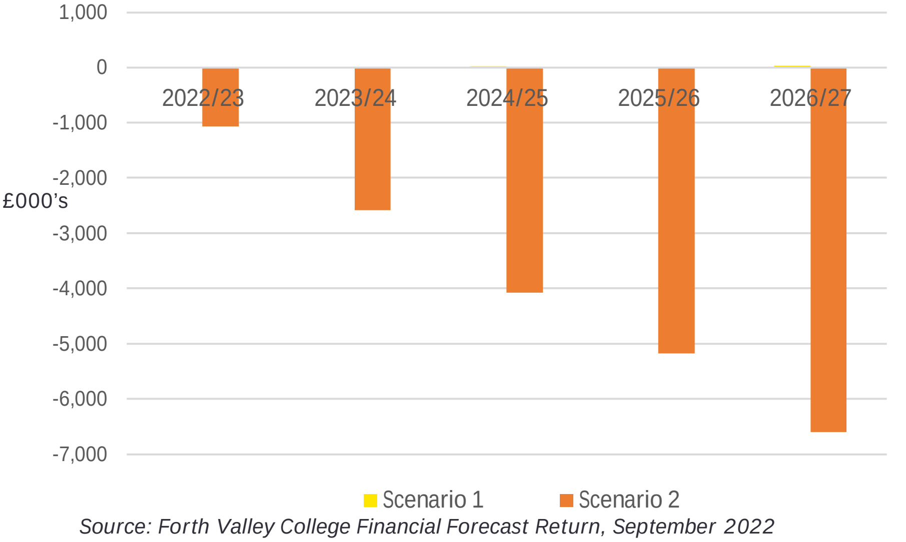
The College has prepared a five-year financial forecast for the period 2022 to 2027 and submitted these to the SFC in the form of the template Financial Forecast Return ('FFR'). Two scenarios for the FFR were considered by the Board and Finance Committee:

- Scenario 1, based on SFC assumptions.
- Scenario 2, based on assumptions agreed by the colleges Finance Directors' Group.

Scenario 2 was not produced in the form of an FFR, however the income and expenditure accounts were adjusted in the papers to the Board to show the variances. These variances mainly arise from the effects of inflation and pay awards. SFC take into account inflation of 3.7% in year one, 2.3% in year 2 and 2% in years 3-5. However, the College has included 9% for year 1 and 7% for years 2-5, which, in the College's view, is a more accurate reflection at the present time. SFC assumes pay awards of 2% p.a., whereas the College have included awards of 5% in years 1-2 and 3% in years 3-5.

Both outturns are set out in Exhibit 1 below (where Scenario 1 presents a balanced operating budget).

Exhibit 1: The College's FFR scenarios highlight the significant financial challenges facing the College in future periods and the significant savings and income growth required to deliver a balanced budget.



Source: Forth Valley College Financial Forecast Return, September 2022

The College's forecasts recognise significant uncertainty in the current environment, particularly in relation to pay awards and inflation. Scenario One above takes account of reductions in staff headcount which would be required to achieve a breakeven position.

Following several years of budget pressures, the College's ability to achieve savings both easily and quickly is challenging. The College continues to consider areas where savings or income growth could be achieved, some of which may require more fundamental change:

- Review of the curriculum offering and delivery model;
- Increasing digital delivery and remote learning;
- Changes in structure / delivery models through university / college alliances;
- Cost rationalisation through continuous improvement programmes.

Going concern cash flow forecasting

We outlined our work in respect of going concern earlier in this report. The College has prepared its financial statements on a going concern basis as required by the FReM for a public body. It is also required to consider its ability to meet liabilities as they fall due over the going concern assessment period to December 2023, being 12 months from the year end after the approval date for the financial statements.

As part of its financial forecasting arrangements the College has forecast its cash flow during this period, including testing a number of sensitivities which may be impacted by the current uncertainty around the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years as a result of pay and other inflationary pressures. As part of the FFR submission, the College has projected cashflows to December 2023 with a closing balance of £0.8 million and £1.3 million in January 2024 using the SFC scenario discussed earlier in the report.

The College's cash flow forecasts based on assumptions agreed by the Finance Directors' Group demonstrates that the College does not anticipate reaching a cash deficit position during the going concern period. Letter of Support from SFC has been obtained stating that it will continue to make payments to the College to manage cash flow requirements for the period of 12 months from the date of approval of College`s balance sheet. Thus, the College has sufficient support to continue as a going concern for a period of twelve months until December 2023.

