

ARC (2021) – 49

COPFS and QLTR Audit and Risk Committee

Minutes of the meeting

held on 25th August 2021

(via MS Teams)

Present:

Members

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Robert Tinlin | Non-Executive Director (Chair) |
| David Watt | Non-Executive Director |
| Vanessa Davies | Non-Executive Director |

In Attendance

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| David Harvie | Crown Agent, Chief Executive and COPFS Accountable Officer |
| Robert Sandeman | QLTR Accountable Officer |
| Ian Walford | COPFS Deputy Chief Executive |
| Esther Scoburgh | Audit Manager, Audit Scotland |
| Sharon Fairweather | Director of Internal Audit and Assurance |
| Jim Montgomery | Audit Manager, SG Internal Audit Directorate |
| William Wilkie | Senior Auditor, SG Internal Audit Directorate |
| Marlene Anderson | COPFS Director of Finance and Procurement |
| Nikolas Koutris | COPFS Head of Financial Accounting & Finance Systems |
| Sharon Davies | COPFS Head of Management Accounting and Planning |
| Claire Lumgair | COPFS Finance Business Partner |
| Ian Palmer | COPFS Secretariat |
| Anne-Marie Henderson | (COPFS observer) |

Apologies

Gillian Woolman Audit Director, Audit Scotland

Taiba Hussain Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland

1.

Welcome / Apologies / Introductions / Declarations of Interest and Feedback on pre-meetings

The Chair welcomed the group

There were no declarations of interest.

There was no feedback of any pre-meetings

2.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes from the ARC meeting held on 5th May 2021 were approved.

3.

Matters Arising / COPFS ARC Action Tracker

All action points are now completed apart from 37 and 2(21). Item 37 (Audit Scotland paper) will appear as a substantive agenda item at the November ARC meeting. Item 2(QLTR) meeting to be scheduled.

It was noted that a time lag can appear between COPFS and IAD status information. MA explained that IAD makes assessments at a particular point in time whereas COPFS marks the action as complete when implemented hence the colour coding appearing out of sync. It was suggested that the colour coded section of the tracker be updated to clarify the position.

Action: Secretariat to update actions from the tracker.

Action : MA to look at revising Action Tracker colour coding section to clarify assessment timetable.

4.

Audit Action Tracker – Internal/External Audit

Progress with the internal action tracker was noted and approved with the caveat that it should reflect a realistic target date for progression and completion of action points.

WW is to give a Fair Futures follow up report at November ARC.

COPFS Fair Futures Project Board has held its final meeting and is in the process of preparing a report for discussion at Executive Board. A copy of this report will be made available to ARC.

The external tracker was approved as complete.

5.

COPFS Update

DH (CA) gave an update on COPFS progress in relation to preparations for the increased numbers of staff returning to work following the easing of COVID restrictions. This included health and safety issues, court programming and recruitment. General discussion followed.

A general update was given in relation to finalising the Annual Report and Accounts.

The committee commended the paper on Agile Working presented at a recent COPFS Executive Board meeting.

6.

Finance and Procurement Update

MA presented papers ARC(2021) – 28 and 29. General discussion followed.

The group was encouraged by the progress being made in controlling off contract expenditure.

It was agreed that a procurement update paper should be brought to the committee in 6 months time.

It was agreed that given the specialist nature of some COPFS requirements, capacity for further savings can be restricted or non-existent. COPFS continues to work to ensure that all cost efficiencies are identified.

7.

IAD Progress Report; DIA Progress Report; Final Wellbeing and Morale Report

Sharon Fairweather, Director of Internal Audit and Assurance was welcomed to the meeting. She gave a brief overview of internal audit operations.

JM and WW spoke to the above papers and general discussion followed.

SF asked what the role of COPFS would be in relation to the COVID Public Inquiries due to be held at a future date. DH(CA) outlined there are precedents for COPFS interacting with Public Inquiries to fulfil each parties specific and independent obligations. These issues will be developed with the Chair of the Public Inquiry.

8.

COPFS Assurance Mapping Framework : Group 2 Review

The committee noted the paper. During general discussion it was observed that reliance was being given to previous year documents and references were being given to documents, strategies and policies that were potentially out of date or gave no indication of when last reviewed. In order to give reliable assurances the committee advised they must be supplied with the most up to date information.

Action: MA to take the Assurance Mapping Framework back to Team Heads to review and refresh ensuring that all information is current. The framework document will have an additional section detailing review dates. Items shown as completed but have ongoing issues outlined in the narrative are to be reviewed. RT DW and VD to meet with key players to discuss Assurance Mapping.

9.

Audit Scotland Report and Management Letter

ES gave an overview and general discussion followed.

10.

Presentation of COPFS Draft Annual Accounts

MA gave an overview of the Draft COPFS Annual Accounts. It was noted that work is ongoing on the presentational design of the format and this will be completed in time for the final accounts being published on the COPFS website. General discussion followed.

The committee welcomed the ongoing progress being made in the presentation of COPFS accounts.

It was agreed that it would be helpful if the committee could be given an update paper in relation to how AME is presented in the accounts.

Action: MA to furnish ARC with a report reflecting how AME is presented in the final accounts. This should be issued in advance of the next meeting of ARC on 22 September 2021

11.

QLTR Update

BS thanked all staff who had been involved in the preparation of the QLTR accounts. The committee echoed this sentiment.

QLTR is looking at the process of returning to offices given the easing of COVID restrictions. Particular focus is being given to special precautions for small teams.

An update was given regarding proposals for how to deal with land. Consultation work is ongoing with local councils. BS is to speak at the Asset Transfer Conference at SG on 7 September.

There ensued general discussion in relation to funding profile for administration of estates.

12.

Presentation of the QLTR Draft Annual Accounts; QLTR Covering Letter (letter of representation)

SD gave a short introduction and presented the draft QLTR annual accounts for approval. After discussion the Committee approved these accounts and the associated covering letter and recommended them to the accountable officer to sign.

13.

QLTR Covering letter (report to those charged with governance)

QLTR Annual Audit Report

ES made a short submission, and the Committee received and noted the QLTR Annual Audit report and the associated covering letter.

14.

Approval and signing of the QLTR Accounts

The approved accounts are to be signed off-line.

15.

Risk Management Update

- DW spoke to his report on recent RMG meetings.
- It was noted that minutes of previous RMG meeting(s) had not been included in ARC meeting pack.

Action: MA to issue a copy of RMG minutes to committee.

16.

ARC Annual Report

The Annual Report was noted.

17.

AOB

No additional items were raised

18.

Date of Next Meeting

22 September 2021 (via MS Teams)