

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

AUDIT COMMITTEE SECOND MEETING [2014]

Tuesday, 24 June, 2014 at 12 noon
Room 3.17, Kildare House

MINUTES

Members Present

**Mr Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson) Mr Peter Mathews TD
Mr Cyril Maybury**

Apologies were received from Deputy Sean Fleming, Mr Bryan O'Sullivan and Mr Padraic Donlon

Also in attendance were:

Ms Adrienne Harrington, Office of the Commission and Secretary General.

Ms Ita Ní Dhonnchadha, Internal Auditor.

Ms. Michelle Grant, Principal Officer, Head of Human Resources 5.

Mr Peter Fitzpatrick, Training Officer, Training Unit for item 5.

Ms. Karen Kehily, Accountant, Finance Unit for item 6

Ms. Anne-Marie O'Reagan, Finance Unit for item 6

Ms Susan Moran, Secretary to the Committee.

The meeting convened at 12:08 pm and adjourned at 1:51 pm.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 25th March 2014 were agreed.

2. Matters arising

An update was provided in relation to queries arising from the previous meeting of 25 March 2014. Committee Members received an update in relation to resources provided to qualifying parties under the scheme for secretarial assistance; aged debtors, Parliamentary Standard Allowance, committee witness protocol and Members travel insurance.

The Audit Committee noted the updates and requested that continued effort be made to further reduce the amount owed by aged debtors.

3. Audit Committee Guidance document from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)

Ms Ita Ní Dhonnchadha, Internal Auditor provided an update to the Committee on the Audit Committee Guidance document from the DPER.

Ms Ní Dhonnchadha informed the Committee that the Guidance documents follows on from the decision in 2012, by the Department of Public Enterprise and Reform that the *Institute of Internal Auditors International Standards for the professional Practice of Internal Auditing (IIA Standards)* should apply across all Departments and other Vote Holders. The purpose of the guidance is to provide clarity to IA Committees in public bodies with respect to their role.

The committee noted the guidelines and agreed that it would be beneficial to review the operation of the committee and its current charter in light of the guidance document. The committee agreed that members could make a statement with regard to any conflict of interest at the start of a meeting and that this would be a standing item at the start of every meeting. The committee also agreed to ask the secretariat to write to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with respect to the extension of the arrangements in General Council report 1357 to external members of the committee and to clarify if those arrangements apply to members of the Dáil and Seanad who are members of the committee.

4. VFM & Policy Review Report on the Library and Research Service

Mr Declan Bale, Business and Policy Analyst presented details of the VFM & Policy Review Report on the Library and Research Service to the Committee.

The Overall Evaluation Statement found that the L&RS objectives are stated clearly, the objectives are valid and relevant in the context of the Commission's statements of strategy. Since 2006, the new L&RS has achieved its objectives and is efficient and effective in the delivery of its services.

Deputy Mathews complimented the high level of service that the L&RS provides to the Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

5. Internal Audit Report

Ms Ní Dhonnchadha presented the findings of the Internal Audit of Training and PMDS.

There were four important recommendations and seven procedural recommendations, all of which have been accepted by management.

The Committee noted the report and discussed the need for adequate controls to be put in place when some of the functions of the Human Resources section transition to People Point in September 2014 and the staff payroll function transitions to the payroll shared service.

6. Risk Materialisation Report

Ms Kehily presented the Risk Materialisation Report. The Committee again noted that there was a 100% response rate from sections which was a good reflection on work done in embedding a culture of risk management within the Service.

The Committee discussed the materialised risks reported and agreed that the risk framework would be discussed at the next meeting of the audit committee.

7. Presentation on Corporate Governance in the Service

The Audit Committee agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

8. Any other business

As there were no items for discussion under any other business the meeting was adjourned until 14th October 2014. *

Sullivan

Eddie Sullivan

Chairman

Tuesday, 4th November, 2014

* Subsequently re-schedule to 4th November 2014

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