

COPFS AND AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2018
CROWN OFFICE, 25 CHAMBERS STREET, EDINBURGH

Present:

Members

Douglas Hutchens	Non-Executive Director – Chair
Annie Gunner Logan	Non-Executive Director
Robert Tinlin	Non-Executive Director
David Watt	Non-Executive Director

In Attendance

Ian Walford	Deputy Chief Executive
William Wilkie	Audit Manager, SG Internal Audit
Stuart Dickson	Assistant Director Audit Services, SG Internal Audit
Gillian Woolman	Assistant Director Audit Services, Audit Scotland
Esther Scoburgh	Audit Manager, Audit Scotland
Anthony McGeehan	Procurator Fiscal Policy & Engagement
Stephen Woodhouse	COPFS Director of Finance
Keith Dargie	COPFS Director of Information Services

Apologies

David Harvie	Crown Agent
Liam Murphy	Risk Champion/ Procurator Fiscal (Specialist Casework)
June Campbell	Corporate Office

Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Robert and David as new non-executive directors (NXDs) and Gillian as the Senior external auditor. It was noted that Morag McNeill had resigned as a Non-Executive Director. The Committee thanked her for her contribution during her time in office.

Declarations of Interests

2. No items were recorded.

3. Feedback on pre meetings

4. The Chair advised that the NXDs meetings with COPFS Finance had been useful to gain a fuller understanding of the financial planning issues and with the Auditors where the members covered the need for continuing engagement from senior members of staff.

Minutes of Previous Meeting – 15th November 2017

5. The minutes were agreed by the Committee.

COPFS ARC Action Tracker

6. It was noted that no material issues were outstanding except as regards the final bullet point regarding NXDs increasing their knowledge of COPFS, as one NXD had not been included in a visit to a PF Office.

Action:

Secretariat to organise outstanding visit to PF Office as part of NXDs induction.

Audit Action Tracker

7. The updated audit action tracker was welcomed but the Committee commented that there was some lack of clarity as to what had been delivered and what would be delivered and by whom.

Action:

Paper to be provided at the next meeting outlining what action is to be taken on any open items, by whom and by when.

COPFS Digital Delivery Plan

8. The COPFS Director of Information Services (ISD) provided the ARC with an overview of the methodology surrounding delivery of the digital Strategy.

Action:

Slide presentation to be copied to ARC members together with detailed assessment against Audit Scotland recommendations for the national Digital Futures report.

GDPR/DPA Legislation

9. The Director of Information Services provided the ARC with an overview of the activities underway to ensure that COPFS complied with the new GDPR requirements coming into effect in May. The committee requested a regular update of progress.

Action:

Provide update to May meeting.

Finance update

10. The Director of Finance advised that the forecast against budget is showing a small underspend and that the budget setting process for 2018-19 was underway, following the approval of the budget Bill. It was noted that the budget settlement had been reasonable in the circumstances, albeit concern was expressed as to whether that would reduce the urgency of seeking efficiency improvements and were reassured that that would not be the case. The committee noted the support of the Lord Advocate in achieving this, but also highlighted that this will bring further pressures as regards delivery of services.

Action:

Forward copy of most recent finance update to the Committee.

Finance Strategy/FSP update

11. The DCE advised the Committee that COPFS' finance strategy, together with the other strategies, notably the workforce strategy, were being updated in the light of the spending review decision and the current re-prioritisation exercise. The Committee discussed how it could best involve itself in monitoring risks as regards the updated strategies.

Action:

Draft strategy to be circulated to the Committee when available.

SG Internal Audit Update

12. Internal Audit provided a progress report in respect of the 2017-18 Audit programme and noted that, with the exception of the Information Management audit, they were on track, with the reports on KPIs and Transitional Finance, Governance and workforce planning due to be issued shortly. The Committee asked for sight of the Procurement & Contract management report.

13. The Committee approved the audit plan for 2018-19 but requested that the Information Management audit, given its postponement from 2017/18, be brought forward, in order that some reliance could be placed on it for the Assurance statement in the Annual report and Accounts. It was noted that the draft remits provided for the planned 2018-19 audits were outlines only and would be worked up more fully before the audits commenced.

Actions:

Internal Audit to provide the Secretariat with a copy of the Procurement and Contract Management report for circulation to the Committee.

COPFS and Internal Audit to agree a revised timetable for the Information Management audit.

External Audit-Audit Scotland

14. Audit Scotland presented their audit plans for both COPFS and QLTR, which were approved, together with the proposed fee. It was noted that there were no relationships that affected the independence or objectivity of audit staff.

Corporate Risk Register

15. The DCE provided the Committee with an update of the changes to the Corporate Risk Register, highlighting the red risks and noting it had been agreed to hold a workshop to undertake a full review of the corporate risk register to ensure it adequately covers current risks to delivery.

16. The Procurator Fiscal Policy & Engagement provided an overview of the current position on Risk 15, We plan for Brexit and implement the Brexit outcome. He highlighted the considerable degree of uncertainty as to the way ahead but that the UKG was willing to replicate the current EU tools that are available, such as the European Arrest Warrant. It was noted that there had been difficulties engaging with the UKG. The Committee found this update helpful, but recognised the challenges ahead.

Any Other Business

17. The Committee were advised that SG's updated Audit Committee Handbook would go live on 1 April 2018. This would be circulated to members as soon as it was available.

18. As this is Douglas Hutchens' final meeting as Chair, the Committee thanked him for his valuable contributions during his time chairing the Committee. In return the Chair thanked all for their support during his time and wished everyone well in the future.

Date of Next Meeting

19. The next meeting will take place on the 30 May 2018 in COPFS.