



NORTHERN
IRELAND
HUMAN
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

11 March 2019

Minutes of the Audit & Risk Management Committee Meeting

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

David Russell, Chief Executive
Lorraine Hamill, Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs)
Rebecca Magee, Personal Assistant (Minutes)
Claire Martin, Director (Communications, information and education, public and political affairs)
Colin Caughey, Director (Legal, research and investigations, and advice to government)

Anthony McKibbin, Grant Thornton

1. Welcome and Apologies

- 1.1 The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Mark Lawther and Ruth Logan, Ernst Young, Paul Keane, National Audit Office, and Simon Burrows, Northern Ireland Office.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Chairman's Business

3.1 The Chairman had nothing to report.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2018

4.1 The minutes of the Audit and Risk Management Committee meeting held on 12 December 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Matters arising from 12 December 2018

5.1 The move to Account NI is ongoing. The aim is have the Commission operational on Account NI by the new financial year (item 7.4 of the December minutes refers).

5.2 The Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee have been amended (item 13.2 of the December minutes refers).

5.3 The Commission has now signed up to the Mental Health Charter and will look at training for the new financial year. The Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) continues to liaise with the Equality Commission NI regarding setting up a persons with disabilities reference group (item 15.1 of the December minutes refers).

Action: The Director (Legal, Research and Investigations, and Advice to Government) to share IMNI paper with the Committee.

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

- **Financial Expenditure as at 28 February 2019**

6.1 The Director provided an overview of the financial report to 28 February 2019.

- **High Value Purchases**

6.2 The Committee noted and discussed the High Value Purchases to 28 February 2019.

- **Absence Statistics as at 28 February 2019**

6.3 The absence statistics as at 28 February 2019 were reviewed.

- **Freedom of Information**

6.4 The Freedom of Information requests were noted.

7. Internal Audit update

- **Internal Audit Report on Corporate Governance (Equality Scheme)**

7.1 Grant Thornton presented the Internal Audit Report on Corporate Governance (Equality Scheme) and provided a 'satisfactory' assurance for the report.

7.2 The Committee discussed the summary of progress in the Internal Audit Report and noted that there were two priority 2 recommendations, and one priority 3 recommendation.

7.3 The Committee welcomed the report and recommendations and commended the work of Grant Thornton.

8. National Audit Office update

8.1 The Director (Finance, Personnel & Corporate Affairs) reported on the interim audit which took place in February 2019.

Action: Ernst Young to be asked to provide a report/update to be circulated to the committee members.

9. Corporate Risk Register

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

Action: Following the move to Account NI, an updated register to be shared with Committee highlighting the move from red to amber for failure to meet accounting performance reports.

Action: Chief Executive to inform Committee once the Budget has been set.

9.2 The Committee discussed the Chief Executive's suggestion of adding a new risk regarding the reappointment/appointment of the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners under Commission stability. The Committee agreed that the new risk should be added.

Action: New risk of Chief Commissioner and Commissioners appointments to go on the risk register.

10. GDPR update

10.1 The Committee was updated on the planned audit in respect of GDPR.

Action: Audit on GDPR to be completed by the end of the financial year.

11. Expenses of Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive

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

12. International Travel

- 12.1 The Committee reviewed the international travel of Commissioners and staff for the period August 2018 – March 2019.

13. Gifts and Hospitality Register

- 13.1 The Committee reviewed the Gifts and Hospitality Register (provided and received) to 28 February 2019.
- 13.2 The Committee discussed the items on the register and Grant Thornton agreed to report back on whether travel and accommodation provided for speakers at events are required to be listed on the register.

Action: Grant Thornton to report back on what items need to be recorded on Gifts and Hospitality Register.

Action: Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to amend the register accordingly for the next meeting.

14. Equality

- 14.1 The Director (Finance, personnel and corporate affairs) reported that the Equality Scheme would be in new staff inductions going forward and that the scheme will be rolled out to staff in a summary document once consultation is completed and training will take place in the upcoming financial year.

Action: Following consultation, the Equality Scheme is to be summarised for staff.

15. Managing Unacceptable Behaviour from Members of the Public

- 15.1 The Chief Executive updated on the Managing Unacceptable Behaviour from Members of the Public Policy which has now been amended to reflect Commissioner, Union and staff comments. The paper will now go to the March Commission meeting for approval.
- 15.2 The Committee noted that the policy will not be implemented until training takes place in the first quarter of the new financial year.
- 15.3 The Committee welcomed the Policy.

16. Any other Business

- 16.1 The Chief Executive updated on the Boardroom Apprentice Scheme which the Commission has agreed to. The Committee welcomed the Scheme.

17. Close

- 17.1 The meeting closed at 11:20am.
- 17.2 The date of the next meeting is to be arranged.

Action: The Director (Finance, Personnel and Corporate Affairs) to circulate dates for 2019-2020 meetings.