Financial Management

Our overall assessment: Green

The College reported an adjusted operating surplus of £0.5 million, representing a decrease of £1.7 million compared to 2020/21. We were satisfied that the College's financial monitoring and reporting was clear and consistent throughout the year.

The College has an established budget setting and monitoring framework which includes presentation of financial updates to the Board and Finance Committee throughout the year. We are satisfied that the core financial management arrangements were not materially impacted as a result of Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdowns with clear financial reporting continuing.

Financial performance and monitoring

The College reported a deficit of £4.7 million for the year (2020/21: £1 million). Following an actuarial gain of £30.9 million, the College reported total comprehensive income of £26.2 million (2020/21: £1.5 million income). The College had an operating surplus after removal of non-cash accounting adjustments (relating to pension and capital accounting) of £0.5 million (2020/21: £2.2 million).

2021/22 was the second full financial year that the College had fully operated in a Covid-19 environment, which continues to have an impact on student recruitment, retention and satisfaction. In addition, the ongoing economic and geopolitical uncertainty, including the cost of living crisis, has led to further financial challenges for the College, resulting in the College having a significant decrease in their adjusted operating position of £1.7 million.

In line with previous years, the College's financial performance was monitored throughout the year by management and the Finance Committee. This process was not impacted by Covid-19, and there is evidence of financial monitoring, reporting and planning by the Board and Finance Committee through the financial year, up to the approval of the 2022/23 budget.

Throughout 2021/22 management reported budget pressures and variances through its management accounting. These were significant in the year, however we are satisfied these related to the impact of Covid-19 and other pay and non-pay inflation pressures on College operations and additional funding awarded late in the financial year.

Systems of internal control

Within the Annual Governance Statement, the College has concluded that they have obtained assurance that the system of internal control was operating effectively during the year with no exceptions or issues identified. Through our audit of the financial statements, we consider the design and implementation of key controls related to areas of significant risk to the financial statements. This work has included documenting the key internal financial controls and performing walkthroughs to ensure controls are implemented as designed.

We undertook an initial assessment of the financial control environment as part of our planning work in April 2022, and updated our understanding as part of the yearend audit. Our work has not identified any significant weaknesses in the College's systems of internal control. In particular, we have not identified any significant changes to the design and implementation of controls as a result of the impact of hybrid working arrangements.

National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

NFI is a counter-fraud exercise co-ordinated by Audit Scotland and overseen by the Cabinet Office to identify fraud and error. The NFI exercise produces data matches by comparing a range of information held on public bodies' systems to identify potential fraud or error.

The College received matches for investigation in January 2021 and results of the investigation were recorded on the NFI system. We noted progress continued to be made by the College and that we have no matters to report.

Governance and Transparency

Our overall assessment: Green

The key features of good governance have remained in place at the College and have been operating effectively throughout the year. A hybrid meeting structure has been implemented after seeking the views of members.

We are satisfied that the College has rectified the prior year issue identified with the regularity of compensation to the Chair of the Board, and no such issue arose this year.

Annual Governance Statement

The College has demonstrated through the year that it has the key requirements for good governance. The key aspects of governance arrangements in the year are required to be disclosed in the College's Annual Governance Statement within the financial statements. We reviewed the governance statement within the financial statements against the requirements outlined in the SFC's 2021/22 Accounts Direction and our understanding of governance arrangements in place up to 31 July 2022.

This includes the requirements to conclude on the College's compliance with the 2016 Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges, or to explain any areas of non-compliance. Our consideration of the governance statement has included:

- Ensuring that the College has met all requirements of the SFC's 2021/22 Accounts Direction with one exception, which has been explained accordingly;
- Ensuring that the content of the statement is consistent with our understanding of the College's governance arrangements and any issues identified during the year; and
- Ensuring that the College has performed a self-assessment of compliance with the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges and that this assessment is reflected in the statement.

We reviewed the Annual Governance Statement against the required guidance and we were satisfied that it was consistent with both the governance framework, key findings from relevant audit activity and management's assessment of its own compliance with the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges. The only exception that the College had with the 2016 Code of Good Governance is due to the role of Secretary to the Board.

