



**AUDIT RISK & ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Wednesday 8 July 2020, 10.30am**  
**Video conference**

**Present:**

Mary McIvor **MMI** (Chair)  
Gerry O'Neill **GON** (Member)

**In Attendance:**

Marie Matthews **MM** (TEO)  
Kathy Doey **KD** (NIAO)  
Steven Lindsay **SL** (Cavanagh Kelly)  
Andrew Sloan **AS** (Accounting Officer, CVS)  
Stephen Moore **SM** (Head of Corporate Services, CVS)  
Judith Thompson **JT** (Commissioner, CVS) At Item 4 only  
Marie Neill **MN** (Secretariat, CVS)

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Chair (**MMI**) welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2. Brain McDonald was unable to join the meeting due to a technical issue.

**2. Declaration of Interests**

- 2.1. There were no Conflicts of Interests noted.

**3. Minutes of meeting on 6 May 2020**

- 3.1. The minutes of meetings on 6 May 2020 were agreed.
- 3.2. *AP3 – Check on status of information/meetings related to Departmental scenario planning* – It was noted that the budget confirmation letter had been received from TEO confirming opening budget for 2020/21 and including an additional £159,000 from the June monitoring round.

- 3.3. *AP4 – Ensure up to date contact details recorded on Fraud & Whistleblowing policies* – It was noted that the policies would be updated, taking into account current guidance from TEO and presented at Board for approval.

**ACTION – SECRETARIAT**

- 3.4. *AP5 – Ascertain if/when Fraud Risk Assessment carried out* – It was noted that the Fraud Risk Assessment would be carried out during the financial year 2020/21.

**ACTION – SECRETARIAT**

- 3.5. *AP13 – Review table headings on ODP 2020/21 at Corporate Outcome 6 to include details of how activities and outputs would be measured* – It was noted that this document was currently under review following feedback and comments from TEO.

**ACTION – AS & SM**

**4. NIAO Update**

- 4.1. **KD** presented the audit strategy for 2019/20 and the audit timetable was agreed.
- 4.2. It was noted that the audit fee for 2019/20 had increased by 10% and **KD** advised that this had been applied across the public sector and was unavoidable, however, if time spent on the audit was less than anticipated the full audit fee would not be charged.

**5. Commissioner Update**

- 5.1. **JT** joined the meeting and provided an update on the Victims Payment and background on current and recent developments including her appearance at the NI Affairs Committee.
- 5.2. **MMI** thanked **JT** for providing good insight into the context and political environment that the Commission worked in.
- 5.3. **JT** left the meeting.

## **6. Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20**

- 6.1. **SM** advised that the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20 had been approved at board meeting on 7 July 2020, subject to minor amendments.
- 6.2. **MMI** and **GON** provided feedback and comments on the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20. It was agreed that when these amendments were made the ARAC were content that the Draft Annual Report and Accounts be submitted to NIAO.

### **ACTION – AS & SM**

- 6.3. It was noted that an audit file would be prepared for the NIAO in the coming weeks in readiness for the audit fieldwork to begin in September 2020.
- 6.4. **AS** advised that a comprehensive review of the Fixed Assets register had taken place.

## **7. Internal Audit Update**

- 7.1. **SL** presented the Internal Audit Charter. **MM** noted an amendment required to wording at 7.10

### **ACTION – SL**

- 7.2. **SL** presented the Internal Audit Strategy for 2020-23.
- 7.3. Following discussion it was agreed to amend timings and allocated days in areas of Financial Management and Information Management & Security.
- 7.4. **GON** noted amendments required to wording at 1.4 and 2.2

### **ACTION – SL**

- 7.5. **SL** presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21.
- 7.6. **MM** queried the wording around staff experience and suggested further clarity be given around training and experience of the internal audit team.
- 7.7. It was agreed that a final plan would be presented in advance of the next ARAC meeting which would take into consideration all of the discussion points.

### **ACTION – SL**

## **6. Accounting Officer Update**

- 6.1. **AS** presented the Accounting Officer Update.

### **Performance Report**

- 6.2. It was noted that the Draft Outcome Delivery Plan for 2020/21 was being reviewed following feedback and comment from TEO.
- 6.3. It was agreed that the Outcome Delivery Plan for 2019/20 would be circulated to ARAC when finalised and forwarded to TEO.

### **ACTION – SECRETARIAT**

### **Risk Management**

- 6.4. The Corporate Risk Register containing 2 medium rated risks with amber and 1 high rated risk with red status was noted.
- 6.5. **MMI** suggested that further guidance may be required from TEO in order to ensure that the Commission's Corporate Risk Register complied with the current HM Treasury's Orange Book Management of Risk.
- 6.6. It was agreed that this would be considered as an agenda item for the next ARAC meeting.

### **ACTION - SECRETARIAT**

### **Management Accounts and Report**

- 6.7. **AS** presented the draft 2020/21 budget report. It was noted that this would need to be revised in light of the recent confirmation from TEO of the budget allocation for 2020/21 including additional resource budget of £159,000.

### **Update on Business Cases and Procurement**

- 6.8. The update paper on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 6.9. **AS** advised that business cases would be drafted in respect of agency staff in accordance with TEO advice and these would be added to the schedule.

### **Audit**

- 6.10. The paper on the implementation of audit recommendations was noted with good progress being made on the implementation of recommendations.

### **Peace IV Funded Research Projects**

- 6.11. The Peace IV Highlight Report was noted.
- 6.12. The Peace IV Tri-Annual Budget and Report was noted.

- 6.13. It was agreed that further detail on the Needs Review Research Project would be provided to ARAC.

## **ACTION - SECRETARIAT**

### **Organisational Structure**

- 6.14. **AS** advised that the recruitment process for Executive PA and Head of Finance & Corporate Affairs would be progressed as soon as possible.
- 6.15. It was noted that JEGS evaluations had been submitted to NICS HR Grading Unit. **AS** advised that the Director of Policy Development, Research and Engagement had been graded as Grade 7 and that in relation to the Policy Development, Research and Engagement Manager posts (three posts) these had been submitted to the Grading Unit and a decision was pending.

### **GDPR**

- 6.16. It was noted that the GDPR Action Plan would be reviewed and updated to take into consideration recommendations from Internal Audit's Information Management Review.

## **ACTION - SM**

### **Freedom of Information**

- 6.17. No FOI requests had been received since the last meeting.

### **Complaints**

- 6.18. No complaints had been received since the last meeting.

### **Subject Access Requests**

- 6.19. No Subject Access Requests had been received since the last meeting.

### **Gifts & Hospitality**

- 6.20. **AS** advised that no exceptional gifts or hospitality had been received or provided since the last meeting.
- 6.21. The Gifts and Hospitality register is made available on the Commission's website.

### **Fraud**

- 6.22. No instances of fraud had been reported since the last meeting.

### **Data Breaches**

- 6.23. No data breaches had been reported since the last meeting.

### **Guidance Received**

- 6.24. DAO (DoF) 04/20 HM Treasury Book was noted.
- 6.25. **GON** advised section 5 on ARAC Annual Report would need to be checked for correctness in relation to compliance with MoU.

**ACTION - SM**

**7. AOB**

7.1. It was noted the date of the next meeting would be 4 November 2020.

**ACTION – SECRETARIAT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary McIvor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Name **MARY MCIVOR**

Date