

## News release

21 April, 2022

For immediate use

### Governance issues at South Lanarkshire College

**Independent audit was unable to conclude that governance at South Lanarkshire College was satisfactory over the last year.**

Auditors found a number of areas where the college did not fully comply with the Code of Good Governance for Scotland's Colleges at the start of the academic year 2021/22. This included the board not meeting for five months from June 2021, and the audit and risk committee not meeting for six months from May 2021.

In November 2021, the college's board agreed to commission two independent investigations into complaints and grievances against the chair of the board, interim clerk to the board, and the principal. The board also agreed to suspend the principal and interim clerk to the board while these investigations were ongoing. The chair of the board voluntarily stepped aside from his role for the same period. The investigations are still ongoing.

Earlier in 2021, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) commissioned an external review into governance at the college. A redacted copy of this report was provided to the South Lanarkshire board in October and its recommendations were included in a governance improvement plan prepared by the college. However, the level of redactions in the report meant the college's independent auditor could not say whether the action plan covers all the SFC's recommendations.

Stephen Boyle, Auditor General for Scotland, said:

"These governance issues risk preventing scrutiny of how South Lanarkshire College operates on behalf of its students, staff and the wider community.

"The improvement plan developed by the college is an important step forward. It is essential that the board and senior management team now take ownership of the plan and work together to ensure it is delivered."

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#### Notes to editors

1. This release is about a Section 22 report, where the Auditor General can directly raise his concerns with Parliament and the public arising from annual audit work under Section 22 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act.
2. At the point of finalising this report, the independent investigations had not been completed. The Auditor General is therefore unable to comment on their conclusions.
3. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are available at [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)
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highest standards; and checks whether they achieve value for money. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament

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