Minutes of NIAO Advisory Board meeting

Tuesday 3 December 2020 at 10am

Members Present: Martin Pitt (Chair)

Noel Hyndman

Marie Mallon

John Turkington

Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)

Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

In Attendance: Louise Donnelly (Board Secretary)

| The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Opening the meeting on a positive note he commented on the positive uptake to the recent NIAO Staff survey with 99 per cent of staff completing a return. Pamela McCreedy welcomed the comment and advised that feedback on results of the survey would be provided at the February 2021 Advisory Board meeting.  Members congratulated the COO and the C&AG on the recent endorsement by NIPSA on social media referring to the positive working relationship between themselves and NIAO, they asked that congratulations be passed to the team concerned. |
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| 1. **Apologies**   No apologies were noted. |
| 1. **Declaration of Conflicts of Interest**   There were no issues declared by Committee members or attendees. |
| 1. **Minutes of Meeting**   The Chair noted the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2020 and notes from the Advisory Board Workshop held on 6 October 2020, both papers were agreed by all parties concerned.  The Matters Arising from the meeting of 26 May 2020 were noted as having been actioned. |
| 1. **Report from meetings of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) – 21 July 2020, 22 September 2020** Noel Hyndman (Chair of ARAC) provided a summary of key issues covered at the meetings. He reported that understandably, COVID 19 was still a dominant item on both agendas. At the September meeting an overview of HM Government’s Orange Book (Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts) was welcomed by members. The presentation was very informative and worthwhile.   The next meeting of ARAC is scheduled for 19 January 2021. |

| 1. **Business Transformation Programme (BTP) Infographic**   An infographic summarising progress to date was prepared for members as requested by the Chair at the meeting on 26 May 2020. Pamela provided an overview on the content and advised that target dates for the completion of outstanding tasks will be agreed at the Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting scheduled for 15 December 2020. Discussion followed on the timelines for digitalisation, the working environment and governance and audit practice.  Members welcomed the infographic and commended management and staff on tasks achieved to date. |
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| 1. **Anti-Fraud Awareness Training**   At the request of the Chair, Non-Executive Directors of the Advisory Board were asked to complete Anti-Fraud Awareness eLearning modules recently completed by NIAO staff. The Board Secretary will liaise with the Learning and Development Officer to assist members with completion of the eLearning modules. |
| 1. **Board Effectiveness Assessment Exercise – actions**   At the Advisory Board meeting in May members endorsed seven actions to be taken forward as a result of the Board Evaluation Exercise. A stocktake on the progress of actions was carried out. |
| 1. **Corporate Plan Update**   A workshop facilitated by Anne McMurray was held in October to scope the development of the NIAO 2021-2024 Corporate Plan. A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for January 2021 to provide an opportunity for members to consider the final document and discuss with Anne the rationale concerning the inclusion or exclusion of any points raised at this workshop in the final draft. |
| 1. **Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) Review**   Recommended best practice is that the terms of reference (ToR) of the Remuneration Committee (Remco) should be reviewed at least annually, these were last reviewed in November 2019. A review was carried out in consultation with the Chair of Remco and one proposed change was recommended, the change was highlighted for members convenience. The proposed change was agreed by SMT at their meeting on 17 November 2020. After discussion members agreed the revised ToR.  Members were asked to note that Remco met on 25 November 2019 and during the pandemic (April 2020) members communicated via email with the COO to confirm and agree NIAO pay proposals. |
| 1. **AOB**  * No items/issues raised. |
| 1. **Dates of next meeting**  * **9 February 2021** |