



**AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT 10.00AM
ON WEDNESDAY 14TH MARCH 2018
IN THE OFFICES OF THE
NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION,
TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET, BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

Present: Joe McKnight, Chairperson
Helen Ferguson
Eddie Rooney
Graham Shields

In attendance: David Russell, Chief Executive
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and
Investigations, and Advice to Government)
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel &
Corporate Affairs)
Barbara Smith, General Administrator
Jonathan Broadley, NAO (by telephone)
Anthony McKibben, Grant Thornton
Leanda Thompson, NIO

1.0 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were recorded.

Apologies: Claire Martin, Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs)
Andrew Scholes, Policy Advisor, NIO

2.0 Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

3.0 Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

4.0 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 6 December 2017

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 6 December 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

5.0 Matters arising from 6 December 2017 Minutes

Recruitment – the Committee agreed to cover this item under 6.0, as below (item 5.3 of the last minutes refers).

6.0 Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) Report

6.1 Financial Expenditure as at 28 February 2018

The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) provided a detailed overview of the financial report, including opening and closing accruals and prepayments, commitments to the end of the financial year and provided information on any variances in expenditure.

The Committee was updated on recruitment. The Chief Executive advised the Committee that no response had yet been received from the NIO in relation to the business case for the additional funding to create the temporary Deputy Principal (DP) post. The Chief Executive highlighted the risk of proceeding with the recruitment exercise in the absence of a response from the NIO.

High Value Purchases as at 28 February 2018

The Committee noted the High Value Purchases to 28 February 2018.

Absence Statistics as at 28 February 2018

The absence statistics as at 28 February 2018 were reviewed and it was noted that sickness absence was lower than for the same period last year.

Freedom of Information

The Committee was advised of recent Freedom of Information requests.

External Audit

The Committee was updated on the external audit, which had taken place in week commencing 12 February 2018 and advised the final external audit will take place week commencing 14 May 2018. The annual accounts are scheduled to be signed off by end June 2018 and submitted the first week of July 2018.

Premises

The Committee was updated on negotiations with the landlord in respect of the office move.

Fraud Awareness Training

The Committee was advised of potential training courses for Fraud Awareness, to be carried out by both staff and Commissioners. The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) will circulate details of the proposed course to Committee members.

Action: The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to circulate details of proposed training course to Committee members.

Information Assurance

The Committee was advised that an Information Assurance report had been submitted to the NIO. The Committee was updated on proposals for training on Information Assurance and possible providers and agreed to discuss at the next meeting. A general discussion followed in relation to the requirements of GDPR and data retention. The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) will circulate a copy of the information asset register to Committee members.

Action: Discussion of training at next meeting. The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to circulate information asset register to Committee members.

Business Continuity Plan

The Committee was advised the Business Continuity Plan had been successfully tested in terms of contacting all staff.

7.0 Internal Audit Update – Anthony McKibbin, Grant Thornton

Revised Internal Audit Strategy & Revised Annual Audit Plan 2017/18

The Committee was advised of a revision to the number of days required to carry out the Overview of Statutory Remit/Operations audit work. This has been increased from 5 to 10 days, resulting in the total number of audit days for this year increasing from 19 to 24. A general discussion followed in relation to the work to be undertaken.

Draft Terms of Reference for Review of Finance & Human Resources Systems

The Committee was advised that the Draft Terms of Reference had been agreed with management and work will commence week commencing 19 March 2018.

Draft Terms of Reference for Overview of the Statutory Review/Operations (under the NI Act)

The Committee was advised that the Draft Terms of Reference had been agreed with management. The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) will liaise with Commissioners to schedule dates to meet with the auditors undertaking this work.

Action : The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to liaise with Commissioners to agree dates to meet internal auditors.

8.0 National Audit Office Update – Jonathan Broadley

The Committee was updated on progress and recommendations from the interim audit.

9.0 Corporate Risk Register 2017-18

The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) and the Chief Executive updated the Committee on the Commission's risk register.

10.0 Expenses of the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive

The Committee reviewed the expenses of the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive and approved the claims.

11.0 Gifts and Hospitality Register (September 2017 – February 2018)

The Committee reviewed the gifts and hospitality register (provided and received) to February 2018.

12.0 International Travel (October 2017 – February 2018)

The Committee reviewed the international travel attended by Commissioners and staff for the period to February 2018.

13.0 Annual Self Assessment

A general discussion took place in relation to Annual Self Assessment and the Committee agreed this would be a difficult exercise given the recent appointment of the Commissioners. The NAO agreed to forward a good practice guide for the Committee to consider in respect of possible benchmarking against other audit committees and to assist in undertaking a skills audit. It was agreed the Committee would discuss this item again at the next meeting.

Action: NAO to forward good practice guide. Item to be discussed at next meeting.

14.0 Draft Business Plan

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the Draft Business Plan.

15.0 Related Party Declarations 2017/18 and Register of Interests 2018/19

The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) advised the Committee that copies of Related Party Declarations and Register of Interests will be forwarded to Committee members for review and sign off.

Action: The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to forward copies of the Related Party Declarations 2017/18 and Register of Interests 2018/19 to Committee Members.

16.0 Any other Business

There were no items of other business.

17.0 Dates of Next Meetings

The dates of the next meetings were agreed, as follows:

Thursday 28 June 2018 at 10am
Monday 17 September 2018 at 10.00am
Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 10.00am
Monday 11 March 2019 at 10.00am

The meeting closed at 11:30 am.