

COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (COPNI)

AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 7 MARCH 2016 AT 9.30AM IN EQUALITY HOUSE, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS

Gerard Campbell (Chair)
Julie Erskine
Don Mackay
Breidge Gadd

IN ATTENDANCE

Evelyn Hoy (Chief Executive, COPNI)
Christine Burns (Northern Ireland Audit Office)
Amanda McMaw (ASM – Internal Audit)
Noel Griffin (OFMDFM)
Gerard McKeown (Finance and Governance Manager, COPNI)
Ashleigh Simpson (Communications and Engagement
Manager, COPNI)
Marie Mullan (HR Manager, COPNI)
Rebecca Kelly (Office Manager, COPNI)

<p>Agenda Item 1: Apologies</p> <p>G Campbell welcomed everyone. There were no apologies.</p> <p>The Chair took this opportunity to note that Mr G McKeown would be leaving his post as Finance and Governance Manager, to thank him for his contribution to COPNI, for his support to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and wished him well in his future career.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 2: Chair's Business</p> <p>a) <u>Conflict of Interests</u> No conflicts of interests were declared.</p> <p>b) <u>Declaration of Interests</u> No new interests were reported in this period. Declaration of Interest forms had been issued to ARAC members and members of the COPNI SMT.</p> <p>c) <u>Fraud</u> No incidents of fraud were reported in this period.</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>

<p>d) <u>Register of Gifts and Hospitality</u> An updated version of the register was tabled. Members discussed the entry and the Chair approved the register. Members agreed that going forward only the register for the current financial year should be included in the papers.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/1 NOTED (Act 117)</p>
<p>e) <u>Register of International Conferences & Events</u> No entries for this period.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/1a NOTED</p>
<p>f) <u>Direct Award Contracts</u> The record of direct award contracts during the period was noted and G McKeown explained the items.</p>	<p>03/16/1b NOTED</p>
<p>g) <u>Whistleblowing</u> Nothing to report for this period.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 3: Draft Minutes of the Meeting of 7 December 2015</p> <p>The minutes of the last ARAC meeting were approved by Members.</p> <p>The minutes were then signed by the Chair and a copy will be published on the COPNI website.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/2</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising not already on the Agenda</p> <p>a) <u>Actions arising from ARAC Meeting 21 September 2015</u> All actions except one were reported as complete by the date of the meeting. The outstanding action was to seek a temporary Finance and Governance Manager to have a handover period with G McKeown before he leaves COPNI. E Hoy explained that recruitment for the temporary position was ongoing.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 5: Commissioner's Update – Emerging Issues</p> <p>a) <u>Engagement</u></p> <p>E Hoy gave an update on the current issues and explained that she completed media training and had since attended a radio interview.</p> <p>E Hoy explained that six members of staff are currently undertaking accredited investigatory training which will enable COPNI to use some of its investigatory powers. E Hoy noted that it is proving to be a great investment.</p> <p>Members noted their appreciation to E Hoy for her continuing hard work whilst in her dual role. E Hoy thanked the Committee. E Hoy explained that COPNI expect to hear in the coming days about the new Commissioner. E Hoy explained that the team have been</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/3</p>

