

AGENDA

**C&AG's Advisory Group Meeting
Tuesday 21st June 2016 at 2:00pm
Conference Room 2nd Floor**

SECTION 1 – PRELIMINARY/ADMINISTRATION

1. Apologies
2. Declaration of conflicts of interest
3. Minutes of meeting held 20 April 2016 and matters arising (Paper 1)

SECTION 2 – STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

1. Stakeholder Engagement Group – achievements 2013 to 2016 (Paper 2)
2. Stakeholder Engagement Group – action plan (Paper 3)

SECTION 3 – AOB

MINUTES OF C&AG'S ADVISORY GROUP MEETING TUESDAY 21ST JUNE 2016

Present Paul Douglas (Non Executive Member - Chair)
Áine Gallagher (Non Executive Member)
Pat Cumiskey (Non Executive Director)
Kieran Donnelly (Comptroller & Auditor General)
Janet Sides (AAG Corporate Support)
Louise Mason (AAG Financial Audit) (from 14:45)

Apologies

In Attendance Joe Campbell (Secretary)

1. Preliminary/Administration

Declaration of Interest - There were no issues declared by members which would be in conflict with the agenda for the meeting.

Minutes of meeting held 20 April 2016 –The minutes were noted and agreed.

Matters Arising – In addressing matters arising, the C&AG informed the meeting that the initial testing, conducted by IA and referred to at the earlier meeting of the Audit Committee, had confirmed that the new performance management system, in its partial implementation to date, should mitigate the significant deficiencies noted in the former system. However, IA was unable to provide an assurance statement on the system as it had not conducted a full year review. It had therefore been agreed, as part of the 2016-17 IA plan, that a full review should be carried out on the new performance system after it has conducted one full year cycle. C&AG agreed that he would provide the Group with a written update at the next meeting following completion of the mid-year check-in phase of the new system.

It was also agreed that the date for the staff survey, which will incorporate feedback on the new performance management system, should be moved from 31 December 2016 to 31 January 2017.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Engagement Group – achievements 2013 to 2016 - J Campbell, in his role as a member of the Stakeholder Engagement Group, provided members with a presentation on its achievements to date.

MLA Survey – Members were informed that two surveys had been carried out to date, as part of a wider survey of MLAs conducted by Ipsos Mori. The NIAO element of this survey related to how MLAs viewed NIAO in terms of familiarity, favorability, and advocacy. The meeting noted the results in year two, and welcomed the initiative that the stakeholder group had undertaken to address performance.

Survey of Audited Bodies – The Group was informed that a survey had been conducted of 33 of the audited bodies (departments and larger arms length bodies) in September 2015, from which it received 20 responses. The results of the survey proved to be largely positive and were considered to be valuable feedback. As a result, it was agreed that a further survey should take place in 2016-17.

In considering the operation of the survey, members discussed holding one to one interviews with the auditees, as had been conducted in year 2 of a similar survey in the Wales Audit Office. It was subsequently agreed that this approach would be considered by the stakeholder group in 2016-17.

Social Media – Twitter – The group was informed that the Office had set up a twitter account and, to date, had tweeted 23 times and had 139 followers; in comparison the Wales Audit Office had 4,500 tweets and 4,000 followers. It was therefore agreed that the Group would consider what action it could take to be more proactive and gain more followers in the use of twitter.

It was also brought to the attention of members that the Wales Audit Office and the NAO had been using Youtube to communicate their message. C&AG agreed that he would consider used this mechanism at the launch of the next good practice guide.

MLA Training Post Election – Members were informed that the Office had developed an NIAO induction package for new MLAs and would present this under the auspices of Politics Plus. However, the initial induction programme had been cancelled and was likely to be reconvened post-Summer Recess. The Chair supported this development and further proposed that such liaison with MLAs could be further enhanced through the launch of reports, such as good practice guides in the Long Gallery of Parliament Buildings.

Enhancing the Core List – Members were informed that, following their feedback, the stakeholder group had added Northern Ireland Members to the House of Lords (HoL) to the core circulation list for publications in order to enhance the profile of the Office. It was further proposed that the Office should engage with Northern Ireland MPs and members of the House of Lords to brief members on our role. C&AG agreed that the stakeholder engagement group should further consider this.

NIAO Papers - A short brief was also provided on the development of a number of papers, including an internal communications plan, a good practice guide in handling and marketing NIAO reports, and the NIAO information bulletin. Members were informed that the latter document will be now updated following Kerry Harkin's appointment as Assembly Liaison Officer ().

Enhanced Corporate Social Responsibility of the Office – Members were updated on how the Office had been progressing its corporate social responsibility. Through the link between Business in the Community and the Office's *Involve to Evolve* Group, a number of events had taken place, covering the key themes of health and wellbeing, community involvement and environmental projects.

Forward Work Programme – Having addressed the achievements to date, J Campbell briefly set out the forward work programme for the Stakeholder Group, which included the strengthening of arrangements with other regulatory bodies, updating of the NIAO and enhancing engagement with MLAs under the new Assembly mandate. In addressing the paper provided around proposals for further MLA engagement, members suggested that each of these were achievable, some with little additional input. Members considered the proposal to attend party conferences was a worthwhile exercise, but that it should proceed with caution, as the Office had to be seen to be even-handed in its dealings with each of the political parties.

The Chair closed the discussion by welcoming the progress to date on stakeholder engagement and encouraged the group to continue to drive forward with its proposed programme in 2016-17.

3. AOB

No issues arose under AOB.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 20th September** in the NI Audit Office Conference Room, starting at **2:00pm**.

