

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, 7th March 2022 via COPNI Zoom**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Professor Dolores O'Reilly (Chair) (DO'R)
Joseph Campbell (JC)
Terry McGonigal (TMcG)

IN ATTENDANCE

Sarah Ferguson (SF) (Department for Communities)
Sarah Heanen (SH) (NIAO)
Catriona McHugh (Moore NI)
Commissioner Eddie Lynch (EL) (COPNI)
Evelyn Hoy (EH) (Chief Executive, COPNI)
Paul Garrity (PG) (Interim Finance and Governance
Manager, COPNI)
Ivor Johnston (IJ) (Interim Head of Corporate Services,
COPNI)
Michael Maguire (MM) (Finance Assistant, COPNI)
Patricia Maskey (PM) (Personal Secretary, COPNI)

Minutes

Agenda Item 1: Apologies Apologies received from Ivor Johnston, joined meeting at 15.10 due to prior engagement.	Noted
Agenda Item 2: Chair's Business a. <u>Conflicts of Interest</u> No conflicts of interest were declared. b. <u>Fraud</u> No incidents were reported in this period. c. <u>Register of Gifts and Hospitality</u> No Gifts or Hospitality received. d. <u>Register of International Conferences and Events</u> There were no items for this period. e. <u>Direct Award Contracts</u>	

<p>Two items were noted.</p> <p>f. <u>Whistleblowing</u> No incidents were reported in this period.</p> <p>g. <u>Complaints</u> No new complaints registered.</p> <p>T McGonigal queried if Declaration of Members interests should be addressed at this meeting. E Hoy advised this is addressed at the June meeting for ARAC Members and SMT.</p>	<p>Irish News/annual subscription.</p> <p>TV Licensing Annual Subscription.</p>
<p>Agenda Item 3: Draft Minutes of Meetings & Action Tracker</p> <p>a. <u>Draft Minutes – 14th December 2021</u></p> <p>The Chair reviewed the minutes with the members present and all agreed the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting on 14th December 2021.</p> <p>T McGonigal indicated that throughout the minutes individuals were referenced by both their names and their initials. He asked could the naming remain consistent.</p> <p>b. <u>Action Tracker</u></p> <p>ACT 182 – to be discussed at Agenda Item 6a.</p> <p>ACT 192 – The Chair had asked at the September meeting for A Colgan to provide a presentation to ARAC Independent Board Members before the March ARAC meeting outlining the new case management system. This has been rescheduled to June 2022. The Chair asked could this take place in April or May. E Hoy advised A Colgan is currently taking part in the casework audit with Moore NI and this presentation could take place after the audit.</p> <p>ACT 198 – E Hoy advised this action should be amber as the Corporate Plan is still under design and hopes to have the designed version by the end of the week. E Hoy advised the Commissioner is hoping to publish the Corporate Plan before the year end.</p>	<p>ARAC 14/03/3a APPROVED</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>ARAC 03/22/3b APPROVED</p> <p>ACT 192</p>

<p>The Chair, J Campbell and T McGonigal agreed they would like to have sight of the Corporate Plan before it is published.</p> <p>T McGonigal stated it would be beneficial to have a completion date for each action to reflect accurate colour coding.</p> <p>ACT 201 – E Hoy confirmed I Johnston has recently joined COPNI and was prioritising the ARAC papers. He would follow up on this action after this meeting.</p>	ACT 201 - IJ
<p>Agenda Item 4: Matters arising not already on the Agenda</p> <p>None outside the agenda</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 5: Commissioner’s Update</p> <p>a. <u>Engagements</u></p> <p>The Commissioner advised meetings and events continue online. However, we have been receiving more invites to attend face to face events which we have been accepting and are looking forward to attending in the coming months.</p> <p>The Commissioner advised he met with the BMA (British Medical Association) and had an interesting discussion on the pressures faced by GP’s. It was agreed we would meet regularly to hear updates.</p> <p>The Commissioner met with Saga Magazine and was interviewed on the merits of having a Commissioner in NI, this is a UK wide magazine.</p> <p>The Commissioner advised he met with the Minister for Communities to discuss the rising energy prices. The Minister provided details of the £200 Energy Payment Support Scheme for vulnerable people in various benefit categories. The Commissioner informed the Minister that rising energy prices is a big issue facing older people and will be for many years to come.</p> <p>The Commissioner and other members of SMT attended a workshop organised by the RQIA which provided an update to recommendations arising from the Home Truths Report. He advised the relationship between both organisations continues to improve.</p> <p>The Commissioner met with the Age Friendly Co-ordinator from Causeway Coast and Glens to discuss their recently published Charter for Age-Friendly Community.</p>	

