

COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (COPNI)

AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD
ON MONDAY 5 AUGUST 2013 AT 9.30AM IN EQUALITY HOUSE, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Gerard Campbell (Chair)
Don Mackay
Julie Erskine
Breidge Gadd

APOLOGIES No apologies

IN ATTENDANCE Claire Keatinge, Commissioner COPNI
Evelyn Hoy COPNI
Stephanie Ingram COPNI
Christine Burns (NIAO)
Nicola Drennan (OFMDFM)
Brian Clerkin (ASM Howarth)

<p>Agenda Item 1: Apologies No apologies were received.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 2: Chair's Business</p> <p>a) <u>Conflict of Interests</u> No conflicts of interests were reported in this period.</p> <p>b) <u>Fraud</u> No incidents of fraud were reported in this period.</p> <p>c) <u>Register of Gifts and Hospitality</u> This had been reviewed and signed by the Chair. A current copy will be put on the COPNI website.</p>	<p>ACTION COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 3: Draft Minutes of the meeting of 17 JUNE 2013. The minutes of the last ARAC meeting were discussed and approved. NOTE: A COPNI staff member noted that the COPNI Action Point detailed on page 4 of the draft minutes of Monday 17 June, Annual Theft and Fraud Return, had not yet been requested by OFMDFM and therefore had not been completed. Following discussion ARAC members suggested it would be helpful to have an action plan on back of minutes to monitor actions identified in previous meetings. This was agreed.</p>	<p>ARAC 8/13/1</p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p>

<p>Agenda Item 4: Matters Arising not Already on Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASM Howarth representative to provide an update on Internal Audit draft reports provisional summary in the 'Any Other Business' item of the agenda. • An OFMDFM official returned ARAC members signed Annual Performance Assessment forms for retention by COPNI (discussed in AOB). • ARAC Chairs session update to be provisionally held on 22nd August (discussed in AOB). 	
<p>Agenda Item 5: Commissioner's Business Update – Emerging Issues</p> <p>The Commissioner gave an update on emerging issues affecting her office:</p> <p>Hope, Confidence and Certainty – Corporate Plan – Corporate plan was launched on 20th June. It has been circulated to key stakeholders including the Junior Ministers and is currently with the First and deputy First Minister for formal approval. Feedback so far has been very positive.</p> <p>Recruitment of Permanent Staff – recently completed the first tranche of recruitment resulting in the appointment of 3 posts; Chief Executive Officer, Officer Manager and Personal Secretary. ARAC Chair extended his congratulations to the successful candidates on behalf of ARAC members. The Commissioner extended her thanks to ARAC members for their assistance throughout the first recruitment tranche.</p> <p>Recruitment, induction, support and management of temporary staff - The Commissioner updated ARAC members and attendees on the recent secondments to COPNI from Belfast City Council for a policy lead and from NISRA a policy officer. The Commissioner also reported to ARAC members and attendees the imminent departure of COPNI Finance Officer. Following discussion ARAC members are content the change over in staff will be mitigated appropriately through detailed hand over documents, processes and procedures to minimise risk. ARAC members noted the risk of changing Finance Officer ahead of the NIAO external audit. COPNI staff advised ARAC members that the outgoing Finance Officer has stated that he will be available to talk with auditors should there be any queries or questions.</p> <p>ARAC members raised point on their ongoing role in the delivery and implementation of business plan. It was agreed that COPNI staff would provide a written update to ARAC members and attendees on Business plan before Christmas.</p>	<p>ARAC 8/13/2</p> <p>NOTED</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 6: Commissioner's Oral Update</p> <p>a. Report on Accountability Meeting</p>	

