

HOUSES OF THE OIREACTHAS COMMISSION

AUDIT COMMITTEE FOURTH MEETING [2015]

Tuesday, 8 December, 2015 at 12 noon
Room 2, Leinster House

MINUTES

Members Present

Mr Eddie Sullivan (Chairperson)
Mr Bryan O'Sullivan

Mr Joe Costello TD
Mr Sean Fleming TD
Mr Peter Mathews TD

Mr Charles Hearne

Apologies were received from John Browne TD and Mr Cyril Maybury.

Also in attendance were:

Ms Bridget Doody, Principal Officer, Office of the Commission and Secretary General.

Ms Ita Ní Dhonnchadha, Internal Auditor.

Ms Karen Kehily, Accountant, Finance Unit for item 3.

Ms Gina Long, Assistant Principal, Finance Unit for item 3.

Mr Ciaran Smith, Principal Officer, Member Services for item 4.

Mr Stephen Mooney, Assistant Principal for item 4.

Mr Brian Hickey, Principal Officer, ICT Unit for item 5.

Mr Ciaran Doyle, Assistant Principal, ICT Unit for item 5.

Ms Susan Moran, Secretary to the Committee.

The meeting convened at 12 noon.

1. Conflict of Interest

Mr Charles Hearne declared, in relation to item 5 on the Agenda that he was Head of ICT in his previous position.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 21st October 2015 were agreed.

3. Comptroller and Auditor General Report on the 2014 Accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission

Ms Ruth Foley, Deputy Director, and Mr. Ronan O'Regan, Senior Auditor, Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, presented a report in relation to the C&AG audit of the 2014 Accounts of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission.

Ms Foley confirmed that the accounts properly present the receipts and expenditure of the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission for the year ended 31st December 2014.

She referred to the management letter sent by the C&AG to the Service which identified issues during the audit and the Service's responses to these findings. There were three audit findings, one rated high and two rated medium.

The Committee noted the C&AG Report.

4. Independent Auditor's Report of the Public Representation Allowance 2014

Mr Bernard Barron, Mazars, presented the findings of the audit of the Public Representation Allowance (PRA) which covered the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

Mr. Ciaran Smith and Stephen Mooney, Principal Officer and Principal Clerk, Corporate and Members' Services Division, were also in attendance.

The Committee noted that all payments to members under the PRA are now fully vouched, therefore all members are now eligible to be selected for random audit (other than those who voluntarily waive the PRA). Of the 22 Members audited in this period, 16 (73%) were able to produce receipts for amounts paid and 6 (27%) were unable to show sufficient receipts for the amounts paid. Of the 22 members audited 98.6% of monies spent was eligible expenditure under the allowance. 1.4% of audited expenditure claimed by 6 Members was deemed ineligible. The claims for 2014 were deemed ineligible for a variety of reasons (such as advertising and sponsorship that was not an allowable expense under the SI, or expenses that did not relate to the relevant period). A total of €5,176 has now been refunded in respect of these six members.

The Committee noted the Independent Auditor's Report.

5. Internal Audit Report

Ms Ní Dhonnchadha presented the findings of the Internal Audit on the payment of invoices for the Managed IT Service (Fujitsu).

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

The Committee noted the report.

6. Report on Status of Implementation of Previous Internal Audit Recommendations

Ms Susan Moran presented details of the implementation of recommendations review.

The Committee noted the report.

7. Updates to Audit Charter and Internal Audit Charter

Ms Ita Ní Dhonnchadha, Internal Auditor, informed the Committee that the Audit Committee operates under a written Charter and that currently the Charter for the Audit Committee and the Charter for the Internal Audit Unit are combined into one Charter document. For the purposes of best auditing practice and clarity it is proposed to split the Charter into two separate Charter documents – One Charter for the Audit Committee; One Charter for Internal Audit Unit.

The Committee noted that the Audit Committee Charter is being updated to take account of the Audit Committee Guidance issued by DPER in September 2014; to be consistent with the Service's Risk Management Policy (updated March 2015); and to reflect current practices since the statutory Audit Committee was established in 2009.

The Committee noted that the Audit Committee composition, functions and duties are set out in the Commission Acts 2003 to 2015, and that the updates to the Audit Committee Charter are being proposed in order to bring greater clarity to the roles and responsibilities of an Audit Committee and in line with best practice. The Committee was advised that only minor textual changes were made to Internal Audit Unit Charter.

The Committee agreed the Charter for the Audit Committee as amended and the Internal Audit Charter.

8. Any other business

The meeting was adjourned at 1.39 pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Sullivan', is written above a horizontal line.

Eddie Sullivan

Chairman