



AUDIT RISK & ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting
Tuesday 4 February 2020, 10.30am
Equality House

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Brian Clerkin **BC** (ASM)
Marie Matthews **MM** (TEO)
Sarah Caldwell **SC** (NIAO)
Andrew Sloan **AS** (Accounting Officer, CVS)
Stephen Moore **SM** (Temporary Head of Corporate Services, CVS)
Marie Neill **MN** (Minutes)

1. Introduction

1.1. The Chair (**MMI**) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Register of Interests / Contractor-Supplier List

- 2.1. There were no Conflicts of Interests.
2.2. It was agreed that a Register of Interest and declaration of Related Party Transactions would be issued at the start of each financial year for completion by ARAC, Board and Senior Management.

ACTION - SECRETARIAT

3. Minutes of meeting on 18 November 2019

3.1. **BMCD** requested that the wording at 9.9 and 9.20 be amended

ACTION - SECRETARIAT

3.2. *AP2 – Replenishment of the Panel/Forum – present PPE of last project and new Project Plan to members* - it was noted that the PPE was not due for completion until September 2020. **AS** provided an update on the progress of the Forum

Replenishment exercise. It was agreed that a copy of the project plan would be shared with ARAC after it was discussed with TEO at the Accountability meeting on 7 February 2020. **GON** said that the PPE for last replenishment exercise should be brought forward in order to inform key objectives. It was agreed that this would be considered.

- 3.3. *AP3 – Arrange for ARAC to meet IA and NIAO without CVS present at agreed times during year* – It was agreed that internal audit would meet with ARAC each year prior to the April meeting and external audit prior to the October meeting, and any other times deemed necessary.

ACTION – SM/SECRETARIAT

- 3.4. *AP4 – Procurement of Internal Audit service starting Q4 for new contract in place by 1 April 2020* – It was noted that this TEO had approved a business case for 3 years plus 1+1 extensions and CVS were awaiting confirmation of tender initiation date from CPD.
- 3.5. *AP5 - Check on status of information/meetings related to Departmental scenario planning* – **MMI** attended a recent meeting with TEO as Chair of ARAC and advised that all ALB's would be receiving further communication in relation to scenario planning for 2020/21 budget.
- 3.6. *AP10 – Ensure up to date contact details recorded on Fraud Prevention & Whistleblowing policies* – it was noted that a full review of CVS policies would take place during Q1 2020/21 and appropriate training provided to staff when policies approved by the Board.
- 3.7. *AP11 – Ascertain if/when Fraud Risk Assessment carried out* – **GON** requested that a paper be produced to provide rationale for CVS being considered as a low risk for fraud.

ACTION – AS/SM

4. NIAO Update

- 4.1. **SC** highlighted that since the last meeting the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) had elevated one of the Priority 2 recommendations to Priority 1. It was noted that CVS had accepted this recommendation.
- 4.2. **AS** confirmed that the Commission had requested to participate on the new collaborative contract for credit cards which would take effect in the 2020/21 year.

5. Internal Audit Update

- 5.1. **BC** presented the Review of Human Resource Management and Information Management final reports with key findings, noting the satisfactory assurance for both.

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

ACTION - SM

6. Quarterly Assurance Statement

- 6.1. Quarter 3 of 2019/20 Assurance Statement was noted.

7. Update – Accounting Officer

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

Performance Report

- 7.2. The Outcome Delivery Plan was noted. It was noted that the commentary on 2.5 and 2.6 was to be removed as this no longer applied.

Risk Management

- 7.3. The Corporate Risk Register containing 1 medium rated risk with amber and 1 high rated risk with red status was noted.
- 7.4. A discussion took place on current staff shortage and concern around impact on deliverability. **GON** suggested a review of Corporate Risk Register to ensure this was being fully captured.

ACTION – AS/SM

Management Accounts and Report

- 7.5. **AS** presented the Management Accounts and Report up to the month of December 2019, showing a current balanced budget.
- 7.6. It was noted that the paper was for information only and not decision.
- 7.7. The January monitoring round budget notification letter was noted, confirming **AS** advised CVS would be submitting a bid in the January monitoring round.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 7.8. The update paper on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 7.9. It was noted that work was ongoing to ensure new contracts would be in place for those due to end in March 2020.

Audit

- 7.10. The paper on the implementation of audit recommendations was noted.
- 7.11. It was agreed to update the paper to clearly indicate only implemented, partially implemented or not implemented recommendations

ACTION – SM

Peace IV Funded Research Projects

- 7.12. The Peace IV Highlight Report was noted.
- 7.13. The Peace IV Tri-Annual Budget and Report was noted.
- 7.14. **SM** advised that measures had been taken to alleviate the cashflow issue advised that CVS has no control over the turnaround of SEUPB verification and timing of lead partners. **MM** agreed to raise at TEO level.

ACTION - MM

Other issues to note

Organisational Structure

- 7.15. **AS** advised that the Commission had received formal notification from the June monitoring round of an additional £15,000 funding in order to take forward the Job Evaluation Grading of 3 posts. It was noted that the JEGS would be carried out by NICS HR therefore no hard charges would apply.
- 7.16. It was noted that an agency member of staff had taken up post as Information and Records Officer in order to complete the File Retention and Disposals project and the additional funding which would absorb the additional funding received for the JEGS.

GDPR

- 7.17. The latest update of the Action Plan from April 2019 was noted.
- 7.18. It was noted that the GDPR Action Plan would be reviewed and updated to take into consideration recommendations from the Information Management Review.

ACTION - SM

Freedom of Information

- 7.18. It was noted that no FOI requests had been received since the last meeting.

Complaints

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

Subject Access Requests

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

Gifts & Hospitality

- 7.21. The Gifts and Hospitality for each quarter were reviewed and would be made available on the Commission's website.
- 7.22. No exceptional gifts or hospitality had been received or provided since the last meeting.
- 7.23. It was noted that there had been one gift declined and returned since the last meeting.

Fraud

7.24. There had been no reported instances of fraud since the last meeting.

Data Breaches

7.25. No data breaches had been reported since the last meeting.

Guidance Received

7.26. There had been no guidance issued since the last meeting

8. AOB

8.1. It was noted the date of the next meeting would be 6 May 2020.

8.2. It was agreed to arrange dates for ARAC Appraisals

ACTION – SECRETARIAT

8.3. It was agreed that **MMI** would forward a brief outline on matters discussed to the Commissioner following each ARAC meeting.



Signed

Name

MARY MCIVOR

Date

12 May 2020