



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE 22nd MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 11 JUNE 2010 AT 10.30AM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA

Present: Bill Smith, Chairperson
Ann Hope
Eamonn O'Neill
Geraldine Rice

In attendance: Peter O'Neill, Chief Executive
Lorraine Hamill, Finance Supervisor
Don Leeson, Head of Corporate Services
Gerald Rogan, Tribal Group plc (agenda items 1-4)
Pauline Poots, Internal Auditor, ASM Horwath
(agenda items 1-5)

Apologies: Alan Henry

1. Minutes of the previous meetings (25 February 2010)

- 1.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 25 February 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Matters arising

2.1 The Committee noted the Commission's decision, following Daphne Trimble's departure, not to nominate another Commissioner to join the Audit and Risk Management Committee for the time being (paragraph 2.1 of the minutes of the last meeting refers). Membership of the Committee will be reviewed when new Commissioners are appointed towards the end of the year.

2.2 The Committee noted that the amended ICT Policies and Procedures will be discussed at the Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC) meeting on 15 June 2010, and then submitted to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for approval (paragraph 2.3 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).

**Action: Head of Communications and Education /
Head of Corporate Services**

2.3 Feedback from staff on the draft Information Assurance Policy has been considered by the Management Team. It will be finalised and then submitted to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for approval (paragraph 2.4 of the minutes of the previous meeting refers).

Action: Chief Executive

2.4 A further draft of the new Internal Complaints Procedure, which incorporates the Grievance Procedure and Dignity at Work Policy, will be discussed at the JNCC meeting on 15 June 2010 and then submitted to the Audit and Risk Management Committee for approval (paragraph 2.5 of the previous minutes refers).

Action: Head of Corporate Services

3. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2009-10

3.1 The Committee considered the draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2009-10, with a particular focus on the Statement on Internal Control.

3.2 The Committee approved the draft Annual Report and Accounts for submission to the Commission, subject to agreed changes.

Action: Head of Corporate Services

3.3 The Committee noted that the Annual Report and Accounts are due to be audited during the week commencing 16 August 2010.

- 3.4 The Committee thanked everyone involved in preparing the draft Annual Report and Accounts.

4. Internal Audit

Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2009–10

- 4.1 The Committee noted the annual Internal Audit Assurance Report for 2009–10.
- 4.2 The Committee noted that the Internal Auditor had given a substantial assurance rating for the Commission's financial and management information arrangements and provision, which is an exceptional achievement.

Progress in implementing Internal Audit recommendations

- 4.3 The Committee noted the progress made in implementing the recommendations, which arose from last year's audit.
- 4.4 Action to implement the two outstanding recommendations, which relate to the Commission's legal services, is expected to be completed shortly and signed-off by the Legal Committee in August 2010.

Action: Head of Legal Services, Policy and Research

- 4.5 Staff were commended on the progress in implementing the recommendations.
- 4.6 The draft Internal Audit Plan for 2010–11 will be submitted to the next Committee meeting for approval.

Action: Internal Auditor / Head of Corporate Services

5. Corporate Risk Management

- 5.1 The Committee reviewed the Risk Register for 2010–11 and the progress of activities to minimise the likelihood or impact of identified risks.

6. Draft Revised Standing Orders for Commission meetings

- 6.1 The Committee considered proposed revised Standing Orders for Commission meetings.

- 6.2 The Committee proposed a number of changes to the Standing Orders. These will be incorporated in the new Code of Governance, which will be submitted for discussion at the next Commission meeting, with a copy sent to the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) for comment.

Action: Chief Executive

- 6.3 Personnel policies as they affect Commissioners will be discussed with Commissioners outside of the Committee meeting and incorporated into the draft Code of Governance for consideration at the next Commission meeting.

Action: Chief Executive

7. Staffing Issues

- 7.1 The Committee noted the outcome of an exit interview with a member of staff who had recently left the Commission.
- 7.2 The Committee recommended that summaries of the outcomes of grievances should be reported to Commission meetings by the Head of Corporate Services, together with progress reports on action resulting from them.

Action: Head of Corporate Services

8. Lessons from the job evaluation exercise

- 8.1 The Committee agreed that the broader lessons from the handling of the job evaluation exercise should be fed into the forthcoming management review.

Action: Chairperson

9. Consultation by CIPFA on the role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations

- 9.1 The Committee noted the consultation by CIPFA on the role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations.
- 9.2 It was agreed that the Commission will use the guide where appropriate, but would not respond to the consultation, which is more relevant to larger organisations.

10. Contracts

- 10.1 The Committee noted that there had been no single tender action over £5,000 for the period January to March 2010.

- 10.2 The Committee reviewed the information on purchases made over £1,000.
- 10.3 The Committee noted the increase in costs for a confidential personnel matter. The Head of Corporate Services will brief the Chairperson on the contract management and governance aspects of this issue outside of the meeting.
Action: Head of Corporate Services / Chairperson

11. Expenses of the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive

- 11.1 The Committee reviewed the expenses of the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive for the period to the end of March 2010.
- 11.2 A query arose over an aspect of the Chief Executive's expenses, which will be discussed further outside of the meeting.
Action: Chairperson / Chief Executive

12. International Events

- 12.1 The Committee reviewed the international events attended by Commissioners and staff.

13. Any other business

- 13.1 The Chairperson and Head of Corporate Services will consider which sister organisation's audit committee should benchmarked against as part of the Committee's continuous improvement arrangements.
Action: Chairperson / Head of Corporate Services
- 13.2 It was agreed to conduct a skills audit of Committee members at the next meeting, and review the Committee's Learning and Development Plan for 2010-11 in light of this.
Action: Head of Corporate Services

14. Date of next meeting

- 14.1 The next meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee will take place on 2 September 2010 at 10.30 am.