



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 2.30 PM ON
TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER 2014 AT THE OFFICE OF THE
NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

Present: Neil Bodger, Chairperson
Christine Collins (from 3.15pm)
John Corey
Alan McBride

In attendance: Virginia McVea, Director
Lorraine Hamill, Finance and Administration
Manager
Barbara Smith, General Administrator
Amanda McMaw, ASM
Stephen Morffew, National Audit Office (By
telephone)

Apologies: Duncan Russell, National Audit Office
Simon Burrows, Northern Ireland Office
Brian Cassidy, Northern Ireland Office

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2014

- 1.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 16 June 2014 were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Matters arising

2.1 Online Information and Security Training for Commissioners and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Management Committee is ongoing. The Director advised the Committee that the intention had been to undertake this training on the day of a Commissioners' meeting, however, due to time constraints on these days it had not yet been possible to complete this training. This will be tabled for a forthcoming Commissioners' meeting. (Paragraph 2.1 of the previous minutes refers).

Action: Committee Members

2.2 The Director advised the Committee that the NIO and NIHRC Framework document is with the NIO following amendments. NIHRC is waiting on a response from the NIO. (Paragraph 2.4 of previous minutes refers).

2.3 The Finance and Administration Manager advised the Committee that the Business Continuity Plan had been shared with all staff at the last staff meeting (following the return of the Communications Worker from maternity leave and the commencement of the new Chief Commissioner). The plan is due to be revised again in December 2014. The Director advised a meeting had taken place with NIHRC's IT providers (Equality Commission) in relation to costs and the proposed move to new premises. (Paragraph 2.5 of the previous minutes refers).

2.4 The Committee was advised by ASM that the 2014-15 Annual Internal Audit Plan had been revised. (Paragraph 3.4 of the previous minutes refers).

2.5 The Committee agreed the traffic light status in relation to the implementation of the Internal Audit recommendations from 2013-14 was beneficial. (Paragraph 3.5 of the previous minutes refers).

2.6 The Committee discussed the budget cuts proposed by the NIO for 2015-16. (Paragraph 5.2 of the previous minutes refers).

2.7 The Director advised the Committee that tax implications had been discussed at length at the Commission meeting and the issue was being raised with HMRC. (Paragraph 6.2 of the previous minutes refers).

Action: Director

3. Internal Audit

- 3.1 The Committee were briefed on the ASM Internal Audit Report – Advice to Government and Research (including investigations). ASM advised the Committee of a ‘Satisfactory’ assurance rating and 7 recommendations which had been accepted by management. The Director and Finance and Administration Manager updated the Committee on progress in relation to the recommendations.

The Finance and Administration Manager advised the Committee that ASM will be undertaking training with staff on the afternoons of 2nd and 3rd December 2014 in relation to internal audit and risk management.

- 3.2 The Committee were briefed on the Internal Audit Progress Reports and were provided with status updates by ASM. The final report on Advice to Government and Research (including investigations) has been issued (as discussed under 3.1 above) and the financial systems field work has been complete. ASM are scheduled to meet with NIHRC on 28 October 2014 to discuss the latter.

4. Corporate Risk Register 2014-15

- 4.1 The Committee discussed the Risk Register 2014-15 and the Director advised the Committee of progress against the recommendations.

The Committee discussed the inclusion of sub-sections under each overarching risk, to provide further details and the consequences attached to each risk. It was agreed by the Committee that the full corporate risk register would be displayed on a screen at the next meeting for discussion in further detail.

Action: Finance and Administration Manager

5. National Audit Office (NAO) Audit Planning Report on the 2014-15 Financial Statement Audit

- 5.1 The National Audit Office updated the Committee on the Audit Planning Report on the 2014-15 financial statement audit. In essence this report is the same as the prior year, albeit, with a slight increase in fee. The

Director acknowledged the support of the National Audit Office in relation to staging this increase.

Christine Collins joined the meeting

6. Finance Report as at 30 September 2014

- 6.1 The Committee noted the Finance Report as at 30 September 2014.

Les Allamby joined the meeting for introduction to the Committee

7. High Value Purchases to 30 September 2014

- 7.1 The Committee noted the High Value Purchases to 30 September 2014.

8. International events to 30 September 2014

- 8.1 Nothing to report.

9. Expenses of the Chief Commissioner, Interim Chair and Director

- 9.1 The Committee reviewed the expenses of the Chief Commissioner, Interim Chair and Director.

10. Gifts and Hospitality Register

- 10.1 The Committee noted the gifts and hospitality given or received for the period to the end of September 2014.

11. Any other Business

- 11.1 The Finance and Administration Manager proposed including details of FOI requests and sickness absence statistics in future papers provided to the Committee. It was agreed by the Committee that this would be beneficial in terms of completeness.

Action: Finance and Administration Manager

The Director agreed to review the Code of Governance in relation to NIHRC's move to NICS policies and report back to the Committee.

Action: Director

12. Dates of the next meetings

12.1 The dates of the next meetings are:

- Monday 15 December 2014 at 10.30am
- 9 or 10 March 2015 (provisional dates)