At the College, the Board Secretary is also the Vice-Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs. This area is continuously reviewed and considered by the Board, and they have concluded that the risk of non-disclosure or non-compliance is mitigated by the appointment of two individuals who report directly to the Chair. We have considered this exception to the Code of Good Governance and, in line with prior years, are satisfied that the current arrangements does not pose an increased risk.

Enquiries of those charged with governance

In line with previous years, we formally wrote to the Chair of the Audit Committee to make inquiries around the College's governance arrangements, including consideration by those charged with governance in respect of compliance with laws and regulations; identification of fraud, error and breaches of internal control; and material litigation and claims. No matters were brought to our attention.

Internal audit's opinion for the year was based on its agreed audit plan, as approved by the Audit Committee. For 2021/22, the internal auditor has issued an annual report and has expressed an opinion that the College has a framework of controls in place that provides reasonable assurance regarding the effective and efficient achievement of objectives and the management of key risks and proper arrangements are in place to promote value for money and deliver best value.

External effectiveness review

All colleges are required to undertake an external effectiveness review (EER) at least every 3 years, in accordance with the Code of Good Governance. The College's external effectiveness review took place and was completed by March 2021, was considered by the Board in April 2021 and is now published on the College website. The report noted a high level of compliance with the Code. The report made eight recommendations for further enhancements which are being monitored for implementation by the Board. From a review of implementation progress, the majority of these have been fully or partially implemented, with minor time input required for the remainder of the actions. As there has been good progress in relation to the recommendations raised, we are satisfied with the recommendation being closed.

Meetings of Committees

We have considered the frequency of meetings during the year for the various sub-committees of the Board. We are satisfied that there have been sufficient meetings held for all committees within the year, except for the Remuneration Committee. The Remuneration Committee had no meetings throughout the year due to the meetings held falling in June 2021 and August 2022 which are both on either side of the financial year. We are satisfied that although there have been no meetings within the year, the appropriate consideration has taken place at these meetings.

Registers of interest by those charged with governance

In the previous year the College had declarations of interest not provided in a timely manner, which has led to an impact on management's assessment and disclosure preparation. This resulted in a recommendation on this matter in the prior year's audit. We have considered this in the current year and are satisfied that the process has improved. All relevant individuals were made aware of the importance of providing the returns in a timely manner and these have all been provided with no issues in the current year. This has allowed management's assessment to be performed and the necessary disclosures to be included within the financial statements.

Remuneration of those charged with Governance

During the prior year audit, there was a recommendation raised surrounding the remuneration of the Chair of the Board as they were paid above the maximum permitted remuneration. We followed up on this matters as part of the 2021/22 audit and are satisfied that appropriate controls have been introduced to prevent a recurrence. The excess remuneration was repaid by the Chair of the Board during 2021/22. The College is now keeping a log of how many days the Chair of the Board provides services to the College.

Value for Money

Our overall assessment: Green

The College has a strategic plan for the period 2022-2025, 'making learning work'. The College has continued to report its performance against its strategic plan, including key measures within the financial statements. The College Board consider regular updates against the Strategic Plan throughout the year. The College's arrangements for considering value for money have not been significantly changed from the previous year.

The College should continue to closely monitor performance and assess what steps can be taken to improve student engagement and experience.

We have no matters to report in respect of the College's arrangements around procurement or staff severance.

Performance Reporting

The College has a strategic plan for the period 2022-2025, 'making learning work". The plan has been amended from the previous strategic plan which covered the period of 2017-2022. The changes to the plan were updated from the six key strategic priorities for the College and this was adapted to four key strategic priorities.

20The College continued to monitor its performance throughout the 2021/22 financial year and has reported on the key aspects of its performance in its financial statements. The reporting includes:

- Summary of financial performance in the year against key performance indicators, including comparatives for the prior year;
- Summary of performance against each strategic priority for the College; and
- Performance in relation to key student targets around recruitment, retention and experience in the year.

The College has a dedicated area of the website for Quality and Performance Information where it publishes its performance indicators annually. The 2021/22 performance indicators have not yet been published, although this is in line with the timetable from previous years and is expected to be published later in 2022.

