

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD  
ON THURSDAY 9 DECEMBER 2021 AT 2PM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND  
POLICING BOARD WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST AND VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:**

**MEMBERS**

Mr Colm McKenna (Chair)  
Mr Edgar Jardine (Vice-Chair)  
Mr Michael Atkinson  
Mr Frank McManus\*  
Mrs Carmel McKinney\*  
Ms Deirdre Toner \*

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Mrs Sharan Dustagheer\*

**INTERNAL AUDIT**

Mr Michael Matthews\*  
Mrs Cathy Hadden\*

**NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT  
OFFICE**

Mr Tomas Wilkinson\*

**ASM ACCOUNTANTS**

Mrs Christine Hagan\*

**OFFICIALS**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive  
Ms Aislinn McGuckin T/Director of Police  
Administration

Three Board Officials

\*Attended the meeting via video conference.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Gerry Kelly MLA and Mr Trevor Clarke MLA.

The Chair welcomed new Members Mrs Carmel McKinney and Ms Deirdre Toner to the meeting.

## 2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared and the Agenda was agreed.

No Member raised any matters for discussion under 'Any Other Business'.

## 3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Chair advised that Item 5.6 - Verbal Update from the meeting with Clarke Black and Stephen Hodgkinson should read "The Chair stated that both he, as ARAC Chair at NIPB and the PSNI ARAC Chair should be included in DoJ Audit Chairs' Forum. Clarke Black, ARAC Chair at DoJ agreed".

## 4. COMMITTEE ACTION LOG

The Committee noted the updates detailed within the Action Log and the related verbal overview provided by the Chief Executive and officials in relation to the actions from the meeting on **30 September 2021**.

### Action Point 1

Risk 4 on the Corporate Risk Register re the Independent Medical Referee process has been reviewed and the wording updated. This will be discussed in greater detail under agenda item 7 later in the meeting.

## **Action Point 2**

With regard to a potential telephone recording system throughout the building the Finance Manager advised that this can be implemented by IT Assist if necessary; Board officials would need to provide the details on the number of devices it was required on. Members agreed this was a matter for the Chief Executive if deemed appropriate.

**Action Point 3** is now closed – the Committee programme of work has been updated and is available on Decisiontime.

Action Point 1 from the meeting on 17 June 2021 can now be closed as the Board's Pension Advisor and the Pension Board Chair are providing a briefing to the committee after this meeting on the Police Pension Board Governance.

## **5 CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

### **5.1 DAO 07/21 – Conflicts of Interest**

The Chair advised this correspondence was issued on 29 September 2021 which advises of the publication of guidance on Conflicts of Interest and which is available on the Accountability and Financial Management Section of the Department of Finance website and he encouraged Members to read it.

Members **NOTED** the report.

## **6. NIPB INTERNAL AUDIT**

### **6.1 NIPB Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Head of Internal Audit presented a paper which noted that since the previous meeting in September 2021 one final report, in respect of Police Appeals Tribunals has been issued. Internal Audit concluded that

management had established a **'Satisfactory'** system of internal control to mitigate the key risks relating to the administration of NIPB Police Appeals Tribunals and management of the associated budget and a Priority 3 recommendation had been noted.

The Head of Internal Audit noted that two other assignments are at an advanced stage, the Police Pensions and Internal Dispute Resolutions review is at quality review stage and the Information Security and Management review is in the latter stages of fieldwork.

There are two further assignments on the 2021/2022 Internal Audit Plan. The Police Property Fund is scheduled to commence in the last quarter of 2021/2022 whilst the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPS) will be undertaken when management request. Internal Audit are meeting with the Chief Executive in mid- January 2022 to discuss and agree the 2022/23 Internal Audit plan. At that meeting the number of days set aside throughout the year for the audit work will be reviewed.

## **6.2 Internal Audit Open Recommendations**

The Committee confirmed they were content to note the paper at agenda item 6.2.

There are currently seven open recommendations. Of the seven open recommendations three are partially achieved.

Three recommendations arising from the Business Continuity Planning Review are being progressed however given the upcoming move to James House a new Business Continuity Plan will be required.

## 7. NIPB CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Chief Executive presented the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) and advised this is reviewed by the senior management team (SMT) at regular intervals. The total number of Corporate Risks is seven. The Chief Executive noted that with the exception of Risk 4, the risk scores have remained the same in the other 6 risks since the last committee meeting in September 2021.

The Chief Executive noted that as requested at the last committee meeting Risk 4 relating to the Independent Medical Referee Process has been reviewed and the wording updated (as outlined in bold in the CRR) to clearly articulate the cause of the risk. During discussion it was noted that the residual score of certain risks, due to the very nature of them would always remain a risk, regardless of the mitigations in place. Members **AGREED** they were content with the updated wording in the CRR and this item will remain on the agenda for future SMT meetings.

In relation to Risk 1 a Member noted that in respect of the briefing given by the PSNI at the Board away day the Chief Constable did not specifically address any issues that may impact on public confidence in policing. After discussion it was **AGREED** that the Chief Constable's monthly report should include a report in this regard.

Members also noted the Pension Board's risk register which is reviewed by the Pension Board at each meeting.

## 8. NIPB FRAUD UPDATE

The Chief Executive noted that there was no suspected or actual fraud to report to the Committee.

## **9. NIPB DIRECT AWARD CONTRACTS**

Officials noted that there were no new Direct Award Contracts (DACs) to report to the Committee. A DAC reported to the Committee in September 2020 remained in place.

## **10. RAISING A CONCERN UPDATE**

No concerns were raised.

## **11. NIPB COMPLAINTS UPDATE**

The Corporate Services Manager stated that Members were advised at the September meeting that one new complaint had been received on 26 August 2021. This complaint falls within the remit of Police Administration Branch and is the only complaint to date this financial year being progressed under the NIPB Complaints Policy. As this complaint is being made through a third party, there has been a short delay in progressing the complaint owing to the necessity to seek written consent from the individual on whose behalf the complaint is being made. This consent has now been received and the complaint will be progressed in line with the timeframes outlined in the Board's complaints policy.

## **12. NIPB GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY REGISTER**

Members noted that because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been no opportunities for Board Members or staff to offer or receive gifts or hospitality.

## **13. COMMUNICATION ISSUES/ OPPORTUNITIES**

No communication issues were raised.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was conducted.

**15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 31 March 2022 at 2pm.

(Meeting closed at 14.20)

**CORPORATE SERVICES**

**Date:** December 2021

**Chair**