<p>planning for and are prepared for a Commissioner to take post. E Hoy noted that that the successful applicant may have an extended notice period.</p>	
<p>b) <u>Recruitment and Induction</u></p> <p>E Hoy noted that COPNI had two new members of staff that started in January, Marie Mullan, HR Manager and Ashleigh Simpson, Communications and Engagement Manager. E Hoy detailed that they have settled in very well.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>c) <u>2015/2016 Finance and expenditure</u></p> <p>G McKeown explained that the summary budget is £843k and COPNI's final total expenditure for the 2015/16 financial year will be within OFMDFM tolerance limits. G McKeown detailed that budget had been reserved to cover a month's salary for the new Commissioner. G McKeown explained that as a new Commissioner will not take up their post in the 15/16 financial year some of that available resource can be used towards other activities. N Griffin noted that OFMDFM would have no issue with the under spend as there is suffice justification. The Chair noted that COPNI had managed the budget well.</p> <p>E Hoy noted that the Business Plan had been submitted to OFMDFM and it was based on a limited budget but one that COPNI could operate to. E Hoy explained that the opening allocation would have an immediate effect on the Business Plan. The Chair queried if the plan would be approved before COPNI move to the Department of Communities. E Hoy noted that approval would likely come from the new Department for Communities.</p> <p>Members discussed potential cuts. E Hoy reported that if COPNI had a 5% cut it would be unsustainable and further explained that there is already only one staff member in each key area. E Hoy noted that she was not completely pessimistic and that there will be discussions once COPNI move departments. Members noted that they would like information on the budget following on from the meeting with Dr M. Browne disclosed to them.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/3a NOTED</p> <p><i>(Act 118)</i></p>
<p>d) <u>Quarterly Performance Report</u></p> <p>G McKeown presented the report and explained that all KPI's have been met this year and all projects complete. E Hoy explained that staff sick leave levels are good and there have been no significant issues to report to OFMDFM. The report was discussed at the recent accountability meeting.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/3b NOTED</p>

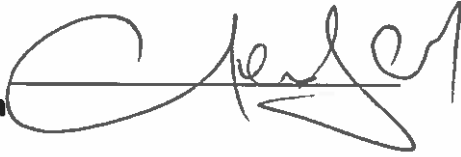
<p>e) <u>Accountability Meeting</u></p> <p>E Hoy reported that the focus at the meetings is on the budget, risks and cuts next year. E Hoy noted that none of the current staff will be moving to the Department for Communities. N Griffin explained that he will be working to ensure a smooth transitional period.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>f) <u>Senior Management Team</u></p> <p>E Hoy confirmed that the Senior Management Team continue to meet monthly. E Hoy confirmed that the meetings have continued to work very well in the absence of a Commissioner.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>g) <u>Complaints</u></p> <p>E Hoy confirmed that there has been no complaints for this quarter.</p> <p>E Hoy noted that one case may conclude in a formal complaint despite having spent a lot of time on it. E Hoy added that she would report to the committee in due course if a formal complaint was lodged.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>h) <u>Change of Commissioner</u></p> <p>E Hoy noted that the announcement of the new Commissioner should be any day now. Members requested that they meet with the new Commissioner before the June meeting.</p> <p>i) <u>2016/17 Business Plan</u></p> <p>E Hoy confirmed that the Business Plan has been submitted to OFMDFM. E Hoy explained that the Business Plan reflects on the work which COPNI are working on and work that COPNI are about to take on. Members discussed the figures and that they are all estimates subject based on the 2015/16 opening allocation. Members requested a one page summary of the COPNI Business Plan and to keep the matter on the June agenda.</p> <p>j) <u>Draft Corporate Plan / Shortlist of options</u></p> <p>E Hoy confirmed that a short list of options for potential inclusion in a new Corporate Plan will be ready for the new Commissioner consideration. E Hoy noted that this Corporate Plan has an appropriate level of ambition. Members queried if the plan had been</p>	<p>NOTED</p> <p>(Act 119)</p> <p>ARAC 03/16/3c</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>(Act 120)</p>

