

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 3 JUNE 2019 AT 1.30PM  
IN EQUALITY HOUSE, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS

Gerard Campbell (Chair)  
Joseph Campbell  
Professor Dolores O'Reilly

IN ATTENDANCE

Eddie Lynch (Commissioner, COPNI)  
Ciaran Cunningham (Department for Communities)  
Catherine O'Hagan (Northern Ireland Audit Office)  
Amanda McMaw (ASM – Internal Audit) (to item 3a)  
Dr Rosemary Peters Gallagher OBE (Moore Stephens – Internal Audit)  
Catriona McHugh (Moore Stephens – Internal Audit)  
Helen Gault (Finance and Governance Manager, COPNI)  
Eloise Gilmour (Office Manager, COPNI)

<p><b>Agenda Item 1: Apologies</b></p> <p>It was noted that E Hoy (Chief Executive) is on sick leave. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular welcomed R Peters Gallagher and C McHugh to their first meeting of the Committee as the new Internal Auditors.</p>	<p><b>NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 2: Chair's Business</b></p> <p><b>a) <u>Conflicts of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No conflicts of interest were declared.</p> <p><b>b) <u>Fraud</u></b></p> <p>No incidents were reported in this period.</p> <p><b>c) <u>Register of Gifts and Hospitality</u></b></p> <p>The 12 items were noted and it was signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>d) <u>Register of International Conferences &amp; Events</u></b></p> <p>There were no items for this period.</p>	<p><b>NOTED</b></p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p> <p><b>ARAC 06/19/2c APPROVED</b></p> <p><b>NOTED</b></p>

<p><b>e) <u>Direct Award Contracts</u></b></p> <p>The four items were noted.</p> <p><b>f) <u>Whistleblowing</u></b></p> <p>No incidents were reported in this period.</p>	<p>ARAC 06/19/2e NOTED</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 3: Update from Internal Audit (ASM)</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked Amanda McMaw and Brian Clerkin from ASM for their diligent work and professionalism over the past four years. A McMaw thanked the Committee and management, and noted this was the last report from ASM at the end of their contract. She indicated Moore Stephens may contact ASM in the event of any queries as they commence their new contract.</p> <p><b>a) <u>Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2018/19</u></b></p> <p>ASM gave a satisfactory assurance for COPNI's systems in relation to risk management, control and governance. ASM fell slightly below target for one key performance indicator relating to the percentage of internal audit days to be delivered by ASM staff familiar with COPNI. A McMaw and B Clerkin had maintained continuity.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the satisfactory opinion and thanked ASM. A McMaw left the meeting.</p>	<p>ARAC 06/19/3a NOTED</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 4: Draft Minutes of Meetings &amp; Action Tracker</b></p> <p><b>a) <u>Draft Minutes of 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019</u></b></p> <p>Those present accepted the accuracy of the minutes, and they were signed by the Chair.</p> <p><b>b) <u>Action Tracker for 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019</u></b></p> <p>The two actions were complete.</p>	<p>ARAC 06/19/4a APPROVED</p> <p>ARAC 06/19/4b NOTED</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 5: Matters Arising not already on the Agenda</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 6: Commissioner's Update</b></p> <p><b>a) <u>Engagement</u></b></p> <p>The Commissioner tabled a list of his engagements over the past three months. He highlighted the last two social isolation workshops were held in March and he plans to publish a report.</p>	<p>NOTED</p>

In May COPNI launched its Crime and Justice report, which contained 24 recommendations to agencies including the PSNI, the Public Prosecution Service, Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service. The Older People's Commissioner for Wales attended the launch, and COPNI intends to build on this relationship.

COPNI has met with Translink to raise issues on behalf of some older people about the new Glider buses in Belfast.

**b) Accountability Meeting**

The Accountability meeting was held on 13 May 2019. It is anticipated the DfC will confirm COPNI's budget this month. The Strategic Investment Board carried out a review of COPNI's baseline funding in early 2019, and the DfC has shared the report with COPNI. It is broadly supportive of the need for COPNI to have a programme budget and sufficient resources for the 2019/20 Business Plan. The Commissioner will meet with the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning and Resources Group, DfC in June regarding the review.

The Commissioner indicated he will request a meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance regarding staff's pay progression issue. The Chair will pass details of another organisation which may have had a similar situation, to the Commissioner.

