

**17 September 2018 at 10.00am**

## **Minutes of the Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting**

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

David Russell, Chief Executive  
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, Research and  
Investigations and Advice to Government)  
Barbara Smith, General Administrator (Minutes)

Chris Haugh, Grant Thornton  
Andrew Scholes, Northern Ireland Office (NIO)  
Lorraine Andrews, Northern Ireland Office (NIO)

Jonathan Broadley, National Audit Office (NAO) (by telephone)

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

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

Apologies: Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and  
Corporate Affairs)  
Claire Martin, Director (Communications, Information  
and Education, Public and Political Affairs)

## 2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No Declarations of Interest were declared.

## 3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 There was no Chairperson's Business.

## 4. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 28 June 2018

4.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 28 June 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

## 5. Matters Arising from 28 June 2018

5.1 *Premises (Paragraph 6.0 of the 14 March 2018 minutes refers)* – the Chief Executive provided an update on recent correspondence issued to the letting agent.

5.2 *Fraud Awareness Training (Paragraph 6.0 of the 14 March 2018 minutes refers)* – the training will be undertaken in due course.

5.3 *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Checklist (Paragraph 13.0 of the 28 June 2018 minutes refers)* – the Chairperson apologised for the delay in undertaking this work. This will be addressed and circulated to members of the Committee.

**Action: The Chairperson to undertake work on the checklist and circulate to members of the Committee.**

## 6. Director (Finance, Personnel & Corporate Affairs) Report

- **Financial Expenditure as at 31 August 2018**

6.1 The Chief Executive provided an overview of the financial report to 31 August 2018.

- **High Value Purchases as at 31 August 2018**

6.2 The Committee noted the High Value Purchases to 31 August 2018.

- **Absence Statistics as at 31 August 2018**

6.3 The absence statistics as at 31 August 2018 were reviewed.

## 7. Internal Audit Update – Chris Haugh – Grant Thornton

7.1 The Committee were advised that Grant Thornton were awaiting management responses on the Review of the Statutory Remit and Operations report. Once responses are received this will be issued as a final report.

The Chief Executive confirmed the recommendations had been accepted and actioned, but agreed to formally respond to Grant Thornton.

**Action: The Chief Executive to provide formal response to Grant Thornton in relation to the Review of Statutory Remit and Operations report.**

## **8. Implementation of Audit Recommendations**

- **Review of Finance and Human Resource System – Detailing Progress**

8.1 The Committee discussed the progress report for the Review of Finance and Human Resource System and approved the recommended improvement actions contained therein.

- **Review of Internal Communications – Follow Up Report**

8.2 The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Director (Communications, Information and Education, Public and Political Affairs) had recently met with Grant Thornton. All recommendations were accepted (apart from one relating to the requirement for staff to sign off on the usage of social media/email). The Chief Executive advised the Committee that all Commissioners had received a copy of the policies relating to social media/email usage.

## **9. National Audit Office Update - Jonathan Broadley, NAO**

9.1 The Committee were advised the NAO are currently working on the audit plan, which they will present to the next meeting. The Committee were further advised that a new Director is in place (Paul Keane).

## **10 Corporate Risk Register 2018-19**

10.1 The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the Commission's risk register.

## 11 GDPR

- **Information Asset Register**

11.1 The Committee approved the Information Asset Register.

- **Data Retention and Disposal Schedule**

11.2 The Committee discussed a query raised in relation to the retention period of 1 year for 1.3 - Legal Enquiries and whether it should be the same as the retention period of 6 years for 1.1 - Litigation. The Chief Executive explained the reasoning behind the decision to retain this data for the 1-year period and the Committee approved this decision and the document in its entirety.

- **NIO and ALBs GDPR Preparedness Final Interim Audit Report**

11.3 The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the report and advised that the Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) continues to attend meetings of this group as a watching brief. Discussion followed in relation to the Policy on Removeable Media and the current process in place. The Chief Executive agreed to discuss the issue further with the Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) and report back to the Committee.

**Action: The Chief Executive to discuss the current process in place with the Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) and report back to the Committee.**

## 12 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Checklist

12.1 Already covered under paragraph 5.3 – Matters Arising from 28 June 2018.

**Action: The Chairperson to undertake work on the checklist and circulate to members of the Committee.**

## **13 Expenses of Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive**

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

## **14 Gifts and Hospitality Register (April – August 2018)**

14.1 The Committee reviewed the Gifts and Hospitality Register (April – August 2018).

## **15 International Travel**

15.1 The Committee reviewed International Travel.

## **16 Information Papers**

- **Equality Scheme Progress Report**

16.1 The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Equality Scheme Progress Report had been completed and submitted and that the NIHRC are awaiting a response from the ECNI.

- **Workforce Projections**

16.2 The Chief Executive updated the Committee in relation to Workforce Projections.

- **Budget Build – August Monitoring Round**

16.3 The Chief Executive updated the Committee in relation to the August Monitoring Round.

- **Framework Document with the NIO**

16.4 The Chief Executive advised the Committee of the work undertaken with the NIO in relation to the Framework Document. Discussion followed in relation to the reference to “novel, contentious or repercussive proposals” (Page 13 of the Framework Document). The Committee asked the Chief Executive to provide assurance that this provision would not interfere with the Commission’s independence. The Chief Executive confirmed that this had been discussed with the NIO and an assurance had been provided.

## **17 Any Other Business**

### **Brexit**

17.1 The Chief Executive advised the Committee of a proposed joint mechanism in relation to Brexit, which involves the NIHRC, ECNI and IHREC. Meetings are currently ongoing both singularly and jointly with the ECNI. The Chief Executive further advised a paper will be presented at the forthcoming Commission Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and stated that any role for the NIHRC would result in significant governance and resource impacts.

## **18 Close**

18.1 The meeting closed at 11.11am.

**Next meeting date Wednesday 12th December 2018 at 10.00am.**