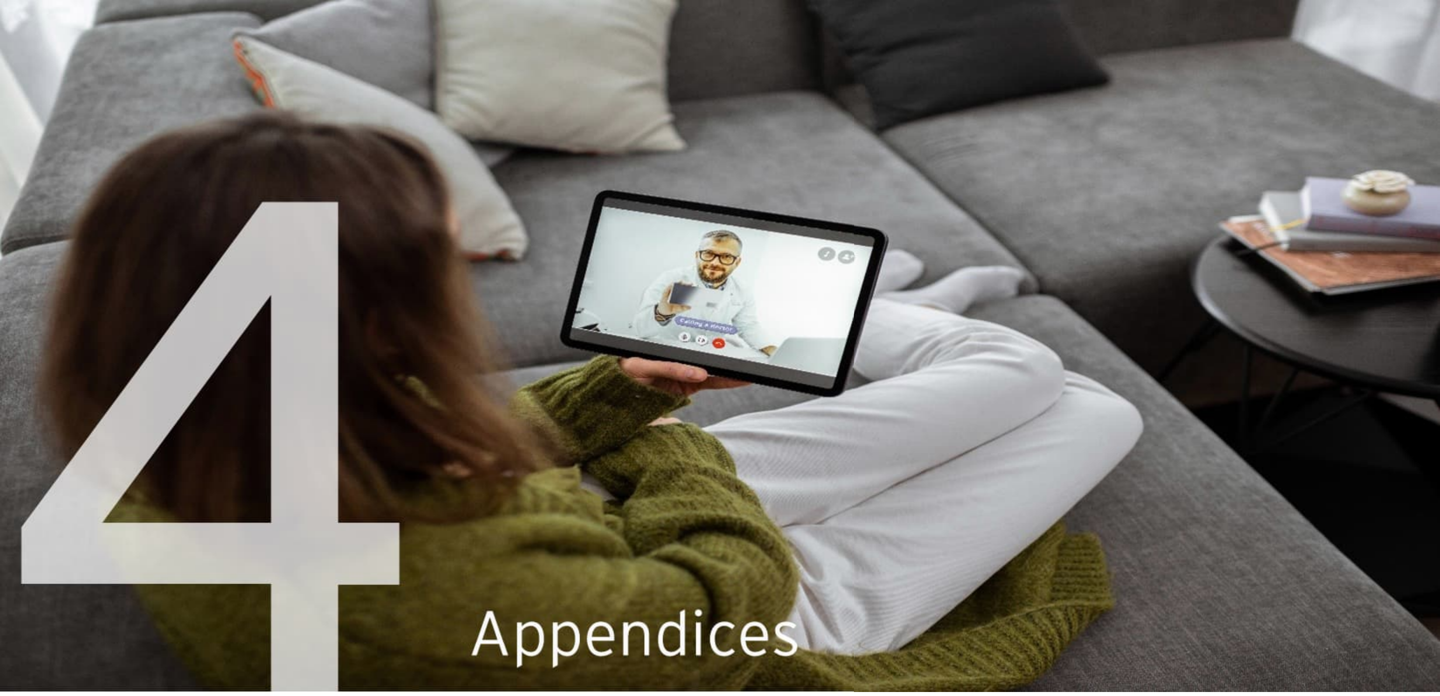
We have reviewed the financial statements for the performance analysis and the College delivered below the target for the number of credits within the year by 264 credits (0.29%). This shortfall related to YPG's which were dealt with financially during the year. As such, there is no expected clawback from Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and therefore has no further financial impact.

Voluntary Severance Scheme

During 2021/22, 27 employees left under voluntary redundancies. The expected outcome of the voluntary severance was to assist with cost savings and to continue to deliver services in line with the strategic plan. We confirmed that the College followed the procedures outlined within the SFC's guidance for seeking approval for severance schemes and settlement agreements for all of these.

Procurement arrangements

We considered the College's procurement arrangements to specifically support the achievement of value for money. We are satisfied that procurement arrangements throughout the financial year continued to be reported and scrutinised by the relevant committees. It has been noted that there have been delays in the procurement process for large tenders and extensions have been taken instead of going to tender during the year. This has been due to management time being required on other matters. This has not been deemed as an issue in relation to the College's procurement process and has been subject to scrutiny by the Board.