The Commissioner has also met with various MLAs in relation to older people's issues in their constituencies and their party's ageing policy which is an important part of our policy work.

The Commissioner advised he continues to have high level meetings with the DoH in relation to the adult protection bill and with the Minister for Health in relation to the reform of adult social care.

The Commissioner met with Beverly Wall from DfC to discuss the review of ALBs. We await receipt of the TORs for this piece of work.

The Commissioner had a constructive meeting with the Finance Branch of DfC which allowed him the opportunity to flag up issues with budget and staffing.

The Commissioner advised he continues to meet fortnightly with the Older People UK Network and they are in the process of writing a joint letter to the PM in relation to the issues faced by older people in Ukraine asking for more action from the UK Government.

b. Accounting Officer Matters

The Commissioner referred to the meeting held with DfC in December in relation to the Independent Review Report and the action plan request arising from that meeting. He confirmed he will meet with the ARAC Committee to discuss and complete this action plan.

The Commissioner referred to the issue of the staff pay progression and his ability now to move staff up the scale on the length of their service.

The Commissioner advised in relation to the back pay issue he is awaiting Counsel's opinion in relation to back pay for former staff.

The Commissioner referred to the two ongoing Judicial Review's in relation to hospital waiting lists and continuing healthcare in NI and confirmed he will keep the ARAC Committee updated on developments as they happen.

Agenda Item 6: Chief Executive's Update

a) Staffing issues

E Hoy stated that staffing issues continue to be a problem. Updated on two temporary posts, namely Ivor Johnston (temp Head of Corporate Services) taking over from P Garrity and Michael Maguire as a temporary finance assistant. The role of Finance Assistant/AO has been advertised and COPNI has started the process of sifting through the applicants. E Hoy also stated that COPNI wanted to replace Helen Gault at SO Accountant level as that role is vacant at present but is also to reflect the loss of the Finance and Governance Manager. The post was advertised but we got no response, and we will look at re-advertising this at graduate level as it is nearly impossible to find someone with the required experience in the public sector. The market is not great at the minute. J Campbell asked if Ivor Johnston (in the temporary HCS role) is a qualified accountant and E Hoy replied to confirm that he is and that the SO role is to support him and to free him up to look at more strategic Governance matters. E Hoy also stated that Paul Garrity will be leaving COPNI soon after the year end, leaving hopefully Ivor Johnston, Michael Maguire and the new SO Accountant. E Hoy also stated that Corporate Services is almost a full-time job thus the need for the SO Accountant to do Management accounts, returns to the Department, etc (to free up Ivor) in response to J Campbell.

T McGonigal questioned whether the SO will be an accountancy graduate, a graduate of any discipline or one that has completed professional exams with the likes of ACCA or CIMA. E Hoy replied that the post has not been re-advertised yet and she would seek advice from T McGonigal relating to entry requirements. S Heanen commented that for the role of SO to be a trainee accountant then CIMA would require a qualified accountant in COPNI to sign off the SOs work experience etc. T McGonigal stressed that if it was the case that COPNI were to employ a trainee that this would most likely require day release for training and a qualified accountant to be employed also by COPNI to sign off training and oversee the Year End accounts processes. Also, Ivor Johnston's role was only temporary, and all these factors would need considered when advertising for the new SO. E Hoy clarified her previous statements that the last time this role was advertised that the criteria were three years' experience post qualified and that this was a barrier to applicants at the salary offered. T McGonigal confirmed that this was most definitely the problem and is a problem in the market generally now. The salary offered would most likely only attract a part-qualified accountant with the opportunity to train and complete the professional exams. E Hoy once again stated that COPNI would seek his advice on this matter before proceeding.

