

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Audit Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

on

Friday 2 June 2023 at 1pm

Over Teams

Present:	David Knott – ARAC Chair Kate Burns – Board Member Lynn Gilmore – Board Member
In attendance:	Kevin Quigley – Chief Executive Belinda McCaughey – Accounts Administrator
DAERA Sponsor Branch (Observer)	Paddy Griffin
DAERA Internal Audit	Eveline Doherty

	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies	
David welcomed all to the meeting. Apology received from Harry Wick – Board Member	
2. Declaration of Interests	
David invited all to declare any interests they may have. No declarations were made.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023	
Minutes were formally approved by Kate and seconded by Lynn.	
4. Matters Arising	
David has been appointed to the DP role under the MSMS. Board approval given at last meeting. Duty Holder Training – Kate has completed the training but cannot find the Certificate. Is happy to repeat. All other members have completed the training.	
Risk register – all matters were addressed and taken to Board Monthly Newsletter will not progress in the immediate future. All other matters arising are on the Agenda.	

	Action
5. Raising Concerns	
<p>Kevin, Alan and David attended a meeting led by the Permanent Secretary where this topic was discussed. Was previously known as Whistleblowing.</p> <p>Whistleblowing Policy will be updated to incorporate Raising Concerns and will be renamed. This will be brought to the September meeting for consideration.</p>	Kevin
6. HR Capacity Issues	
<p>Final Pay and Grading review document has not yet been received. It will be brought to the Board Meeting for consideration.</p> <p>Extra staff member in the budget to aid the workload of Kevin and Belinda will not happen at the moment. We are working in a difficult financial environment.</p> <p>Pay Review will be submitted to DAERA by the end of June 2023. Guidance is to raise the hourly rate to £10.90 for minimum paid staff members and £552 p.a. for everyone else.</p> <p>The Admin Officer recruited in February to cover the Health and Safety Admin tasks has left and we are currently unable to fill this post. NIFHA will run a further recruitment campaign in August with a proposed start date of September.</p> <p>Replacement for the Environmental Officer who is on maternity leave has been recruited. It is hoped that this post will still be grant aided – subject to the new round of funding.</p>	Board
7. IIP Report	
<p>Kevin confirmed interviews were carried out. The mood remains poor in the harbours and pay remains a critical issue.</p> <p>Likelihood is that we will gain the standard for one year only.</p> <p>Formal report has still not been received. Kevin will chase.</p>	Kevin
8. Risk Register – May 2023	
<p>Kevin spoke to those items which had changed since the previous register.</p> <p>No 1 – Failure in Corporate Governance. KQ to prepare a business plan to seek additional resources.</p> <p>No 3. – Failure to deliver budget outturn. At year end the risk was stable but now that GIA is tight this risk trend is worsening.</p>	

	Action
<p>No 8 – Changes in Industry regulations. Crewing issues are looking slightly more promising. Crews have been included on the Shortage Occupation List which makes salary levels more affordable for vessel owners. This trend needs to be changed from downward to stable.</p> <p>No 9 – Capital Funding. New grant rules mean that any spend before Grant Letter of Offer is received are at NIFHA’s expense. NIFHA is currently in discussions with DAERA on this issue and will amend the trend if talks produce a positive outcome.</p> <p>No 10 – Environmental Issues. New Waste Management in Kilkeel is still improving. Plans to roll this out to the other harbours.</p> <p>No 12 – Abandoned Vessels. Still hurdles to mount. The Water pollution Officer (DAERA) asked for a method statement for control of water pollution (coffer dam). This was done, approved and is now out for consultation with the other consultees.</p> <p>No 13 – Dredging. New samples taken. Emerging risk.</p> <p>Kate asked about being able to source alternative funding within the green sector.</p> <p>The Committee discussed in full this issue, the resource capability within the Authority at the moment, and the need to bid for funding from DAERA.</p> <p>Paddy confirmed there was a section in the last Bid Form which specifically mention Climate Change. He will check this out and come back to Kevin if there is a possibility to put in a late bid.</p> <p>Within the Evidential Support Document the following were discussed:</p> <p>Risk 4 – Failure in MSMS. Recruitment will take place in August hopefully for September appointment to the Internal Health & Safety Audit function.</p> <p>Risk 7 – Threat to IT. Training has been carried out. X to be removed from Status.</p> <p>Risk 13 – Dredging. Samples are back. Looking promising for licence to be issued.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the Risk Register with one amendment to be made to Item 8 trend. Will be taken to Board for approval at the meeting on 29 June 2023.</p>	<p>KQ</p> <p>Paddy</p> <p>Kevin</p> <p>Board</p>
<p>9. Annual Report on the Work of the ARAC Committee</p>	
<p>This report was discussed in detail. All meetings were fully attended and this should be reflected in the report.</p> <p>David also asked if reference to his meeting with Chairs of other ALB’s should be included. Kevin to address.</p>	<p>Kevin</p>