4 Appendices

Appendix A: audited body's responsibilities

Appendix B: independence and audit quality

Appendix C: required auditor communications

Appendix D: Summary of adjusted and unadjusted errors identified during the audit

Appendix E: Action plan, including follow up on recommendations from prior year

Appendix F: Timing and deliverables of the audit

Appendix A: Code of Audit Practice Responsibilities

Audited Body's Responsibilities

Corporate Governance	Each body, through its chief executive or accountable officer, is responsible for establishing arrangements to ensure the proper conduct of its affairs including the legality of activities and transactions, and for monitoring the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. Audited bodies should involve those charged with governance (including audit, risk and governance committees or equivalent) in monitoring these arrangements.
Financial Statements and related reports	Audited bodies must prepare an annual report and accounts containing financial statements and other related reports. They have responsibility for: • preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of their financial position and their expenditure and income, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and relevant legislation. • maintaining accounting records and working papers that have been prepared to an acceptable professional standard and support their financial statements and related reports disclosures. • ensuring the regularity of transactions, by putting in place systems of internal control to ensure that they are in accordance with the appropriate authority. • maintaining proper accounting records. • preparing and publishing, along with their financial statements, an annual governance statement, management commentary (or equivalent) and a remuneration report that are consistent with the disclosures made in the financial statements. Management commentary should be fair, balanced and understandable and also clearly address the longer-term financial sustainability of the body. • Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, should communicate clearly and concisely relevant information to users about the entity and its financial performance, including providing adequate disclosures in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. Audited bodies are responsible for developing and implementing effective systems of internal control as well as financial, operational and compliance controls. These systems should support the achievement of their objectives and safeguard and secure value for money from the public funds at their disposal. They are also responsible for establishing effective and appropriate internal audit and risk-management functions.
Standards of conduct / prevention and detection of fraud and error	Audited bodies are responsible for establishing arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and irregularities, bribery and corruption and also to ensure that their affairs are managed in accordance with proper standards of conduct by putting proper arrangements in place.
Standards of conduct / prevention and detection of fraud and error	Audited bodies are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to ensure that their financial position is soundly based having regard to: • such financial monitoring and reporting arrangements as may be specified • compliance with any statutory financial requirements and achievement of financial targets • balances and reserves, including strategies about levels and their future use • how they plan to deal with uncertainty in the medium and longer term • the impact of planned future policies and foreseeable developments on their financial position.
Best Value	The Scottish Public Finance Manual sets out that accountable officers appointed by the Principal Accountable Officer for the Scottish Administration have a specific responsibility to ensure that arrangements have been made to secure best value.

Appendix B: Independence and audit quality

Professional ethical standards, and the Terms of our Appointment, require us to communicate all significant facts and matters that have a bearing on EY's objectivity and independence as auditor of the College.

Matters that we are required to communicate

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY), its directors and senior management and affiliates, and you, including all services provided by us and our network to you, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 August 2021 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity.

Confirmations

We are not aware of any inconsistencies between the College's policy for the supply of non audit services and FRC Ethical Standard. We are not aware of any apparent breach of that policy.

We confirm that, in our professional judgment, Ernst & Young is independent, our integrity and objectivity is not compromised and we have complied with the FRC Ethical Standard.

We confirm that your engagement team (partners, senior managers and managers and all others involved with the audit) and others within the firm, the firm and network firms have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence.

Audit Fees

	2021/22	2020/21
Component of fee:		
Auditor remuneration – expected fee	£22,720	£22,500
Additional audit procedures (see below)	£2,000	£2,000
Consideration of ALF donation	£2,200	-
Audit Scotland fixed charges:		
Pooled costs	£1,270	£1,440
Contribution to Audit Scotland costs	£1,130	£940
Total fee	£29,320	£26,630

The expected fee for each body is set centrally by Audit Scotland, and assumes that it has sound governance arrangements in place and operating effectively throughout the year, prepares comprehensive and accurate draft financial statements and supporting schedules, and meets the agreed timetable for the audit. It also assumes there is no major change in respect of the scope of work in the year and an unqualified audit opinion resulting from the audit.

If the College's situation departs from any of these circumstances throughout the audit, it is expected that additional costs will be incurred through the course of the audit which will be subject to recovery in line with the agreed process and rates set out by Audit Scotland. Under this process, fees can be agreed between the auditor and audited body by varying the auditor remuneration by up to 20% above the level set, or more with the approval of Audit Scotland. We outlined in our audit plan to the committee in May that we have included in the fee estimate for the year the costs related to additional work required around going concern under the new ISA 570. In addition to that, an additional fee of £2,200 has been agreed with management in respect of additional audit work required for concluding on ALF donation accrual transaction.

