

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD
ON THURSDAY 23 MAY 2024 AT 2PM IN JAMES HOUSE AND VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS

Mr Patrick Nelson (Chair)**
Mr Peter McReynolds MLA*
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

IN ATTENDANCE:

INTERNAL AUDIT

Mrs Cathy Hadden

**NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT
OFFICE**

Ms Sarah Heanen*

FPM ACCOUNTANTS

Ms Suzanne Villiers

OFFICIALS

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of
Resources
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of
Performance

Five Board Officials

* Attended the meeting via video conference.

** Elected to Office at item 3

The Director of Resources opened the meeting and advised Members that he will assume the role of Chair to facilitate the election of a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee at agenda item 3 and following the election will hand over to the new Chair to progress the meeting agenda.

Members were reminded that the previous Chair Mr Brendan Mullan has moved to a new role as Vice Chair of the Board and the previous Vice Chair

Mr Peter Osborne has moved to another Board Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, the Director of Resources thanked the previous Chair and Vice Chair for their hard work and dedication during their time on the Committee, and offered the Committee's thanks and appreciation to Ms Nuala McAllister MLA who has moved to another Board Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Frank McManus, Mr Gerry Kelly MLA and Mr Tommy O'Reilly.

The Chair welcomed Mr Patrick Nelson and Mr Peter McReynolds MLA as new Members of the Committee to their first meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared and the agenda for the meeting was agreed.

No matters for discussion were raised under 'Any Other Business' and it was confirmed the meeting was quorate.

3. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Director of Resources advised Members that guidance for the election of the Board Chair and Vice Chair is set out in paragraph 4 of the Board's Standing Orders, and that Committees follow the same process.

The Director of Resources moved to the election process and requested nominations for the role of Committee Chair.

Mr Patrick Nelson was nominated by Mr Keith Buchanan MLA and seconded by Mr Peter McReynolds MLA, and Mr Patrick Nelson confirmed that he was

content to accept the nomination. No further nominations were received and following a vote it was unanimously **AGREED** to elect Mr Patrick Nelson to the role of Committee Chair.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- That Mr Patrick Nelson be elected as Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Director of Resources invited nominations for the role of Committee Vice Chair. Mr Tommy O'Reilly was nominated by Mr Peter McReynolds MLA and seconded by Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, and the Director of Resources advised that Mr Tommy O'Reilly was content to accept the nomination in his absence. No further nominations were received, and following a vote it was unanimously **AGREED** to elect Mr Tommy O'Reilly to the role of Committee Vice Chair.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**:

- That Mr Tommy O'Reilly be elected as Vice Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Director of Resources congratulated both Members on their successful election to the new roles and invited Mr Patrick Nelson to assume the position as Committee Chair and proceed with the meeting agenda.

The newly elected Chair formally accepted the position of ARAC Chair and offered his thanks to Members for their nomination and support in the election process.

4. KEY COMMITTEE DOCUMENTS

4.1 Review of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Terms of Reference

The Director of Resources presented the Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) and advised that pursuant to Section 20 of the Board's Standing Orders the TOR for the Committee should be reviewed at the beginning of each financial year.

Members were advised of proposed amendments to the TOR in respect of the draft minutes, renaming of the Whistle-Blowing policy to Raising Concerns policy, addition of the annual recommendation from the Committee to the Accounting Officer on the signing of the Board's Annual Report & Financial Statements following the completion of the external audit, and inclusion of the Annual Internal Audit Charter as part of the suite of documents made available to the Committee.

Following discussion Members:

- **APPROVED** the amendments to the ARAC Terms of Reference as outlined, and
- **AGREED** to make a recommendation to the Board that the updated ARAC Terms of Reference be approved.

4.2 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report 2023-24

The Director of Resources presented the Committee's Annual Report summarising the work undertaken during 2023-24, noting that in accordance with the Committee's Terms of Reference, this report (along with other Committee Annual Reports) will be taken to the Board to agree its inclusion as part of the overall composite document for the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

The Director of Resources highlighted the following areas of the Annual

Report:

- Board Members and Board senior staff participated in a Risk Management Workshop in September 2023 which resulted in a decision to prioritise next steps in terms of the Board's approach in the future to risk management.
- The end of year Stewardship statement for 2023-24 was issued to the Department of Justice on 5 April 2024 and tabled at the May 2024 ARAC meeting.
- The previous Committee Chair was asked for his feedback in respect of the Committee's Annual Report.

The feedback included a 'Recommendation to the Accounting Officer' (item 10) relating to Corporate Risk 3 – Capacity and Capability (Staffing), and for the Annual Report Conclusion (item 11) to record the view that risk control and governance is at a satisfactory level within NIPB.

Members **NOTED** the report and following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- to make a recommendation to the Board to **APPROVE** the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Annual Report 2023-24.

5. DRAFT NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023-24

The Chair asked Members to consider the NIPB Draft Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 including the Board Chair's Foreword, Performance Report overview, Accountability Report, and Financial Statements.

The Chair advised that following consideration, agreement will be sought from Members to share the Draft Annual Report with the NI Audit Office, ahead of

coming back to the Committee at the meeting in June 2024, and the Finance Manager provided a further update on the quality assurance process undertaken with the NI Audit Office.

Board Officials provided an overview of the key sections of the report and Members raised the following matters:

- Board Chair's Foreword – suggested amendments regarding the Chief Constable's assessment of the impact on policing services given the financial settlement for policing; removal of reference to PSNI becoming a reactive service only; and include reference to the PSNI data breach.
(AP1)
- Performance Report overview – Clarity in respect of how outcome 2, 'We have confidence in policing', is measured against other Services in the UK, and types of surveys, including range of different providers available, utilised to measure progress towards achieving Policing Plan outcomes.
- Draft Financial Statements – mechanism by which additional funding received near the end of the financial year (and subsequently returned to the Department of Justice) and categorised as surplus funding will be recorded in financial statements, and work taking place in respect of Provisions.

Following discussion, and subject to the amendments outlined above, Members **AGREED:**

- that the draft document of the NIPB Annual Report & Accounts 2023-24 be shared with the NI Audit Office, and following audit, the final draft will be considered at the next ARAC meeting in June 2024.

5.1 Northern Ireland Audit Office Letter of Understanding

The Director of Resources asked Members to **NOTE** correspondence from the NI Audit Office regarding the basis on which the Comptroller and Auditor General audits the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

6. NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD ACCOUNTING OFFICER END OF YEAR STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT

The Chief Executive presented a paper which provided Members with an update on the Chief Executive's Stewardship Statement to the Department of Justice for the period 1 October 2023- 31 March 2024.

Members were advised of no exceptions and **NOTED** the Stewardship Statement.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 20 June 2024 at 2pm in James House.

(Meeting closed at 3.05pm)

Strategic Planning and Governance

Date: May 2024

Chair