J Campbell asked (in terms of the restructuring Business case being a critical piece of work) when the case will be submitted to the Department. E Hoy responded in saying that it was at an advanced stage and just needed some minor points agreed

between herself and the Commissioner and should be ready in the next two weeks. J Campbell asked would this new business case tie in with the budget requirements for 2022-2023 negotiations with the Department. E Hoy replied that restructuring would not all happen in the forthcoming year and was in the three-year budget plan but that the costings projected to occur in the 2022-2023 have been part of the ongoing negotiations., Also COPNI have started at the managerial level of restructuring to enable E Hoy to commit herself to more strategic work, but the lower levels need filled as well as a lot of these positions are temporary, and this is an ongoing issue that needs resolved. The Chair asked for all the positions required whether Departmental approval had been obtained to which E Hoy replied that some have head count already approved and others not yet approved.

The Chair stated that C O'Hagan suggested in a previous meeting that it might be worthwhile looking into whether other Dept employees might be interested in a secondment to fulfil COPNI's vacant posts to which E Hoy replied that every avenue of filling these posts was being considered.

E Hoy then talked about the Comms and Engagement team being a team of two people. One position was vacant, and the other person is going on maternity leave soon. The vacant Assistant Comms role has been advertised and interviews have been scheduled. Also, COPNI will shortly be advertising for a fixed term contract to cover the maternity leave.

This role is vital to the business as they work alongside the Commissioner on all outward comms.

Good news is that the Policy team and Legal team are pretty stable and have no recruitment requirements at present except that the band 7 posts are of a temporary nature. This will need reviewed if COPNI does not get approval for the business case. Policy and Legal cannot be covered by one person now as the workloads are too significant.

The Chair asked for the timeline for the Comms and Engagement posts to be filled and how many applicants had applied for the Assistant Comms role. The Commissioner replied that two out the three applicants look like good strong candidates and have a fair bit of experience. Also, that they had been invited for interview soon. The Chair asked when the Assistant role became vacant as she was worried about the big gap in them leaving and getting the role filled. E Hoy replied that they left at the end of January and the Commissioner added that they gave a month's notice and the recruitment process to fill this was within normal standard practice. E Hoy added that the market for staff at this moment is challenging and even temporary roles are

hard to fill. The Commissioner and E Hoy confirmed that COPNI expects the Assistant Comms officer to be in the role by the start of May with a short handover with L Rice who is going on maternity leave. It is also hoped that L Rice's fixed term cover will be in place to enable a short handover.

b) Senior Management Team

E Hoy confirmed that SMT continues to meet 3 times per week and once a month to confirm all decisions made for Audit purposes. SMT now consists of Heads of Policy, Legal, Corporate Services and Comms and they are working very well together with all departments now represented.

E Hoy then went on to mention the Beverly Wall ALB Review meeting which is quite a significant review. It will be looking at legislation, the corporation sole, methodology for the COPNI and NICCY legislation and the accounting officer delegation. It will also look at the sponsorship arrangements and decide as to whether DFC are an appropriate sponsoring body or whether Commissioners (as in other jurisdictions) are sponsored by the legislative assembly. The review is also going to look at COPNI's form, function, impact and staffing/future needs. Beverly Wall and DFC representatives are both keen to see it as part of the review. It was due to be completed by the end of March 22 and will be quite an administrative burden for COPNI especially around year end. We have asked to be kept in the loop about any developments but have heard nothing yet.

