

HOUSES OF THE OIREACHTAS COMMISSION

AUDIT COMMITTEE

THIRD MEETING [2019]

**Wednesday, 2nd October 2019 at 2:00 pm
Room 1.60, 5 Storey Block, Leinster House**

MINUTES

Members Present

Mr Pat McLoughlin, Chair
Senator Victor Boyhan

Mr Cyril Maybury
Mr Charles Hearne

Senator Kieran O'Donnell
Ms Noreen Fahy

Also in attendance were:

Ms Ramona Quinn, Head of Internal Audit (outgoing).

Ms Máirín Devlin, OCSG & Head of Internal Audit (incoming) & Item 5.

Mr Jerome Flanagan, Internal Audit Unit, Secretary to the Committee.

Ms Saragh Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer and Mr Conor Morrison, Finance Officer along with Mr Denis Cromie, Senior Auditor and Mr Mark Brady, Deputy Director, Comptroller & Auditor General for Item 4.

Mr Ciaran Smith, Principal Officer, Members' Services, International & Travel Services, Catering and Mr Stephen Mooney, Assistant Principal, Members' Services along with Mr Bernard Barron from Mazars for Item 7.

Mr Paul O'Neill, KOSI Corporation for Item 8.

The meeting convened at 2:15 pm.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Senator Catherine Ardagh.

1. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 2 July 2019 were agreed.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

There were no matters arising.

4. C&AG Report on the audit of Houses of the Oireachtas Service in 2018

Staff from the Office of the C&AG, along with Ms Saragh Fitzpatrick, Chief Financial Officer and Mr Conor Morrison, Finance Officer, stated that they have given the HOS a clear report. 10 findings were outlined in their Report, none of which rated above 'Medium'.

The Committee wished to have noted its congratulations to the HOS and its staff at such findings which is a great achievement.

The Committee noted the Report.

5. Risk Report

Ms Máirín Devlin, Principal Officer, Office of the Commission and the Secretary General reported on the content of the Report i.e. the risk materialisations and emerging risks, for the period 1 May to 31 July 2019.

There were two risk materialisations and one emerging risk outlined in the Report.

Ms. Devlin also updated the Committee on developments around risk policy in the Office and noted that the Office is taking part in a pilot of a new risk recording system being recommended by the OGCIO.

Ms. Devlin also reported to the Committee that she would be taking over from Ms Ramona Quinn as Head of Internal Audit as the Internal Audit area is to be moved into the Office of the Commission and the Secretary General.

The Committee noted the Report.

6. Report on the External Quality Assessment

Ms Ramona Quinn, outgoing Head of Internal Audit, and Mr Jerome Flanagan, Internal Audit Unit, briefed the Committee on the contents of the Report and its findings and recommendations.

Ms Quinn stated that the assessment had been conducted by the Head of Internal Audit of the Scottish Parliament, who is also accredited by the Institute of Internal Audit, the international governing body for internal audit.

The Report found that the Internal Audit Unit of the Houses of the Oireachtas "is operating effectively and generally conforms with internal auditing standards as set out by, and in accordance with, the Internal Audit Quality Assessment Framework and Government Internal Audit Standards".

Ms. Quinn reported that the most important recommendation to come out of the Report was that the Internal Audit Unit should have an in-house professionally qualified internal auditor.

The Committee welcomed the Report and wished to express its compliments to the Houses of the Oireachtas's audit team on the work done to earn such a good report from the assessor. The Committee sought a timeline on implementation of the recommendations of the Report.

The Committee agreed the Report and accepted its recommendations. The Committee also agreed to send the Report to the Management Board for its information and comments.

7. Report on the Audit of the Public Representation Allowance

Mr Ciaran Smith, Principal Officer, Members' Services, International & Travel Services, Catering and Mr Stephen Mooney, Assistant Principal, Members' Services along with Mr Bernard Barron from Mazars briefed the Committee on the contents and recommendations of the Report.

They stated that the audit covered the year 2017 and that of the 22 Members chosen for audit, only six were unable to show sufficient receipts/relevant documentation within allowable expenditure categories and/or the expenditure was not incurred in the relevant period for the PRA as set out in the legislation. In total they refunded the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission €9,650.45 out of a total payout of €372,004.59. The auditors made three recommendations.

The Committee noted the Report and agreed to its publication on the Oireachtas website once Members had been informed.

8. Internal Audit Report on the Mobile Phone Repayment Scheme for Members

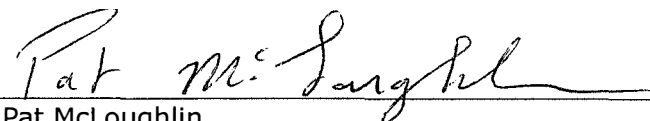
Mr Jerome Flanagan, Internal Audit and Mr Paul O'Neill, KOSI Corporation along with Mr Ciaran Smith, Principal Officer, Members' Services, International & Travel Services, Catering and Mr. Stephen Mooney, Assistant Principal, Members' Services, briefed the Committee on the contents and recommendations of the Report.

The overall finding of the audit was that "*SUBSTANTIAL ASSURANCE can be given that within the Service, the overall framework and systems of control in place to manage the Mobile Telephone Direct Purchase Scheme are effective*".

However, of the 6 recommendations presented 3 were not accepted by local management as they felt they were outside the scope of the Internal Audit and having considered the matter further the Audit Committee formed the view that further work was required on this Internal Audit Report. It was agreed that the Mr. O'Neill would in consultation with the local Management review the scope and adjust the findings accordingly and report back to the Audit Committee at its next meeting. It also agreed that any findings which may fall outside the scope of the Internal Audit could be presented separately to the Audit Committee and Secretary General.

9. Any other business

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25pm.



Pat McLoughlin

Chairman