



NORTHERN  
IRELAND  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS  
COMMISSION

**AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE 12<sup>th</sup> MEETING**  
**HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE 2008 AT 3.00PM**  
**AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET,**  
**BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

**Present:** Bill Smith, Chairperson  
Alan Henry  
Eamonn O'Neill  
Daphne Trimble

**Apologies:** Geraldine Rice

**In attendance:** Peter O'Neill, Chief Executive  
Don Leeson, Head of Corporate Services  
Lorraine Hamill, Finance Supervisor  
Joe Copeland, Helm Corporation

**1. Minutes of the previous meeting (28 April 2008)**

1.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 28 April 2008 were agreed as an accurate record.

**2. Matters arising**

2.1 The Chief Executive reported that appraisal meetings between the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners are scheduled to begin shortly and will include an opportunity for Commissioners to comment on the performance of the Chief Commissioner (paragraph 2.1 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).

2.2 The Head of Corporate Services confirmed that the report on the progress in implementing internal audit recommendations will be copied to all Commissioners for information with the July Commission papers (paragraph 3.2 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).

**Action: Head of Corporate Services**

2.3 The Chief Executive reported that completion dates for implementation of outstanding audit recommendations will be agreed with relevant staff when finalising personal work plans for 2008–09. The dates will be incorporated in the next progress report (paragraph 3.5 of the minutes of the last meeting refers). He also confirmed that a meeting with the Equality Commission is being scheduled to discuss the implementation of the audit recommendations relevant to the IT systems support that they provide.

**Action: Chief Executive / Head of Corporate Services**

2.4 A meeting will be arranged in the summer between the Chairperson and the Head of Corporate Services and their counterparts in the Equality Commission to compare practices in respect of audit committee work and identify any opportunities for further improvement (paragraph 4.3 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).

**Action: Chairperson / Head of Corporate Services**

2.5 The Committee noted the revised Dignity at Work Policy and Grievance Procedure, which had been circulated recently for information (paragraph 5.2 of the minutes of the last meeting refers).

2.6 The Commission's register of interests has been updated and published on the Commission's website (paragraph 7.1 of the minutes of the previous meeting refers).

2.7 The Committee noted the reappointment of ASM Horwath as the Commission's internal auditors for the next three years (paragraph 10.1 of the minutes of the previous meeting refers).

### **3. Financial Statements for 2007–08**

3.1 Joe Copeland, accountant from Helm Corporation, gave an overview of the Commission's financial statements for 2007–08.

- 3.2 The Committee noted a change in accounting policy relating to depreciation of leasehold property, which means that relevant assets are depreciated over the length of the lease or 10 years, whichever is least. The previous policy was to depreciate over 10 years and is no longer appropriate as the Commission's lease now has less than 10 years to run.
- 3.3 The financial statements for 2007-08, including the Statement on Internal Control, were approved, subject to a number of minor textual changes. They will be incorporated into the annual report and presented to a special Commission meeting on 27 June 2008 for final approval. Thereafter, the Annual Report and Accounts will be audited by the National Audit Office at the end of July and laid before Parliament and published in October 2008.

**Action: Head of Corporate Services**

- 3.4 The Committee thanked the accountant, Head of Corporate Services and Finance Supervisor for their work on the accounts.

#### **4. Date of next meeting**

- 4.1 The Finance Supervisor will canvas all members for a convenient date for the next meeting, which will be scheduled for September 2008. [Note: it was subsequently agreed to hold the meeting on Tuesday 9 September 2008 at 10.30am.]

**Action: Finance Supervisor**