Matters that we are required to communicate	International Standard on Quality Control (UK and Ireland) 1 (ISQC1) requires that a system of quality control is established, as part of financial audit procedures, to provide reasonable assurance that professional standards and regulatory and legal requirements are being complied with and that the independent auditor's report or opinion is appropriate in the circumstances. The EY 2022 UK Transparency Report can be accessed on our website at EY UK 2022 Transparency Report | EY UK. This material is published to provide a timely and relevant source of information about EY in general, and our audit business in particular. This includes our inaugural Audit Quality Report. The disclosures are extensive. For example, they explain our outlook and how we are structured and governed, including the role of our Independent Non-Executives and how we apply the requirements of the UK's Audit Firm Governance Code. We refer to the quality of our audits and our commitment to recruiting, developing and diversifying our people and talent pool. We also explain how we manage our risks and remain innovative and technologically advanced in what we do and how we do it. Maintaining high audit quality across all of our engagements is of paramount importance to us. Our transformational Audit Quality Programme continues and is a part of the global EY Sustainable Audit Quality Programme (SAQ). Our Audit Quality Board (AQB) continues to oversee all matters relating to audit quality and sets the agenda for the Audit Quality programme. The AQB meets monthly and also holds an annual strategy session. The AQB reports to the EY UK Board. The AQB receives regular updates on regulatory matters, results of internal and external reviews, results of root cause analysis, resourcing, the SAQ programme and pursuit approvals, as well as a comprehensive dashboard on quality measures. Our Audit Quality Support Team (AQST), which started within the SAQ programme, reviews 40 to 50 audits each audit cycle providing challenge and guidance to the engagement teams. These are in-depth reviews carried out by experienced auditors independent of the audit team. AQST reviews enhance the quality of both the audit under review and other audits on which team members apply the lessons learned. The AQST has now become a business-as-usual function.
Audit Quality Framework / Annual Audit Quality Report	Audit Scotland's Appointments and Assurance Team are responsible for applying the new Audit Quality Framework across all financial audits and performance and Best Value audits. This covers the quality of audit work undertaken by Audit Scotland staff and appointed firms. The team are independent of audit delivery and provide assurance on audit quality to the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission. We support Audit Scotland in their commitment to reporting on audit quality through responding to requests for information and providing the results of internal quality reviews undertaken in respect of relevant public sector audits in Scotland. The most recent audit quality report which covers our work at the College since appointment can be found at: Quality of public audit in Scotland annual report 2021/22 | Audit Scotland (audit-scotland.gov.uk)

Appendix C: Required communications

Required communication	Our reporting to you
Terms of engagement / Our responsibilities Confirmation by the audit, risk and governance committee of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties. Our responsibilities are as set out in our engagement letter.	Audit Scotland Terms of Appointment letter – audit to be undertaken in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice
Planning and audit approach Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team.	Annual Audit Plan
Significant findings from the audit • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management • Written representations that we are seeking • Expected modifications to the audit report • Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process	Annual Audit Plan Annual Audit Report
Going concern Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including: • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements	Annual Audit Report
Misstatements • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods • A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected • Corrected misstatements that are significant • Material misstatements corrected by management	Annual Audit Report
Fraud • Enquiries of the audit, risk and governance committee to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist • A discussion of any other matters related to fraud	Annual Audit Report

Required communication	Our reporting to you
Consideration of laws and regulations • Audit findings regarding non-compliance where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional. This communication is subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off • Enquiry of the audit and risk committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Committee may be aware of	Annual Audit Report (to be issued on completion of audit work) or as occurring if material.
Related parties Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable: • Non-disclosure by management • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions • Disagreement over disclosures • Non-compliance with laws and regulations • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity	No significant matters have been identified.
Independence Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as: • The principal threats • Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness • An overall assessment of threats and safeguards • Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence	Annual Audit Plan This Annual Audit Report – Appendix B
Internal controls Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	This Annual Audit Report – no significant deficiencies reported
Subsequent events Where appropriate, asking the audit, risk and governance committee whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements.	We have asked management and those charged with governance. We have no matters to report.
Material inconsistencies Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	This Annual Audit Report

Appendix D: Adjusted and unadjusted errors identified during the audit

This appendix sets out the significant adjustments processed as part of finalisation of the financial statements. There was one unadjusted audit difference identified above our reporting threshold.

