

**Minutes of Audit & Risk Assurance Extraordinary Committee Meeting  
No. 61  
Held on Monday 24 June 2024 at 9.30am**

**Present:**

Hugh McKeag, Commissioner (Chair)  
Alan Hunter, Commissioner  
Caron Alexander, Independent committee member

**In Attendance:**

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive  
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services  
David McGurk, (Minutes)  
Peter Murchan, DfC Internal Audit  
Philip Armstrong, DfC Internal Audit  
Barry Mitchell, Northern Ireland Audit Office  
Barney Conway, ASM Chartered Accountants (External Auditors)  
Gerard Reilly, DfC Voluntary and Community Division (observer)

**Apologies:**

None

The meeting commenced at 9.30am. The Board commissioned an Independent Review of the recent data incident. This meeting of the Audit & Risk Assurance (A&RA) committee was called to examine the Internal Audit Report on the data incident, to gain assurance that the incident was thoroughly investigated, to review all processes associated with the incident, to understand any root causes and corrective actions, including any process changes.

The output from the report and the recommendations of the A&RA committee will be reported back to the Board and CEO.

**1. Minutes of Meeting No 60**

The minutes of the Audit & Risk Assurance (A&RA) Committee meeting number 60 held on 14 May 2024 were for information only, having been previously agreed as a true and accurate record and approved for publication at the Board Meeting 112 held on 20 May 2024.

## **2. Conflicts of Interest**

None recorded.

## **3. Chair's Comments**

The Chair noted the recent appointment of a new Deputy Chief Commissioner and that arrangements to replace the commissioner with accountancy experience were being taken forward by the sponsor department. In the interim the committee noted this left it at a deficit in terms of knowledge and experience.

## **4. Internal Audit Report**

Peter Murchan introduced the report following a recent data incident and noted their conclusion was this was down to human error and some weaknesses in specific operational processes. The report's two recommendations were outlined and discussed.

The Chief Executive indicated management accepted and were acting on the recommendations for completion by the end of September. The Committee noted Board had been kept informed and the Commission had liaised with sponsor department and information regulator. The Chief Executive highlighted further controls had been introduced and other measures including bespoke training were being undertaken to reduce the risk of a recurrence and provide further assurance. The Committee noted other investigations were still ongoing, but the assessment of the data incident was low to no harm to individuals.

Commissioners discussed how the Internal Audit report reflected the Board's previous discussion of the incident on 24 May 2024. It was noted the meeting had been briefed on immediate actions taken and raised governance considerations which were fully aired. The position was that no further changes were agreed as needed at that time, pending the outcome of investigations underway, but further development of training and the serious incident protocol was raised. Internal Audit undertook to revisit some aspects of their report before finalisation, to include mention of training and other issues.

The Chair thanked staff for their response to the incident and Peter Murchan and Philip Armstrong for producing the report at short notice. Finally, he underlined the Committee looked forward to Internal Audit checking actions to address the report's recommendations at a later stage.

**AP1: Internal Audit to provide a finalised report.**

**5. AOB**  
None

Meeting ended at 10.05am.

**Audit & Risk Committee**  
**Register of Outstanding Action Points**

<b>Committee Meeting and Action Point Number</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Status</b>
61 (1)	24/06/24	4	Internal Audit to provide a finalised data incident report	IA	Complete
60 (1)	14/05/24	1	Minutes of meeting No 60 to be recommended to the Board for publication	HoCS	Complete
60 (1)	14/05/24	4	Amended draft accounts to be recommended to Board for approval.	HoCS	Complete
60 (1)	14/05/24	5	Draft governance statement to be recommended to Board for approval.	CEx	Complete
60 (1)	14/05/24	6	Draft Corporate Risk Register to be recommended to Board for approval.	HoCS	Complete
59 (5)	12/03/24	6	Further training staff and Commission on fraud, bribery and money laundering to be arranged.	HoCS	Underway
59 (11)	12/03/24	12	Head of Corporate Services to follow up with IT Assist account manager	HoCS	Underway

			regarding access to assurance dashboard.		
54 (6)	24/11/22	7	Commission to write to all MOU partners updating them on current arrangements and future developments.	HCS	Postponed Until intro of potential scheme of delegation