<p>Next Accountability meeting to be held on Wednesday 7 August 2013.</p> <p>b. Financial Update COPNI staff member updated ARAC members and attendees on the current forecast of expenditure and noted successful bid for £18,000 in capital expenditure. This offsets over half of the original £30,000 reduction to the original budget. There are no plans for any bids or easements in expenditure in the October monitoring round.</p> <p>c. Permanent Staffing Progress Update provided by the Commissioner in the Commissioner's Business update (ARAC 8/13/2).</p> <p>ARAC members voiced their concern and dissatisfaction with the timescale and length of process for approval by OFMDFM of the business plan. ARAC Chair willing to write to OFMDFM to express these concerns and the disappointment that the business plan is yet to be approved.</p>	<p>ARAC 8/13/3</p> <p>NOTED</p>
<p>Agenda Item 7: Update from OFMDFM</p> <p>COPNI staff confirmed that any concerns/issues would be raised with OFMDFM at the Accountability meeting on Wednesday 7 August 2013; specifically the MOTO arrangements and the need for additional staff in COPNI Legal department.</p> <p>No other queries from ARAC members or attendees.</p>	<p>ACTION COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 8: Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Audit Strategy</p> <p>NIAO representative outlined the function of the audit, the timetable and any actions required by COPNI. NIAO representative stated that the fieldwork for the audit would begin on 9th September and the financial accounts should be ready for then. COPNI draft accounts 12/13 include the draft Governance Statement which will be provided prior to the NIAO audit. COPNI staff member noted the draft Governance Statement will be circulated to ARAC members W.C. 19th August 2013.</p>	<p>ARAC 8/13/4</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 9: Risk Management Review of the Risk Register</p> <p>The risk register was discussed at length and the following actions agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mitigate the loss of corporate knowledge through the departure of COPNI temporary finance officer, an OFMDFM representative invited the replacement finance officer to meet with the department once in post. • Changes are required to the wording to reflect the 	<p>ARAC 8/13/5</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p>

<p>appetite for risk in the context of the Commissioner's first term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COPNI should look at a standard Corporate Risk Register format and make changes accordingly. • COPNI to develop full business continuity plan. • COPNI to present communications strategy at ARAC meeting on 23 September 2013. • COPNI to raise issue of open access points; namely the Ante Room and the second door into the Commissioner's office, at the next tenancy meeting on 12 September 2013. • COPNI to raise issues regarding the Memorandum Of Terms of Occupancy (MOTO) with OFMDFM at the Accountability meeting on 7 August and report back to ARAC. • COPNI to detail who is responsible for individual risks on the register. • COPNI asked to consider highlighting on the Risk Register whether individual risks have increased or decreased from quarter to quarter. 	<p>COPNI – discussion with Commissioner</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 10: Update on DAO and DFD Instructions Contents of such guidance are assessed upon receipt and any required changes made to internal policies. This remains as a standing agenda item on COPNI monthly management finance meetings.</p>	<p>ARAC 8/13/6</p>
<p>Agenda Item 11: Progress against NIAO Report to Those charged with Governance and Internal Audit Recommendations The document was discussed at length focusing on those items which appeared red and amber.</p> <p>Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COPNI asked to reword recommendation in relation to outsourcing human resources and payroll and salary. • COPNI should remove recommendation number 23 as OFMDFM will not supply the papers in question. • COPNI to change status from amber to green on recommendations made by internal audit. 	<p>ARAC 8/13/7</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p>
<p>Agenda Item 15: Any Other Business</p> <p>ASM Howarth representative gave overview on fieldwork draft reports. Draft reports provided to ARAC members and relevant COPNI staff at this point to note. Management response will be discussed at the next ARAC meeting on 23 September 2013.</p> <p>ARAC Chair noted unavailability to attend a forthcoming ARAC Chairs update session on 22nd August. It was agreed</p>	

<p>that an ARAC member Julie Erskine will attend on behalf of ARAC Chair as member is already attending the update session on behalf of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.</p> <p>OFMDFM official returned ARAC members Performance Assessment forms now signed by the department. OFMDFM official queried one matter with ARAC member and Chair re representation on additional Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. It was agreed that appropriate amendments would be made.</p>	<p>ACTION ARAC member Julie Erskine</p>
<p>Agenda Item 16: Date of Next Meeting/Schedule of Meetings Meeting scheduled for Monday 23 September agreed and agenda will be sent out in due course.</p> <p>ARAC member raised a question regarding advanced training for ARAC. COPNI staff advised the advanced training for ARAC members would be researched. ARAC chair advised that all basic training for ARAC members should be renewed on an annual basis. COPNI to arrange this.</p> <p>ARAC member asked regarding the possibility of COPNI providing ARAC with a summary of the key issues arising from reports from NIAO to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to advise on good practice. COPNI to research and report back at meeting on 23 September 2013.</p> <p>ARAC member reported problems logging into the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) online information resource for public sector Financial managers, TISonline. COPNI to address with CIPFA and resolve.</p>	<p>ARAC 6/13/8</p> <p>ACTION COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p> <p>COPNI</p>

Signed: 
Chairperson

Date: 9/12/13

