

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

AUDIT COMMITTEE THIRD MEETING [2014]

Tuesday, 4 November, 2014 at 12 noon
Room 2, Leinster House

MINUTES

Members Present

Mr Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson)
Mr Bryan O'Sullivan
Mr Cyril Maybury

Mr Joe Costello TD
Mr Peter Mathews TD
Mr Charles Hearne

Apologies were received from Mr Sean Fleming TD

Also in attendance were:

Ms Bridget Doody, Office of the Commission and Secretary General.
Ms Ita Ní Dhonnchadha, Internal Auditor.
Ms. Adrienne Harrington, Principal Officer, Head of ICT for item 6.
Ms. Karen Kehily, Accountant, Finance Unit for items 4 & 5
Ms. Anne-Marie O'Regan, Finance Unit for items 4 & 5
Ms Susan Moran, Secretary to the Committee.

The meeting convened at 12 noon and adjourned at 1:54 pm.

1. Opening comments

The Chairman welcomed Mr Joe Costello TD and Mr Charles Hearne, Principal Officer, who are replacing Minister of State Kevin Humphries and Mr Padraic Donlon respectively on the Audit Committee. He also thanked Ms Adrienne Harrington and wished her well in her new role in the Department of An Taoiseach. The Chairman then welcomed Ms Bridget Doody who replaces Ms Harrington as Head of the Office of the Commission and Secretary General.

2. Conflict of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest to declare.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 24th June 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

An update was provided in relation to queries arising from the previous meeting of 24 June 2014.

Committee Members noted correspondence from Mr Nicholas Meehan, Assistant Principal, DPER, regarding the granting of legal indemnification, as set out in General Council Report 1357, for members of the Oireachtas Audit Committee. The sanction has been given for indemnification on the basis that it only applies to the official duties undertaken by the external members of the Committee and that they carry out their duties in a bona fide manner.

The Committee requested that clarification be sought from DPER as to whether the indemnification also applies to the Oireachtas Members of the Audit Committee.

5. Risk Materialisation Report

Ms Karen Kehily, Accountant, Finance Unit, presented the Risk Materialisation Report for the period 1st June to 30th September 2014.

The Committee noted the materialised risks reported and noted that there was a 100% response rate from sections within the Service.

6. Risk Framework Report

Ms Karen Kehily, Accountant, Finance Unit, presented the Service's proposed approach to a Risk Framework.

The Committee noted that the overall goal of the Service's Risk Policy is to ensure that all risk management activities contribute to the achievement of the Service's Strategic objectives and that the policy contributes to the comprehensiveness of the Service's business continuity plan, and articulates its approach and expectations in relation to the management of enterprise risk management.

Ms. Kehily advised that the Service is in the process of reviewing the Strategic Risks for the Houses of the Oireachtas which will shortly be presented to the MAC.

The Committee requested that an update be given to the Audit Committee when the Strategic Risks have been agreed.

7. Presentation on Corporate Governance in the Service

Ms Adrienne Harrington, former Head of the Office of the Commission and Secretary General, presented an overview of the Service's Corporate Governance arrangements.

The Committee noted the practicality of the presentation in the context of the Committee's role in advising on corporate governance and suggested that it would be beneficial to include the presentation in the induction pack for any future Audit Committee members.

In relation to the governance challenges facing the Service, the Committee noted that there was a process underway in relation to the filling of the key vacancy at Clerk of the Dáil/Secretary General level. In relation to decisions made external to the Service but which must be implemented by the Service, the Committee noted that the Service continues to try and influence these decisions in advance at the appropriate levels.

8. Internal Audit Report

i) Ms Ní Dhonnchadha presented the findings of the Internal Audit on Electronic Access.

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

The Committee noted the report and requested that the ICT Security Charter be circulated to members of the Audit Committee.

ii) Ms Susan Moran presented the findings of the Internal Audit on the Management of Administrative changes to payee details.

Two recommendations emerged during the course of the audit and were implemented immediately, as a result there were no recommendations arising from this report.

The Committee noted the report.

9. Implementation of Internal Audit Recommendations

Ms Moran presented details of the review of the implementation of internal audit report recommendations.

The overall position in October 2014 is that of the 98 outstanding recommendations; 67 have been implemented; 30 recommendations are in the process of being implemented; and one will not be implemented as the recommendation has been overtaken by Public Service Reform initiatives as per March Update 2014.

The Committee noted the report and asked that the next review concentrate on the 10 historical recommendations outstanding for the period 2010-2012 setting out the reason for the delays in full implementation.

10. Any other business

As there were no items for discussion under any other business, the meeting was adjourned until 9th December 2014.



Eddie Sullivan

Chairman

Tuesday, 9th December, 2014