E Hoy stated that we

have convened the Legal Funding Committee a few times in the last period regarding cases that required either funding or COPNI to represent them with all minutes recorded. Joe Campbell asked about the timeline for the review by Beverly Wall (ALB) and terms of reference. S Ferguson confirmed that terms of reference are still with the Minister and has not signed off yet, so the Audit will not be commissioned until this is done.

E Hoy mentioned that management accounts were included for January, but that February was now available and have also been sent out to all Members. This was relevant to a point that T McGonigal was making about dynamic papers and that sometimes we can provide more updated papers. T McGonigal responded that the problem was that the updated papers came out very late and did not give him enough time to go over them in any detail or prepare questions. He suggested that the meeting should be moved further into the month to allow time for the likes of management accounts to be as up to date as possible. The Chair also stated that it would be beneficial if we could get the draft minutes of meetings out to members as soon as is possible so that they can look over them when everything

is fresh in their minds. T McGonigal agreed that this would be helpful.
(2-3 weeks preferably)

Action IJ

c) Finance and Expenditure

P Garrity confirmed that the Annual Report and Accounts was laid before the NI Assembly on the 28th of Feb 2022, with the pressure now on to get the current year submitted on a more timely basis.

P Garrity presented the Feb 2022 accounts, stating that it was more appropriate to look at February management accounts now as they are more up to date and relevant, and everyone now had a copy.

The variance for the month and year to date is significant but the table helps put it into context in line with successful bids against the opening budget allocation.

There is a £55.2k adverse variance for the month which is half of year-to-date cumulative variance against the original profiled budget of 112k.

In referring to the table, the Base allocation of £1,075k minus £3k depreciation = £1,072k starting RDEL allocation.

5 successful funding bids were made to the Dept from September to the end of January.

Overall operating expenditure including depreciation is now £1,209k of a revised £1,234k total funding allocation (inc £25k capital).

Referring to the summary page of management accounts

£1,229.9k projected expenditure with a forecast easement of £4.1k, which is reassuring.

Staff costs variances appear high at £25k in Feb and year to date £75k but these variances are where we expected to be and are in line with forecasts. We have increased the accrual regarding the pay progression based on where we think this will be at the end of March/beginning of April. £25.5k reserve from last year and to Feb end £21.3k accrual = £51k accrued against pay progression (which should be sufficient).

Temporary staff by departments and

HR and training costs is significantly different from our original budget. It is now in line with the revised projection to the end of March.

Rent and facilities had a reduced charge this quarter.

Pressure with Capital now covered by DFC with £25K capital spend identified in February and up to 25k spend in March.

T McGonigal sought clarification that all bids were in year bids and not base line bids. P Garrity confirmed that they were all in year bids.

T McGonigal referred to the revised budget of £1,229k, what it included and whether we would be reverting to a budget of £929k in 22/23.

P Garrity responded that the budget would revert to £1,075k with base line bid of £1,065k for both operating and capital expenditure

and £10k depreciation but that reduced by 3k so budget would be £1,072k per the 2021/22 starting point.

T McGonigal asked whether next year we would be starting with a reduced base line budget to which P Garrity confirmed that would be the case.

The Chair and T McGonigal both stated that is far from ideal to be starting the next year on a reduced baseline budget and that Departments can only allocate 95% of this. Also, that there is no 3-year budget to help with planning longer term budgets since there is no Assembly sitting. E Hoy intervened stating that initially we will only be allocated 45% of budget then thereafter adjusted until it gets to 75% - 95% with legislation required by Westminster for further spending. S Ferguson replied to this saying that DOF hope to get Finance Allocation letters out by before of June for this year's one year budget and followed hopefully by a 2-year budget for the following years. P Garrity agreed with these statements and J Campbell also mentioned it is great to be able to breakeven but that because of continuing pressures on staffing etc there would need to be some contingency plans in place. P Garrity stated that it is an ongoing issue and needs managed. S Ferguson also responded to T McGonigal's question regarding in year bids stating that due to pressures on DOF budget that there was unlikely to be any in year bids approved in the coming year.

c1) Assurance statement?

