



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**16 June 2025**

## **Minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee held in the offices of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission**

**Alfred House, 19-21 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8ED (Note: some members attended virtually via Microsoft Teams)**

**Present:** Sean Donaghy, Chairperson  
David Lavery CB, Commissioner (Online)  
Helen Henderson, Commissioner (Online)

**In Attendance:** David Russell, Chief Executive  
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs)  
Rhyannon Blythe, Director of Legal Services (Online)  
Jacqueline McClintock, Senior Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs Officer  
Darren Veighey, Administrative Officer (Minutes)  
Mark Lawther, Ernst & Young (EY)  
Aidan Dummigan, Ernst & Young (EY)  
Elaine Manak, National Audit Office (NAO) (Online)  
Philip Whitehead, Sumer NI  
Richard Sharpe, Northern Ireland Office (NIO) (Online)

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from:  
Stephen White, Commissioner  
Claire Martin, Director (Engagement and Communications)

## 2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

## 3. Chairman's business

- 3.1 Nothing to report.

## 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024

- 4.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 12 December 2024 were agreed as an accurate record.

**Action: Minutes of 12 December 2024 meeting to be uploaded to the Commission's website**

## 5. Matters arising from the meeting held on 12 December 2024

- 5.1 There were no matters arising.

## 6. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25

- 6.1 The Senior Finance, Personnel, and Corporate Affairs Officer presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25, which focused on the following areas:

- Performance Analysis (Grant in Aid & Revaluation of Leasehold Improvements).
- Corporate Governance
- Remuneration and staff
- Parliamentary Accountability and Audit

- Comprehensive net expenditure
- Financial position
- Cash flows
- Changes in Taxpayers' Equity
- Notes to the financial statements

6.2 The Senior Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs Officer reported that the resource accounts disclosure was outstanding as the information would not be received from the Civil Service Pensions until 27 June 2025. This information would not have any effect on the overall net operating expenditure. It was noted that the information would be included in the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 on that date, shared with EY and the NAO for audit, and tabled for approval at the Commission board meeting on Monday 30 June 2025.

**Action: Resource Accounts information to be included in the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 for final approval at the Commission Board meeting on Monday 30 June 2025.**

6.3 The Chief Executive updated Commissioners on key risks facing the Commission, contingent liabilities and going concern wording. It was noted that the going concern wording would be updated on receipt of the delegated authority letter from the NIO, confirming the Commission's budget for 2025-26 and going forward.

**Action: Going concern wording to be updated in the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.**

6.4 The Committee approved the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25 subject to the inclusion of the resource accounts and the going concern wording being finalised between the NIO and EY.

## 7. National Audit Office Completion Report 2024-25

7.1 Mark Lawther and Aidan Dummigan of EY gave an overview of the draft National Audit Office Completion Report 2024-25.

7.2 The report included key audit findings, other audit findings, and appendices.

7.3 It was noted that there were two unadjusted misstatements in the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.

The Committee agreed that the unadjusted misstatements did not require correction, as the effect of it was nil on the statement of comprehensive net expenditure and/or the statement of financial position and one misstatement was a judgemental variance.

7.4 The Committee accepted the report.

## **8. Oral update from Chief Executive**

8.1 The Chief Executive confirmed that the comprehensive spending review had concluded and the Commission was awaiting confirmation of its budget for 2025-26 and for the further three years. The Chief Executive and Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) would continue to meet with the NIO Finance Team to take this forward.

## **9. Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) update**

9.1 The Director provided an update in relation to the following areas:

- Finance reports for May 2025 for Core and Dedicated Mechanism.
- Absence statistics for period ended 31 May 2025, including an update for the year-ended 31 March 2025.
- High Value Purchases 1 April 2025 – 31 May 2025.
- Personnel issues including the Solicitor vacancy within the legal team (shortlisting and interview process).

## **10. Freedom of Information Requests**

10.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel, and Corporate Affairs) gave an overview of the Freedom of Information requests for the following periods:

- November 2024 – March 2025
- April 2025

10.2 The Director also notified commissioners of a complaint made to the Information Commission Office and confirmed that a Decision Notice had been received noting that the complaint had not been upheld.

## 11. Internal Audit Update

11.1 Philip Whitehead, Sumer NI updated Commissioners regarding the recent internal audits on:

- Financial Systems
- IT Systems and Security
- Follow up Review

11.2 The annual internal audit assurance report was also presented to the Committee for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025. The report provided a satisfactory assurance that the Commission's systems in relation to risk management, control and governance were adequate and operated effectively.

## 12. Any Other Business

12.1 There being no other business the meeting closed at 11.15am.

## 13. Date of next meeting

13.1 The next Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting will be held in September 2025 – date to be confirmed.

**Action: Date to be arranged for September.**