<p>shared with OFMDFM. E Hoy noted that it would be appropriate to share with OFMDFM once the incoming Commissioner has an opportunity to consider.</p> <p>k) <u>Change to Department of Communities</u> E Hoy explained that a first meeting with Permanent Secretary the Department for Communities has now been set up in April. E Hoy confirmed that it is likely that the Department for Communities will approve the final 16/17 Business Plan.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 6: Update from OFMDFM</p> <p>The Chair formally welcomed N Griffin to the meeting. N Griffin noted that many matters have been covered by the agenda.</p> <p>N Griffin highlighted that it was not likely that the pay remit would be approved this month. E Hoy noted that COPNI and NIPSA have been discussing the suitability of a single point pay system. E Hoy noted that a third staff member is now leaving COPNI to a job role of the same grade but that is on a pay scale. E Hoy confirmed that the pay scale issue is proving increasingly difficult to retain staff.</p> <p>The Chair formally highlighted thanks to N Drennan for her valued contribution. E Hoy added that N Drennan had been a great help to COPNI in the past four years and wishes her all the best for her new post.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 7: Update from NIAO</p> <p>C Burns confirmed that NIAO are on a planning cycle for the next few weeks. C Burns added that they have recently publish a good practice guide on Managing Fraud Risk in a Changing Environment. E Hoy queried if resources and staff would stay the same between COPNI and NIAO. C Burns confirmed that they would for this year subject to change in Audit Manager. C Burns added that after 15/16 they cannot be definitive. Members added that they were content that the staff would stay the same as it is good to keep the same staff in the midst of a lot of changes.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8: Update from Internal Audit</p> <p>a) <u>Governance and Compliance Audit</u> A McMaw confirmed that the Governance and Compliance Audit was overall satisfactory. E Hoy noted that COPNI did not accept Observation A3 until the committee had an opportunity to consider it. A Member noted their frustration that this was a priority 2 and not 3. A McMaw noted that it was not clear from the Risk Register that management do not have control of the risk. Members had a discussion around the acceptance of the priority ranking. The Chair noted that this should be a final copy and not in draft version. The</p>	<p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/4</p>

<p>Chair asked that all future reports be only brought before the Committee once they have been agreed between management and the auditors. E Hoy confirmed she was happy to finalise the report and did not need to see it again.</p> <p>b) Procurement and Contract management Audit A McMaw reported that all recommendations had been accepted by management.</p> <p>c) 2015/16 Progress Report A McMaw explained that she will bring this dashboard to all meetings going forward. A McMaw referred to the dashboard and how it reflects the report.</p> <p>d) 2015/16 draft Annual Assurance report incorporating our KPI analysis A McMaw noted that this could not be finalised until March 2016. All internal KPI's have been met</p> <p>A member requested the previous Internal Audit Charter from the June 2015 papers be forwarded to them after the meeting.</p> <p>e) Proposed 2016/17 IA plan for Audit Committee consideration A McMaw noted that the plan remains flexible and that a change can be often required to ensure the reviews add the best value to COPNI. Members had a discussion around the best value and practical reviews. The Committee agreed with managements suggestion that the 2016/17 IA Plan be amended so that the substantive review of Communication and Engagement be replaced by Strategic Project Management but that this considers Communication and Engagement as part of that review.</p> <p>A McMaw noted that a review plan and schedule would be brought to the June 2016 meeting.</p>	<p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/4a</p> <p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/4b</p> <p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/4c</p> <p><i>(Act 121)</i></p> <p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/4d</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Audit Recommendations</p> <p>E Hoy noted that the Audit Recommendations were all agreed and there were none outstanding. Members noted that they were all content.</p>	<p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/5</p>

<p>Agenda Item 10: Risk Matters</p> <p>a) <u>Corporate Risk Register 2015/16 Quarter 4</u></p> <p>E Hoy noted that there is a Risk Management meeting every month with the Risk Analysis Team. E Hoy gave a summary of the risks. The Chair asked if anyone had any queries. All members and attendees were content and had nothing additional to add.</p>	<p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/6</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11: Revised Business Continuity Plan</p> <p>The BCP has recently been updated and some minor changes have been made. E Hoy confirmed that all appropriate staff have copies in the appropriate places.</p>	<p>NOTED ARAC 03/16/7</p>
<p>Agenda Item 12: Update on DAO and DFD Guidance</p> <p>The report was noted. Members noted their appreciation for the summary report.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/8 NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 13: Summary of Key Issues from Public Accounts Committee Reports</p> <p>There were no issues applicable to COPNI during the period.</p>	<p>ARAC 03/16/9 NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 14: Any Other Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement of new Commissioner • Re-appointment of ARAC • R Kelly to let members know details of training course for Members <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 15: Dates of Next Meeting</p> <p>Proposed Dates of Next Meeting</p> <p>27 June 2016 5 September 2016 5 December 2016 6 March 2017</p>	<p>NOTED 03/16/10</p>

Signed:
Chairperson

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Date:

27/6/16