E Hoy stated that everything in the Statement had already been covered.

T McGonigal & the Chair mentioned Adult Safeguarding regarding COPNI giving advice to other bodies and that our policy should reflect this. E Hoy replied that an external review of our policy needs done but that no deadline yet. The Chair

mentioned reputational risk and a review of policy needed ASAP. J Campbell mentioned that we are already applying policy that just needs updated.

d) Quarterly Performance Report

Only reported by exception so nothing to report.

e) Quarterly Assurance Statement

All business plan objectives now green or amber. E Hoy stated that the Q3 Risk Register does not reflect the submitted report as has been updated since following an SMT review in Feb 2022. No consultancy projects as we do not use consultants.

Employee head count as of 31.12.21 permanent full-time posts 16.

Monthly absence summary included a staff member on long term sick (recovering from surgery) and expected to return in the next six weeks along with Covid and cold cases. She stated that this does not look good but explained reasons as to why this was the case.

f) Business Plan

E Hoy confirmed the business plan is on course in response to T McGonigal asking about 15 green objectives saying that the Business plan should be aligned to the Risk Register and any green items should be removed from the plan. He agreed that there would be some in year risks but the likes of Covid risks should be removed as they are being managed. The chair and E Hoy agreed that this requires more discussion. T McGonigal stated that Risk Register should reflect whether you are going to achieve your business plan objectives. E Hoy welcomed the conversation and agreed that this would be beneficial. The Chair suggested a workshop to discuss further at a later date.

C McHugh stated that risks are about achieving objectives, but some will remain and cannot be completely mitigated against. T McGonigal agreed but said that every risk should have an action plan with an SMT member assigned to this within a certain timeline.

Action IJ

Agenda Item 7: Draft Business Plan 2022/2023

E Hoy stated that the Business Plan has been developed over the last few months and covers all of the ambition for next year but that it is heavily reliant on having the staffing resources to deliver it. Budget required for staff to deliver is way above last year's baseline. Plan B, which removes the need for temporary

staff, will need to be implemented if budget does not meet the costings in the proposed plan. It is aligned with the Commissioner's Corporate Plan with the focus on ageism. We have been clear about the work and its connectivity to the Commissioner enabling the required legislation. There are a number of standing items each year which are highly connected to legislation and the Commissioners' duties. The only thing that changes each year is how we deliver these items. The Workstreams are slightly different each year (projects listed), for example we usually cover something to do with crime each year. This coming year we are going to be looking at the effect of an ageing population on older prisoners and the social care provisions within prisons.

The Chair intervened saying that it might be better to get members to ask any questions on specific projects. E Hoy agreed.

T McGonigal commented on the survey commending the results and numbers that took part considering the current climate. Also found the results very interesting. He stated that workstreams should be aligned to the findings (snapshot) of the survey to show that they are the priority. Regarding the tables, target dates and a plan of action would be helpful and details on how we measure impact and outcomes. Budget projections require more narrative, with KPIs etc and how these issues/plans are going to be impacted if the £1.4 million budget asked for is not realised.

J Campbell mentioned that a lot of the issues are out of COPNI's control and the need for strategies to be in place to advocate on behalf of the older generation that are outside the control of COPNI.

The Chair mentioned that a few numbers were missing for example number of new policies developed and asked E Hoy to update regarding this.

Action EH

Agenda Item 8: Risk matters

The chair stated that there is a slightly new format with 16 x risks, 9 of which were high, 6 x medium and 1 x low. E Hoy welcomed the proposal for a workshop on the Risk register.

