



Board Meeting 2 February 2023

PRESENT

Ian Jeffers (IJ)	Commissioner and Board Chair
Andrew Sloan (AS)	Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Marie Neill (MN)	Secretariat

1.0 Apologies

1.1 No apologies were noted.

2.0 Declaration of Interests

2.1 No conflicts of interest to note.

3.0 Minutes of last meeting

3.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on 2 November 2022 were approved.

4.0 Outcome Delivery Plan 2022-23

4.1 The progress report on the Corporate Plan and Outcome Delivery Plan for 2022-23 was noted.

4.2 The draft Outcome Delivery Plan for 2023-24 was approved, subject to confirmation of budget. **AS** to formally submit to TEO, highlighting that it would still be subject to review, as it cannot be formally approved due to the absence of Ministers at Stormont.

ACTION – AS

5.0 Management Accounts

5.1 The Management Accounts to 31 January 2023 were reviewed and discussed.

5.2 **AS** highlighted an estimated underspend of £10k, due to the removal of the agency staff costs to 31 March 2023 and noted that the Commission was within the tolerance limit of 1.5% of budget spend.

5.3 **AS** advised that in order for the Commission to run at full capacity it would cost £1.1m, however the budget for the Commission currently stands at £875k. **AS** advised that this had been brought to the attention of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and would also be highlighted at the next Accountability meeting.

6.0 **Corporate Risk Register**

6.1 The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed, with two amber risks and one red risk. It was noted that an additional risk around IT and Cyber Security had been included. **AS** advised that the Commission had received the annual ICT Assurance Statement from the Equality Commission.

7.0 **Quarterly ALB Performance Report**

7.1 The Corporate Performance Report for the period October to December 2022 was noted.

8.0 **Quarterly Assurance Statement**

8.1 The Corporate Assurance Statement for the period October to December 2022 was noted.

9.0 **Northern Ireland Audit Office Update**

9.1 The Report to Those Charged with Governance for 2021-23 was noted, with one priority 3 recommendation. **AS** confirmed that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22 had been certified with an unqualified opinion.

9.2 It was noted that the current lead auditor from NIAO has been replaced by Andrew Allen.

10.0 **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Update**

10.1 **AS** provided an update on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting which took place on 2 February 2023, in particular the following:

- Internal Audit Report on Communications and Engagement, which provided a satisfactory assurance and resulted in 2 priority 3 recommendations
- Annual Internal Audit Assurance Statement to follow when the final report and follow up completed
- NIAO Report to those Charged with Governance
- Accounting Officer update
- Recruitment of new Audit and Risk Assurance Committee chair and members

10.2 It was agreed that a final meeting for the current ARAC members would take place before the end of March, during which a draft Internal Audit Strategy for 2023-24 would be considered and agreed.

IJ requested that an induction plan and meeting arrangements for Commissioner, commission staff and forum members be put in place before the first meeting of ARAC in May 2023.

ACTION – AS/MN

11.0 Freedom of Information and Subject Access Requests

11.1 One Freedom of Information request was received and responded to. No Subject Access requests had been received.

12.0 Complaints

12.1 No Complaints had been received.

13.0 Gifts and Hospitality

13.1 The Gifts and Hospitality Register for the period October to December 2022 was noted and it will now be put on the Commission's website.

14.0 Fraud and Data Breaches

14.1 There were no fraud or data breaches to report.

15.0 Guidance

15.1 The following guidance was noted:

- DAO (DoF) 03/19 Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies – NI Code of Good Practice
- DAO (DoF) 05/19 Illustrative Template for Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bo
- FD (DoF) 09/22 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) 2022-23
- FD (DoF) 08/22 Pay Remit approval Process and Guidance (2022-23)


16.0 Any Other Business

The policies detailed below were approved in principle, subject to ARAC comments on Discipline policy.

- Discipline Policy
- Finance Procedures
- Grievance Policy
- Procurement Policy

Date of next meeting: 11 May 2023

Approved: I. JEFFERS

Signed: I. 

Date: 7/2/23