

Minutes of Advisory Board meeting Tuesday 9th February 2021 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: Donna Anderson (Minute taker)

<p>The Chair welcomed members to the 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 The Chair noted the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2020 were agreed by all parties concerned.</p> <p>The Matters Arising from the meeting of 3rd December 2020 were noted as having been actioned.</p> <p>It was noted that members completed their Anti-Fraud Awareness eLearning but, due to IT difficulties, their training did not register as complete. The Chair confirmed he is content that training has been undertaken by all Board members.</p>
<p>4. Report from meetings of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) NH briefed members on the ARAC meeting held on Tuesday 19 January 2021 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colette updated group on relevant changes but had hoped to be to considering the Corporate Risk Register in more detail, however, given the continuing impact of the pandemic, it was appropriate to continue to focus on the Covid 19 Risk Register, particularly because of ongoing lockdown restrictions.• In relation to the NIAO refurbishment and associated decant period timelines, Brian McFetridge provided an assurance that the project had been considered by external audit and was not considered to be a risk in this year, but could be considered a risk in 2021-22.• As the existing internal audit contract has been in place for five years and would expire June 2021, the Committee agreed to set up a procurement evaluation panel with John Turkington agreeing to act as the non-executive director along with two other members of staff.
<p>5. Matters for Remuneration Committee PM emphasised the importance of the remuneration committee throughout the course of the year. It was noted that, although a two year pay deal had been secured for the 20-22 period, pay for the 21-22 period was dependent on securing the adequate budgetary cover.</p>

Following the announcement from the Finance Minister in relation to funding provided to the NI Executive and the impact of funding being made available for public sector pay, KD informed members that a formal response would be provided to the Chair of NI Assembly's Audit Committee in relation to the 2021-22 pay agreement once engagement had taken place with representatives from the trade unions and with non-executive members on the Remuneration Committee.

6. Staff Survey Results

PM provided an overview on work undertaken since Inspire were commissioned in early 2019. An infographic was provided to members which summarised the results of Employee Survey 2020 (completed Nov 2020) with 4 additional employee workshops held in January 2021 which further explored 10 key themes which had arisen from the survey findings. PM noted the high level of staff engagement with 83% of staff completing the survey and 30 members of staff also involved in the workshops. Findings from Employee survey have been shared with staff with Employee workshop findings to follow.

Members commended the Employee Survey results specifically on topics such as staff engagement, interest in work, organisation and personal objectives, pay and benefits and confidence in the whistleblowing process and code of conduct which scored well above that of the NICS.

Members also discussed other topic areas such as safety at work, learning and development, leadership and managing change and poor performance where staff confidence could be improved upon. PM assured members that prompt actions going forward would include consultation with trade unions, revisiting the Pulse Survey format/timing and updating the HR roadmap. SMT have also scheduled a meeting with Investors in People in week commencing 22 February 2021.

7. BTP

PM informed members that a full updated report on BTP would be presented to SMT on 16th February but briefly noted the plan had been updated and compressed to reflect all work that has been closed off. All outstanding items will be revisited with new timescales agreed.

The Chair asked PM if any areas were at risk and PM confirmed that everything was moving at the right pace but noted a potential delay in relation to FAM ISQM as a feasibility study would need to be undertaken.

8. Corporate Plan Update

KD thanked the Chair for providing a foreword to the draft Corporate Plan and PM thanked Board members for their views which had been incorporated into the plan following consultation with Anne McMurray.

Members queried whether the Assembly Audit Committee would have an opportunity to consider the document before publication and KD confirmed that this would be the case. The Chair noted the document read very well and confirmed it would stay in draft form until further engagement is concluded.

9. A.O.B.

The Chair and members passed on their sincere thanks to PM for her invaluable support and assistance to the Advisory Board and wished her every success in her position of COO in PSNI.

10. Date of Next meeting

18 May 2021