ACTION EH

Staffing matters one of the more concerning risks already discussed, on the up because of new vacancies and the uncertainty regarding budget and how business plan objectives would be affected if the proposed budget was not met. A lot of the legal work for example would have to be reduced, we would not be able to take on new legal cases. J Campbell agreed and mentioned that come the next meeting he hoped that the issue of temp staff and pay progression/back pay would be resolved enabling a more aggressive campaign to get the right people (permanent) in the current vacancies and retaining them. E Hoy agreed with this and that it would also help in future proofing the business and enable the likes of Legal team/engagement work to plan forward. The Commissioner commented that this issue is part of an ongoing process to get the organisation into a more fit for purpose body and that problems during this period of change are inevitable.

ACTION PM

ACTION EH

T McGonigal replied that there needs to be a link back to the business plan, for example if we do not have a strong legal team or comms team due to staff shortages then this will impact on our business plan objectives. There is a need to formulate these risks back to the business plan and what areas of it will be impacted. He went on to say that in controls and actions it is hard to differentiate between them. Controls should mitigate the risk and actions eliminate or greatly reduce the risk. There is no target date to see as to where the risks are at presently to see how much progress has been made. It also does not mention who is responsible for ensuring that target dates are being met. These comments are in general about the need for the Risk Register to be improved.

The Chair again mentioned that there is now a proposed workshop to resolve these ongoing issues.

Action IJ

Risk 2

Grievance has come down to low and by next meeting should be removed and all relevant audits such as HR (completed), case work audit (underway) and recruitment practices updated. All actions have been completed.

The Chair asked the Commissioner should this be included in the ARAC to show that this issue is being addressed (action plan). The Commissioner agreed that it can be included.

3. Framework for temporary staff.

E Hoy stated that there is no meeting of candidates before commencing employment,

This is not suitable for an organisation the size of COPNI. It has been agreed with CPD that we can use the Crown Service framework

which is marginally better. Also, we have been given permission to use Agencies outside the framework. Not much difference in costs and enables us to meet the prospective employees

Agenda Item 9: Update from Department for Communities.

S Ferguson updated members in that the annual report had been laid before the NI Assembly on the 28.02.2022 and that budget allocation letters will be sent out before June hopefully. If we present the business case for restructuring, then this will inform us as to how to allocate monies taking this year's overspend into account. She stated that Moira had asked for more info/update on the action plan in terms of the independent review and in terms of more information on the inaccuracies in the report.

The Chair responded saying that she had written to Moira, Sharon, Andre Orr, her two colleagues and the Commissioner about the action plan to agree a date to feed into and advise the Commissioner on it. The Commissioner responded saying that he would come back with answers to any relevant points that needed clarification.

Agenda Item 10: Update from Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The Chair stated that all members should be in possession of the relevant documents and invited S Heanen to speak.

S Heanen responded to say that the audit strategy sent out in February- was to inform the Accounting Officer and the Audit Committee of COPNI how the NIAO are going to plan the 2022 audit and how they are going to address any significant risks. Planned timetable, fee, any audit changes and any changes in accounting standards were outlined. The Audit Committee were asked to approve whether the risks identified to the financial statements are complete and whether the plans identified by NIAO are adequate. Also, whether management have any cases of suspected fraud, any non-compliance with laws or regulations or any irregularities in COPNI expenditure. Materiality this year will be based on total expenditure and NIAO will report to management/committee any unadjusted errors over £1000. They may liaise with Internal Audit but will not take full assurance from them. Significant audit risk including presumed fraud risk like management overriding controls will be investigated. Other

audit risk factors will be monitored and reported on if deemed necessary. Filling of Finance and Governance manager needs completed as advised at last Audit ensuring that they have public sector finance experience and have Staff pay issues need to be reflected properly in the Financial Statements. Another risk is the limited opinion in HR which will be kept under review.

The NIAO are hoping to bring the timetable forward this year to get the accounts signed by 17th October and certified by the end of October. The Fee for this year is £9250, slightly up on last year.

The timetable is dependent on NIAO receiving the full set of accounts within the agreed timeframe.22/10/2022 and suitable accounting staff from COPNI being available during the Audit.

