

Minutes of Advisory Board meeting Thursday 30 May 2019 at 11.30am

Members Present: Martin Pitt (Chair)
 Noel Hyndman
 Marie Mallon
 John Turkington
 Kieran Donnelly (C&AG)
 Pamela McCreedy (COO)

In Attendance: Rodney Allen (Director) – Agenda items 6 and 9
 Linda Hutchinson (Head of HR) – Agenda item 9
 Louise Donnelly (Board Secretary)

<p>The Chair formally welcomed the new Non-Executive Directors to their first Advisory Board meeting.</p>
<p>1. Apologies No apologies were noted.</p>
<p>2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest There were no issues declared by Committee members or attendees.</p>
<p>3. Minutes of Meeting held on 19 June 2018 and Matters Arising The Chair noted the minutes of the meeting held by the former Board on 19 June 2018 had been agreed by all parties concerned, he also recorded his thanks to past members for their contribution.</p> <p>The Matters Arising from the meeting of 19 June 2019 were noted as having been completed.</p>
<p>4. Advisory Board Terms of Reference (TOR) A copy of the TOR had been considered by members. All parties confirmed they were content with the TOR presented and a copy will be signed and dated for completeness by the Chair and C&AG.</p>
<p>5. Report from meeting of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) – 7 May 2019 Draft minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 7 May were noted as having been circulated and considered by members. The Chair noted from the minutes that he was content with the current Internal Audit Programme for the year ahead but wished to note members would contribute to the development of a terms of reference to be developed for the Internal Audit Plan for 20/21.</p> <p>As Chair of ARAC, N Hyndman invited M Pitt to attend the meeting scheduled for 19 June 2019. M Pitt accepted the invitation.</p>
<p>6. Report on Strategic Financial Management and Budgeting A paper was presented to brief members, the following was discussed:</p>

- **2018-19 Finances** - R Allen confirmed to date no major issues had been reported by External Audit in their audit of the draft financial statements. The financial statements and audit report will be considered by ARAC on 19 June 2019.
- **2019-20 and 2020-21 Finances:** The Chair asked how future budget allocations would impact on NIAO. The C&AG advised that he intends to issue a letter to the Secretary of State outlining his concerns with the budget allocation process for 2019-20 and the anticipated financial impact on the NIAO 2020-21 budget. The Chair requested that any potential budget limitations that impact on strategic decisions be reported to the Board.

7. Key Business Developments – look back and forward three months

The C&AG summarised recent reports issued and those due for publication in the next three months, he also provided briefing on the role of the External Review Panel and advised they were scheduled to meet the next day to review three reports+. N Hyndman queried if it might be beneficial for Board members to meet with the External Panel to get an insight into their remit and output. After discussion it was agreed that in the first instance members would review the External Panel findings on the NIAO website. The COO extended an invitation to the NEDs to attend the next internal briefing for staff prior to publication of the next report to provide additional background information on the content. NED's agreed this would suffice at this stage.

8. Business Transformation Programme (BTP)

P McCreedy updated members on the current position of the BTP. The transformation revolves around three key points of focus - strategy, people and service delivery. Within this focus five pillars of transformation each with associated work streams have been identified. Individual project initiation documents (PIDs) have been prepared for a series of the work streams which help sign post in more detail what NIAO wants to achieve in relation to each of the pillars. NEDs remarked that the PIDs were very comprehensive and queried how they are used to ensure totality, the COO advised that PIDs are subject to regular monitoring and update by the Directorate at weekly OMT meetings and quarterly by SMT.

9. Staff Survey

A report was provided summarising findings. Members commented on the excellent response rate of 91% and asked what actions have been taken following the results. R Allen and L Hutchinson advised:

- A preliminary report was provided to staff at the Office Conference in April and TUS were provided with a copy of the full report in confidence;
- At a meeting on 14 May the OMT examined the key themes emerging from the Staff Survey in order to identify appropriate actions. This was endorsed by SMT at its meeting on 21 May.
- The full staff survey report was circulated to all staff by the COO via email on 16 May 2019
- The Survey facilitator, has been asked to facilitate four two-hour workshops for staff in late May and early June. Once the workshops are completed, the facilitator will provide an anonymised feedback report and recommendations. Staff will also be asked for their suggestions on improvements. All of these actions will facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategy and action plan.
- Staff were also informed at a staff briefing that morning that the survey results were on the Agenda for the Advisory Board meeting today.

Members asked how the survey was scored and if results were benchmarked against other organisations. R Allen and L Hutchinson advised the survey was modelled on the one used by the NI Civil Service with additional questions included and results were scored and benchmarked against: the 5 point Likert scale; the Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale; the NICS rating scale questions for employee wellbeing; and the UWES Employee Engagement scale.

10. AOB

- The Chair finished the meeting by noting the Board would like to consider the NIAO budget in more detail and for this to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
- Date of next meeting 8 October 2019.