

Minutes of Advisory Board meeting held on Tuesday 18 May 2021 at 10am

Members present: Martin Pitt (Chair)
Noel Hyndman
Marie Mallon
John Turkington
Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)
Rodney Allen, Chief Operating Officer (COO)

In attendance: Joe Campbell (Audit Manager) Agenda item 7
Louise Donnelly (Board Secretary)
Michael Heery (Senior Auditor) Agenda item 4
Suzanne Walsh (Director) Agenda item 4

The Chair welcomed members to the first socially distanced meeting held at Bradford Court
1. Apologies No apologies were noted.
2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest There were no issues declared by Committee members or attendees.
3. Minutes of Meeting The Chair noted the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were agreed by all parties concerned. The Matters Arising from the meeting were also noted as having been actioned.
4. Future Management Information Presentation Suzanne Walsh and Michael Heery from the data analytics and visualisations team joined the meeting and were introduced by the Chair. Members were provided with an overview on the proposals for presenting interactive management information to the Board and briefed on how to navigate the content and presentation of information in the report. Michael advised some streamlining was required and members were asked for feedback. The Chair thanked Suzanne and Michael for the presentation, all agreed they found it informative. Members suggested the report be modified to include a RAG status to provide a visual indication of how projects were performing, it was agreed the report will be modified to incorporate this suggestion. The Board agreed to review the report in 12 months to evaluate how the information presented.
5. Report from meetings of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) Noel Hyndman provided an update to members on the ARAC meeting held on 4 May 2021 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Committee were updated on relevant changes to the COVID 19 Risk Register and advised that work will now commence on incorporating the COVID 19 risks into the Corporate Risk Register as the NIAO looks beyond the COVID issues which have dominated risk management for the past year.• The Committee has agreed that a workshop session for ARAC members would be scheduled for later in the year on the subject of risk appetite and risk management. An indicative date sometime in October/November would seem appropriate in order to facilitate an in-person event.• The existing internal audit contract will expire June 2021, the Committee discussed the progress of the procurement process.

<p>6.</p>	<p>Annual Business Plan</p> <p>The Annual Business Plan for 2021-22 was presented by Rodney Allen, discussion followed on key corporate priorities identified in the Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The C&AG advised the financial audit certification target would not be met this year due to the knock-on effect of covid-19 on accounts preparation and audit completions. He felt it was important not to change the target for this yet, better to explain the slippage in the annual report. • The Chair queried the approach used to obtain stakeholder feedback from PAC and suggested a personal approach as an alternative to surveys and questionnaires. The C&AG welcomed this suggestion and agreed it could be a more effective way to achieve an improved outcome on this objective. <p>The Plan was shared with staff at the Office staff briefing held on 14 May 2021.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>COVID 19 – Stocktake Report</p> <p>Joe Campbell joined the meeting and provided a briefing to members on a report produced detailing NIAO’s response to the COVID 19 pandemic, describing support for staff and the impact on business and deliverables.</p> <p>Marie Mallon questioned if any issues had been identified in the ongoing staff surveys concerning the health and wellbeing of staff now that we are emerging from the pandemic. Joe provided assurance that the COVID 19 Working Group monitored trends and comments in all survey responses to ensure all issues raised were responded to. Members were also advised that a WellHub has recently been launched for all staff to access information and support.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Three year Public Reporting Plan Update</p> <p>The draft Three Year Public Reporting Programme for 2021-23 was presented for consideration. Discussion followed and centred on the publication of Good Practice Guides. Some minor amendments were agreed. Members were advised next steps will be to share the Plan with key external stakeholders.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Review of the Governance and Accountability Arrangements for the NIAO</p> <p>The C&AG briefed members on correspondence and a report he issued to the NI Assembly Audit Committee (NIAAC) on the Review of Governance and Accountability arrangements in NIAO. Members noted the content and a request for the C&AG and Chair to appear at NIAAC in July.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Review of Terms of Reference (ToR) Advisory Board</p> <p>Members reviewed the ToR, and confirmed they were content.</p> <p>ARAC Tor Approval</p> <p>The ARAC ToR was reviewed at their meeting on 4 May 2021 and forwarded to Advisory Board for approval. Members approved the ToR presented.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Board Self-Assessment – update</p> <p>The Chair advised a workshop will be scheduled for September to complete the exercise, he will liaise with Rodney Allen to progress.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Date of Next meeting</p> <p>5 October 2021</p>