**c) Budget 2019/20**

This item was covered in item 6(b).

**d) Dunmurry Manor Care Home Investigation**

The investigation team and the Expert Panel have analysed around 400 responses from the relevant authorities. The investigation is still being conducted in private. An update report will be sent this week to the families involved in the investigation, which will explain that the Commissioner will be in a position to comment in full later this year. Relevant political representatives will also receive an update.

**e) Relocation of COPNI and other Arm's Length Bodies**

There has been a proposal that COPNI and other ALBs will move to another building in Belfast in May 2021, as the lease for Equality House ends that year. Preliminary meetings have been held however it is not yet known what will be the level of rent.

**NOTED**

**NOTED**

**NOTED**

**NOTED**

**Agenda Item 7: Chief Executive's Update – Emerging Issues**

**a) Staffing Issues**

**NOTED**

There are recruitment exercises ongoing for two administration posts.

**b) Senior Management Team**

**NOTED**

The SMT meets every other month.

**c) Finance and Expenditure 2018/19**

**ARAC 06/19/7c  
NOTED**

£869,000 was spent by year end, which was an underspend of £25,000. The main reason for this was that funding for the Expert Panel was received late in the year and could not be spent by March. There is therefore a new bid in the Business Plan 2019/20. There were variances in March due to increased travel, training and professional fees expenditure.

**d) Finance and Expenditure 2019/2020**

**ARAC 06/19/7d  
NOTED**

The opening allocation for the year was £839,000. This does not include any programme funding and causes an immediate pressure of £55,000 on salaries and overheads. There has been a large increase in employer pension contributions. C Cunningham indicated this will be met by the DfC in year.

The Expert Panel carried out work in April and May. The 'One Year On' event for the Home Truths report has been postponed from June to later this year. A budgetary pressure of £69,000 at year end is expected. It is anticipated the DfC will confirm COPNI's budget this month.

J Campbell welcomed the increased opening allocation, compared to last year which was £754,000. He asked whether any delays in the post-investigation process would cause Expert Panel costs to increase. The Commissioner said it should not, as the Expert Panel are paid for their actual hours worked.

J Campbell said he hoped staff would reach a successful outcome in the pay progression issue. He asked how this could affect the budget. The Commissioner said there should not be a significant additional cost.

**e) Quarterly Performance Report January – March 2019**

**ARAC 06/19/7e  
NOTED**

The report was noted.

**f) Quarterly Assurance Statement January – March 2019**

**ARAC 06/19/7f  
NOTED**

The report was noted.



<p>discussed these with the Commissioner and H Gault. The plan for 2019-2023 may change in accordance with priorities.</p> <p>The internal audit approach, summary of audit needs assessment, and audit resources for 2019/2023 were noted, as was as the flexibility to tailor the audit plan within the Strategy. The Committee approved the Strategy.</p> <p><b>b) <u>Draft Internal Audit Charter</u></b></p> <p>The Charter set out the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Auditors. Regarding the final item under point 1.3, the Chair indicated the Committee reports to the Commissioner on its own effectiveness at (<i>not before</i>) the September meeting. The Charter was approved.</p>	<p><b>ARAC 06/19/11b NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 12: Audit Recommendations – Progress to date</b></p> <p>It was noted the three recommendations were still within their target period.</p>	<p><b>ARAC 06/19/12 NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 13: Accountability and Financial Management Guidance Update</b></p> <p>The six items in the report were noted. Copies of 'Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies: NI Code of Good Practice (March 2019)' were handed out.</p>	<p><b>ARAC 06/19/13 NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 14: COPNI Updated Policies</b></p> <p>The two policies listed in the report were noted.</p>	<p><b>ARAC 06/19/14 NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 15: Revised Secretariat Procedures</b></p> <p>The Chair commended the high standard of secretariat support provided to the Committee. Dates within the document had been updated for 2019/20, and there were no other significant changes. It was noted.</p>	<p><b>ARAC 06/19/15 NOTED</b></p>
<p><b>Agenda Item 16: Any Other Business</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	<p><b>NOTED</b></p>

<p><b>Agenda Item 17: Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 at 1.30pm.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 2.50 pm.</p>	<p><b>NOTED</b></p>
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**Signed:** L. O'Sullivan  
**Chairperson**

**Date:** 02-09-2019.

