

## MINUTES OF C&AG'S ADVISORY GROUP MEETING THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014

**Present** Gary Martin (Chair – Non Executive Member)  
Mary Halton (Non Executive Member)  
Kieran Donnelly (Comptroller & Auditor General)  
Louise Mason (AAG Division F)  
Janet Sides (AAG Division A)  
Eddie Bradley (AAG Division V)

**In Attendance** Calwell Steele (Secretary)

### 1. PRELIMINARY/ADMINISTRATION

#### 1.1 Apologies.

There was full attendance of members at the meeting.

#### 1.2 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

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

#### 1.3 Minutes of meeting held 1 May 2014 and matters arising

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed subject to two alterations.

### 2. UPDATES

2.1 Members had received copies of the minutes of the Executive Team meetings held since the previous Group meeting.

### 3. NIAO GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 The Group discussed the Chair's paper on the NIAO's Governance Framework which was prepared to stimulate debate around the calibration of NIAO's reconstituted governance arrangements which are recorded in the annual Governance Statement. The discussion paper was based on the Department of Finance and Personnel's 2013 report "Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of good practice NI". Each of the principles in the best practice guide was considered;

- **Principle 1 - Accountability**

The C&AG is accountable to the NI Assembly and the main issue discussed under this principle was where responsibility for decision making rests and where are the areas where authority can be delegated. It was agreed that a detailed mapping

exercise was needed to establish these areas taking into account legislative requirements.

- **Principle 2 - Role of the Board**

As NIAO does not have provision in its legislation for statutory board arrangements the issue under this principle was where related board activities take place. Discussion centered on the following functions, which are usually carried out by a board, and based around the key provisions in the 2013 DFP best practice code, and how and where they can be accommodated:

- Strategy clarity;
- Commercial sense;
- Talented people;
- Results focused;
- Management information.

- **Principle 3 – Board composition**

Discussion centered on which people should serve in which roles within any new structures.

- **Principle 4 – Board effectiveness**

The issue under this principle was the support necessary to make any new structure effective. This included secretarial support and agenda planning.

- **Principle 5 – Risk management**

Consideration of effective risk management issues focused on how current arrangements could be enhanced to ensure that;

- Risks are identified, assessed and managed as prudently and effectively as possible;
- There is clear accountability for managing risks;
- Staff are equipped with relevant skills and guidance to perform their assigned roles effectively and efficiently.

- **Principle 6 – Arms Length Bodies**

This principle is not relevant to NIAO.

## **4. OTHER ISSUES**

### **4.1 Emerging Issues**

There are no issues emerging which have not already been taken into account in recent discussions within the Advisory Group. The situation continues to be monitored and any emerging issues are dealt with as appropriate.

#### **4.2 Business Improvement Programme**

A paper will be presented at the next meeting outlining progress to date and further action to be taken.

#### **5. AOB**

The next Advisory Group meeting will be held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2014.