	Action
10. ARAC Self Assessment	
<p>David spoke in particular to those items for which there was not a unanimous response.</p> <p>The Committee decided that the following questions should be removed from future questionnaires as they are not relevant to NIFHA.</p> <p>Question Numbers 25, 35, 43, 48 and 51 will be removed.</p> <p>In summary accounting experience would be useful for the Finance or Board rather than this Committee.</p>	<p>Belinda</p> <p>Belinda</p>
11. Draft Governance Statement	
<p>This is the statement which is included in the Annual Report and Accounts.</p> <p>The report was covered in detail. Reference to external Auditor providing further assurance should be changed to independent assurance.</p> <p>This amendment will be made and taken to the June Board Meeting for Approval.</p>	<p>Kevin</p> <p>Board</p>
12. Internal Audit	
<p>Evelyn covered the papers on the Agenda.</p> <p>Internal Audit Annual Opinion & Report for 2022/23 – free access was provided to carry out the Audit. A Satisfactory Result was achieved.</p> <p>This years audit covered 5 topics. Evelyn detailed each and the recommendations coming out of them.</p> <p>Lynn thanks everyone for their work and David commented that the results are a credit to the Executive Team.</p> <p>Kevin reiterated that this year has been a concerning year – we feel we have a partnership relationship with Internal Audit which helps us to improve ourselves. He thanked Evelyn for her, and her teams very thorough work this year.</p> <p>Evelyn presented the topics to be addressed during 2023/24 – which will conclude the current 3 year plan.</p>	
13. Conflict of Interest Register	
<p>As this meeting is a Teams meeting David will review and sign off the Register before the Board Meeting on 29 June 2023.</p>	<p>David</p>
14. Minutes of Accountability Meeting on 18 May 2023	
<p>There are no minutes available yet – these will be included in the next ARAC Pack.</p>	

	Action
Paddy expressed his personal disappointment in not being able to attend the meeting which took place in Ardglass, however DAERA were well represented at the meeting.	
15. Policy List Update	
<p>David confirmed that the additional columns added to the list were very helpful.</p> <p>On reviewing the policy list it was determined that the CCTV Policy and the Records Management Policy be updated and brought to the next ARAC meeting for review.</p> <p>Kevin confirmed that a Raising Concerns Policy will replace the Whistleblowing Policy.</p>	<p>Kevin / Belinda</p> <p>Kevin</p>
16. Review of Policies and Procedures	
<p>Policy on the Prioritisation of Capital and Maintenance Works Projects – Kevin and David L both reviewed this policy which is applied when determining which projects to move forward. This was planned as an in depth review. The Key Issue is that a list of ranked projects will be presented but keeping to the order is not always a reality.</p> <p>Funding and time restrictions will require NIFHA to adjust what we will deliver. It is imperative we keep a degree of flexibility.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the document in detail.</p> <p>Policy approved to take to Board for Approval.</p> <p>Abandoned Vessels Procedure – This is only a procedure and not a Policy. Kevin asked for questions.</p> <p>David queries bond level of £40k but Kevin confirmed this should cover the cost of decommissioning a vessel.</p> <p>Kevin confirmed that whilst some vessels may ask for permission to enter the harbour the issue is more around those vessels already in the harbour and condemned by the MCA.</p> <p>We may have to let a risky vessel into the harbour if MCA or the Secretary of State’s Representative (SOREP) instruct us to do so. In this cases MCA is then responsible for it.</p>	Board
17. Review of Harbour Health and Safety Meetings	
<p>Kevin asked for questions.</p> <p>Kevin confirmed issues around hot work being carried out on a vessel. There was a recent incident which involved the HSE. Result of which is that there needs to be a way to address managing people on the slipway. This is proving challenging.</p>	

	Action
<p>Belinda confirmed that due to the loss of the Admin staff member to take the minutes the Table of Actions at the end of each set of minutes had not been updated. This will be addressed at the next Health and Safety Meetings.</p>	
18. Any Other Business	
<p>Lynn thanked Kevin for hosting the Seafish Board in Kilkeel last week.</p> <p>David congratulated Kilkeel on winning the Fishing News Best Fishing Harbour 2023.</p> <p>Paddy advised the Committee that he was leaving DAERA in July to join the Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. On behalf of the Committee, David thanked Paddy for his faithful attendance and valuable input to the Committee over the years and wished Paddy all the best in his new role.</p>	
19. Date and location of next meeting	
To be determined at Board Meeting on 29 June 2023	