



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE 5th MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2007 AT 10.30AM
AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION, TEMPLE COURT, 39 NORTH STREET,
BELFAST, BT1 1NA**

Present: Bill Smith, Chairperson
Christine Eames
Kevin McLaughlin
Eamonn O'Neill
Geraldine Rice

In attendance: Paddy Sloan, Chief Executive
Don Leeson, Head of Corporate Services
Lorraine Hamill, Administrative Officer (Finance)
Peter O'Neill, Head of Information, Education &
Development (for agenda item 6)
Brian Clerkin, ASM Horwath (for agenda item 6)
Pauline Poots, ASM Horwath (for agenda item 6)

Apologies: Alan Henry

1. Minutes of the last meeting (12 December 2006)

1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters arising

2.1 The Chief Executive has invited the Equality Commission to the forthcoming training on risk management for Commissioners scheduled for 9 March 2007, but they have not confirmed if they will be attending. She will be meeting with NICCY later in the week and will also raise the issue with them (paragraph 2.2 refers). **Action: Chief Executive**

2.2 It was confirmed that individual work plans have been agreed with all staff (paragraph 3.2 refers).

2.3 The proposal to create new posts has been approved by the Commission and NIPSA. The posts will be advertised week commencing 12 February 2007, subject to NIO approval (paragraph 3.3 refers).

Action: Head of Corporate Services

2.4 Guidance from the NIO regarding the implications of any Commissioners standing for election as MLAs has been forwarded to Commissioners. Although no Commissioners were now standing for election, it was agreed that this was a useful paper to have, as it provided clear guidance for future use (paragraph 3.4 refers).

2.5 The revised travel and expenses policy for Commission staff has been updated and brought into line with the NICS and will now go to NIPSA for approval (paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 refers).

Action: Head of Corporate Services

2.6 The Chief Executive is to arrange an appraisal date for the Chairperson (paragraph 6.3 refers).

Action: Chief Executive

2.7 Some Committee members have not returned their Skills Audit. They were reminded to complete this as soon as possible and return it to the Head of Corporate Services or the Administrative Officer (Finance) (paragraph 6.4 refers).

Action: Committee Members

2.8 The Financial Procedures Manual has been updated and is available on the shared network drive for all staff. A briefing event will be planned, probably in April, to explain the updated manual and the range of new personnel policies that the Commission is in the process of agreeing with NIPSA (paragraph 8.1 refers). **Action: Head of Corporate Services**

3. Corporate Risk Management

3.1 The Head of Corporate Services went through the Risk Register and highlighted the key activities that had been amended since the last meeting.

- 3.2 A new Risk Register will be prepared for the next financial year (April 2007 – March 2008) and will be available for discussion at the next Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting scheduled for 27 April 2007.

Action: Head of Corporate Services

4. Revised pay policy for Commission staff

- 4.1 The Head of Corporate Services gave an overview on the revised pay policy for Commission staff.
- 4.2 The policy was discussed in detail and approved. It will be taken to the next Commission meeting, scheduled for Monday 12 February 2007, with a recommendation that it is brought to a conclusion as soon as possible.
- 4.3 Once agreed the policy will be forwarded to NIPSA for approval, before being formally submitted to the NIO.

Action: Head of Corporate Services

- 4.4 It was also agreed that a Moderating Panel be established, drawn from members of the Audit and Risk Management Committee, who would oversee the operation of the non-consolidated performance bonus scheme. The Chairperson agreed to be on this panel. Two other members of the Committee will also be required to sit on the panel.

Action: Committee Members

5. Audit and Risk Management Committee's Annual Report to the Commission (2006-07)

- 5.1 The Committee's Annual Report was reviewed and approved.
- 5.2 It was agreed that this may be a useful exercise for all of the Commission's Committees to undertake.

Peter O'Neill, Brian Clerkin and Pauline Poots joined the meeting at 11.50am.

6. Internal Audit Reports

- 6.1 The Internal Audit Reports recommendations and findings, and the Commission's responses to them, were noted.

Peter O'Neill, Brian Clerkin and Pauline Poots left the meeting at 12.25pm.

7. Expenses of the Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive

- 7.1 The expenses of the Chief Commissioner were reviewed and signed off.
- 7.2 There were no expenses submitted from the Chief Executive for the period.

8. Date of next meetings

- 8.1 The next Committee meeting will be held on Friday 27 April 2007 at 10.30 am. Agenda items for the meeting will be the new risk register, management statement and the pay award.
- 8.2 A further Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday 4 June 2007 at 10.30 am when the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts for 2006-07 will be reviewed.