

**Minutes of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee Meeting No. 55  
Held on Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 09.30am via Video Conference**

**Present:**

Séamus Magee, Commissioner (Chair)  
Gerard McCurdy, Interim Chief Commissioner  
Alan Hunter, Commissioner  
Caron Alexander, Independent member  
Andrea Quail, co-opted member  
Emma O'Neill, (Boardroom Apprentice)

**In Attendance:**

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive  
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services  
Ciara McCann, Admin Officer (Minutes)  
Barry Mitchell, Northern Ireland Audit Office  
Curtis Fleming, Northern Ireland Audit Office  
Gary Curran, DfC Internal Audit  
Paul McIlroy, DfC Internal Audit  
Valarie McCloskey, DfC Voluntary and Community Division (observer)  
Gerard Reilly, DfC Voluntary and Community Division (observer)

**Apologies:** N/A

The meeting commenced at 9.30am.

**1. Minutes of Meeting No 54**

The minutes of the Audit & Risk Assurance (A&RA) Committee meeting number 54 held on 24 November 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record, as proposed by Alan Hunter and seconded by Andrea Quail. Update on action points noted.

**AP1: Minutes of meeting No 54 to be recommended to Board for publication.**

**AP2: Potential hard charge for 2023/24 Internal Audit to be confirmed.**

### **3. Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair reminded Commissioners to raise any conflicts of interest. None were recorded.

### **4. Chair's Comments**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the Committee that he had met with internal audit and the Chief Executive on audit strategy agenda item 7. It was also agreed that the next committee meeting will be in person.

### **5. Corporate Risk Register & Action Plan Deep dive Risk 2**

The Chair outlined the increase and decreases in various risk ratings and that overall the risk level was decreased. The Committee was content with SMT's proposal and, following consideration, the revisions to the register were accepted as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Alan Hunter. A further deep dive discussion was had on Risk 2 and Risk 6.

**AP3: 2022/23 Corporate Risk Register to be recommended to Board for approval.**

### **6. Review of Fraud & Bribery policy & Assessment**

The Head of Corporate Services outlined the conclusions of the review. The assessments were agreed subject to minor amendments, as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Alan Hunter.

**AP4: Amended review paper to be recommended to Board for approval.**

### **7. Review Committee Terms of Reference**

The Committee reviewed the current wording including the timescale for a co-opted member. Following discussion, the terms of reference were agreed, subject to amendment, as proposed by Caron Alexander and seconded by Gerard McCurdy.

**AP5: Amended Committee TOR to be recommended to Board for approval.**

## **9. IA Strategy 23-26**

The Chair and Gary Curran introduced the paper. The Committee discussed the draft, noting work on the strategic risks was yet to be finalised. It was agreed to recommend the current draft to the Board and that a final version would be brought to the May Audit & Risk Assurance committee meeting as proposed by Gerard McCurdy and seconded by Caron Alexander. The Committee agreed it wanted to develop evaluative aspects of assurance work and noted potential use of audit consultancy days and peer reviews outlined in previous assurance mapping.

**AP6: Draft IA strategy 2023-26 to be recommended to Board for approval.**

## **10. NIAO Audit Strategy 22/23**

Barry Mitchell introduced the strategy and noted the risk-based approach. The Committee noted this does not include a 9-month audit. The Head of Corporate Services reminded members if there are any audit matters arising between the Committee's meeting in May and the June Board meeting that an additional committee meeting will be held.

## **11. Internal Audit Assignment 1 report**

Paul McIlroy gave an outline and noted the satisfactory assurance rating with two priority two recommendations. The Chair welcomed the very positive report.

## **12. Progress update on Internal Audit 2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment**

Paul McIlroy confirmed the assignment was at early stages of fieldwork. The Committee noted the areas being covered and that the report will be brought to the May meeting.

## **13. Review conditions attached to business case approvals**

The Committee noted the update and a number of queries regarding litigation were addressed.

## **14. Audit recommendations implementation report**

The Committee noted the progress on previous recommendations.

## **15. Cyber Security update**

The Head of Corporate Services gave an update on the Gov assurance framework rollout. The update was noted.

## **16. DAO and FD letters summary**

The paper was noted.

## **17. Budget**

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report and gave a further updated on developments since the end of January. It was noted plans to spend to within 1% target were being pursued.

## **18. Fraud and Whistleblowing report**

The Head of Corporate Services confirmed there had been nothing to report.

## **19. AOB**

The Chief Executive noted to the Committee that the Assurance Statement would be issued via email for agreement before the next Board meeting.

## **20. Issues for next meeting 9 May 2023**

The Committee agreed the next meeting would begin at 10:30.

Agenda items to include;

- Review of the Risk Management Policy and Assurance Framework
- Draft 2023/24 Corporate Risk Register & Action Plan
- Draft Accounts 2022/23
- Draft Governance Statement
- A&RA Annual Report
- A&RA Committee schedule
- Internal Audit 2<sup>nd</sup> Assignment Report 2022/23
- Internal Audit Year-End Report 2022/23
- Annual Expenditure Report 2022/23
- Budget 2023/24
- Report on SMT and Board Expenses
- Usual Items – Review Business case, Audit recs, DAO and FD letters

Meeting ended at 11:35am

## Audit & Risk Committee

### Register of Outstanding Action Points

<b>Committee Meeting and Action Point Number</b>	<b>Date Raised</b>	<b>Agenda Item<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Owners</b>	<b>Status</b>
55 (1)	07/03/2023	1	Amended minutes of meeting No 54 to be recommended to Board for publication.	HCorps	Complete
55 (2)	07/03/2023	1	Potential hard charge for 2023/24 Internal Audit to be confirmed.	Valarie McCloskey	Underway
55 (3)	07/03/2023	5	2022/23 Corporate Risk Register to be recommended to Board for approval.	HCorps	Complete
55 (4)	07/03/2023	6	Amended review paper to be recommended to Board for approval.	HCorps	Complete
55 (5)	07/03/2023	7	Amended Committee TOR to be recommended to Board for approval.	HCorps	Complete
55 (6)	807/03/2023	8	Draft IA strategy 2023-26 to be recommended to	HCorps	Complete

			Board for approval.		
54 (6)	24/11/22	7	Commission to write to all MOU partners updating them on current arrangements and future developments.	HCS	Underway
49 (6)	11/05/21	10	Internal Audit to share network security assurances with the Commission.	Internal Audit	Complete