Adjusted differences				
No.	Description	Income and Expenditure Impact / £000's	Other Comprehensive Income £000's	Balance Sheet Impact / £000's
1	*Pension Increase Order*		Dr Pension Reserve 2,975	Cr Pension Provision 2,975

Unadjusted differences				
No.	Description	Income and Expenditure Impact / £000's	Other Comprehensive Income £000's	Balance Sheet Impact / £000's
1	*SFC fuel change income not yet confirmed*	*Dr SFC Income 105*		Cr Accrued Income 105

Appendix E: Action Plan, including follow up on prior year recommendations

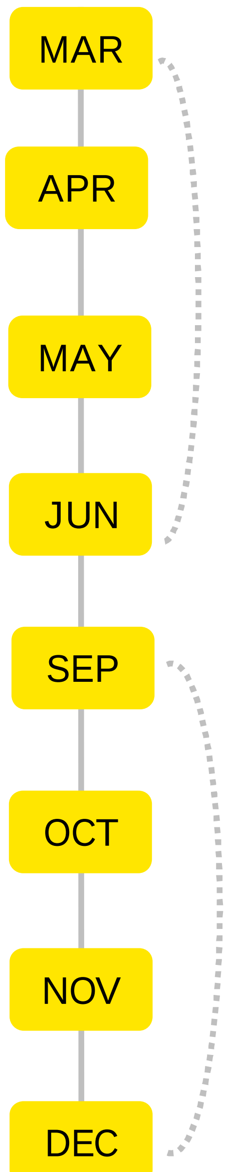
This action plan summarises specific recommendations included elsewhere within this Annual Audit Report. We have graded these findings according to our consideration of their priority for the College or management to action.

Classification of recommendations			
Grade 1: Key risks and / or significant deficiencies which are critical to the achievement of strategic objectives. Consequently management needs to address and seek resolution urgently.		Grade 2: Risks or potential weaknesses which impact on individual objectives, or impact the operation of a single process, and so require prompt but not immediate action by management.	Grade 3: Less significant issues and / or areas for improvement which we consider merit attention but do not require to be prioritised by management.
No.	Findings and / or risk	Recommendation / grading	Management response / Implementation timeframe / 2022 update
1	While the FFR submission process itself is robust, currently the College does not explicitly align its financial forecasts to its overall strategic or operational objectives going forward. Grade 2	Good practice around financial planning should include alignment of financial plans to the College's overall strategy to ensure they are complimentary and that the College has sufficient resources to meet its objectives. We have outlined our consideration of the College's FFR in the financial sustainability section of our wider scope reporting.	We have outlined our consideration of the College's FFR in the financial sustainability section of our wider scope reporting.
2	In the prior year, we noted that a number of registers of interest were not provided by members in a timely manner, impacting management's assessment and disclosure preparation. Grade 2	The College should ensure members return registers of interest declarations in a timely manner to support effective governance around conflicts and financial statements disclosures.	2021/22 Update: All relevant individuals have been made aware of the importance of providing the returns in a timely manner and these have all been provided with no issues in the current year. This has allowed management's assessment to be performed and the necessary disclosures to be included within the financial statements. We are satisfied that this has been corrected in the current year.

No.	Findings and / or risk	Recommendation / grading	Management response / Implementation timeframe
3	In the prior year, management notified us that the Board Chair was paid above the maximum remuneration as disclosed in the financial statements for additional project work. The College was required to obtain an advance approval of this payment from the Scottish Government, however this was not completed. The College tried to seek retrospective approval which was rejected, and had to claw back the overpayment from the chair. Grade 1	The College should ensure all payments to Board members are considered and approved as required in advance of payments being made.	2021/22 update: Excess remuneration has been repaid by the Chair during 2021/22. The College is now keeping a log of how many days the Chair is allowed to work and also the number of days that they have worked per month. We are satisfied that this has been corrected in the current year.

Appendix F: Timing and deliverables of the audit

We deliver our audit in accordance with the timeline set by the College, in accordance with guidance from Audit Scotland. Below is a timetable showing the key stages of the audit and the deliverables through the 2021/22 audit cycle.



Audit Activity	Deliverable	Timing
• Walkthroughs	Completion of internal documentation	April 2022
• Audit planning and setting scope and strategy for the 2021/22 audit	Annual Audit Plan	May 2022
• Year-end substantive audit fieldwork on unaudited financial statements	Audited Financial Statements	October – November 2022
• Conclude on results of audit procedures	Issue Annual Audit Report	December 2022
• Issue opinion on the College's financial statements	Submit Audit Scotland minimum dataset request	December 2022

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Ernst & Young LLP

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