Appendix 1 is a list of good practice guides just for information.

Appendix 2 Public reports that have been released may also be of interest to the committee

Appendix 3 Prior periods of statements regarding the removal of pay progression accrual until removed last year now resolved and should be correct this year.

Internal fraud risk papers released this week for the Committees attention which maybe they want to bring up at next meeting for discussion. It lists all types of fraud, examples of fraud and how to mitigate against them. E Hoy replied that COPNI already in possession of the relevant documents with link to them in papers.

P Garrity suggested that it would be possible to get accounts to C&AG earlier this year, but S Heanen said that the C&AG timetable quite strict but will investigate that to see if possible.

The Chair asked members to agree the audit strategy for 2022 to which Agreement was given by all members.

Agenda Item 11: Update from Internal Audit

C McHugh stated that the draft has been approved for the Terms of Reference in the Case Management audit and had planned to start the field testing. This has been delayed slightly due to unforeseen circumstances relating to S Hoy. Based on her initial conversations with staff regarding updated guidance etc, everything has now been digitised and the procedures COPNI staff are required to follow. She stated that she in hoping when auditing this area that she will see an improvement and that staff had told her that digitisation has helped greatly in reducing the workload and helped in managing/monitoring of cases. She hoped that this would be reflected in testing.

No questions.

Agenda Item 12: Audit Recommendation Tracker

For note, The Chair put it out to questions.

E Hoy replied that one of the items in red should now be amber because the questions have now been incorporated but needs to check this. Regarding 527 training has not been available.

The Chair suggested that a new date should be entered for this.

522. E Hoy stated that COPNI are not using agencies in the same way now and are now requesting that proof of qualifications is sent to COPNI HR for both Temp staff and permanent staff.

531 E Hoy stated that she now has the Recruitment and Selection policy but needs to sign it off and should therefore be green when the Tracker is reissued. (522 & 531)

533 & 534 Applicants Appeals disputes recruitment.

E Hoy stated that as above Recruitment procedures need signed off.

T McGonigal made a few points, first one regarding 531 refresher training and asked can it not go ahead anyway without the update in policy as it is usually generic.

E Hoy confirmed that there is ongoing refresher training as and when required.

T McGonigal also mentioned item 535 and that no new staff had been appointed though two new temp staff had been appointed.

E Hoy replied that this should have been clearer in that it referred to no new legal staff.

T McGonigal wanted confirmation that qualifications for all new staff - temp or permanent were now being checked by COPNI to which E Hoy confirmed that was now the case and that COPNI do not rely on the agency anymore to do this.

T McGonigal noted that a few of the green actions were on the December Agenda and that he wanted them noted that they were complete, then agreed by the Audit Committee and removed before the next meeting so that we are only seeing live actions.

E Hoy mentioned that this must have been a misunderstanding and that this action would be followed in future.

<p>Agenda Item 13: Accountability and Financial Management Guidance Update Links available for documents of interest.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 14: Schedule of meetings for coming year.</p> <p>There was some discussion around dates between the Chair, T McGonigal and P Garrity with moving the meeting date to a week later in the month so that the most up to date accounts were available. This was left with E Hoy to advise on the most appropriate dates moving forward taking into account summer holidays and to not move it too far into June.</p>	<p>Action EH</p>
<p>Agenda item 15: AOB:</p> <p>T McGonigal questioned whether members being given Email accounts would necessitate office 365. E Hoy said that this would not be a problem. T McGonigal mentioned that it might be beneficial to use software called Decision Time to which E Hoy stated that COPNI would investigate that.</p> <p>P Maskey asked members whether they had got their Emails working and that she would work with IT to resolve any outstanding issues.</p> <p>It was agreed that 6 June for next meeting would be fine as the accounts would be focussing on 2021/22 outturn.</p>	<p>Action EH</p>
<p>Agenda Item 16: Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Monday, 6th June 2022</p>	

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____