

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

on

Wednesday 04 September 2024 at 10am

In Head Office, Downpatrick

Present:	Maynard Mawhinney (MM) – ARAC Chair David Knott (DK) – Board Member Robert Ryans (RR) – Board Member Harry Wick (HW) – Board Member Lynn Gilmore (LG) – Board Member (Teams)
In attendance:	Kevin Quigley (KQ) – Chief Executive Belinda McCaughey (BMcC) – Accounts Administrator
DAERA Internal Audit	Eveline Doherty (ED) (Teams)

	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies	
MM welcomed all to the meeting.	
2. Declaration of Interests	
No declarations made. BMcC confirmed all declarations are up to date.	
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 06 June 2024	
Minutes were approved.	
4. Matters Arising	
All action points have been completed or are on todays agenda.	
5. Overview and Emerging Issues	
KQ spoke to this paper. In particular: Business Plan & Funding – DAERA have worked hard to provide this years GIA of £616k. Capital – Business Case is required for the Kilkeel Slipway Rails Project. KQ confirmed grant funding for Project Manager and Environmental Officer salary costs. Fish Pass – No repairs will be carried out this winter. There is a concern that the DSO will decide that because the Fish Pass sits on our ground then we own it. They may ignore the Act.	

	Action
<p>As per the Extraordinary Board Meeting draft letter to the Permanent Secretary is with our solicitors. Once approved and sent a copy will be forwarded to all Board Members.</p> <p>Ladder Access to Slipways – So far unable to recruit a new member of staff. Process has begun again.</p> <p>Temporary solution is to use the harnesses. This should be up and running by mid October but all staff need to be trained in the use of these.</p> <p>Peace Plus Innovation Program has opened and we are working with QUB to obtain funding. This will be a high level initial claim and then the next stage will be to flesh it out.</p>	KQ
<p>6. Board Training</p>	
<p>Mandatory Training as per table supplied. Equality training date has been set.</p>	
<p>7. HR Issues</p>	
<p>KQ advised that absence is a big issue within the Authority. Ardglass currently has one staff member off for c.3 months with a temporary staff member recruited to cover. Kilkeel has one staff member on long term sick leave and another off for a minimum of 6 weeks.</p> <p>Not been successful in the recruitment of a member of staff for the slipway.</p> <p>BMcC is still under pressure. KQ is also back under pressure to get work completed.</p> <p>Quinquennial Review is ongoing. Next stage in October will be a draft for comment.</p> <p>Maternity Leave – KQ discussed the issues with Maternity / Paternity Pay within NIFHA.</p> <p>Currently NIFHA pays Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks. First 6 weeks are at 90% of average weekly earnings and the remaining 33 weeks are at SMP rates set by HMRC.</p> <p>The proposal is to align to NICS by paying full pay for the first 18 weeks of maternity leave with the remaining 21 weeks being paid at current SMP rate.</p> <p>Committee agreed to take this proposal to the next Board meeting for approval.</p>	Board
<p>8. IIP Report</p>	
<p>KQ noted this was a separate document and it is a big achievement for such a small organisation as ours to actually have this.</p>	

	Action
Committee discussed the considerations which will be brought to the next Board Meeting.	
9. Risk Register – August 2024	
<p>The Committee had a full discussion over the history behind having the current number of risks on the Register.</p> <p>Historically there were even more and the introduction of the Evidential Support Document meant that some could be removed. At this stage it would be difficult to remove any of the current 13 risks.</p> <p>KQ will check the removed risks to ensure they do not need to be re-instated.</p> <p>MM stated that everything goes through the CEO at the moment. The risk here is that the Board channels everything through one person. The Board needs to consider this as a risk going forward.</p> <p>Board receive a shortened form of the Risk Register – the committee decided the full register should be included with the Board Papers.</p> <p>KQ spoke to the Evidential Support document and discussed changes since the last presented Register.</p> <p>In particular the following risks were addressed:</p> <p>No 5 – Remuneration. Pay increase was delivered in August at the last moment. This needs to be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>Union now want to discuss the Pay differentials. At the DAERA accountability meeting it was suggested that NIFHA need to address the Organisation as a whole and not just one group of staff.</p> <p>KQ will need direction from the Board before informing the Union.</p> <p>No 8 - Failure to obtain funding. The capital situation is worsening. Arrow is missing and needs to be added.</p> <p>No 12 & No 13 – Risk of damage to infrastructure. This is currently static but after discussion it should be changed to worsening.</p> <p>Risk Register was approved to take to the next Board Meeting.</p>	<p>Board</p> <p>BMcC</p> <p>KQ</p> <p>KQ</p> <p>KQ</p> <p>Board</p>
10. Risk Appetite	
<p>This was reviewed last year and hopefully is easier to read.</p> <p>Approved to take to the next Board Meeting.</p>	Board
11. Risk Management Policy Annual Review	
<p>Everyone was content with the Policy.</p> <p>Approved.</p>	

	Action
12. Policy Updates	
<p>Current list of policies was discussed. Anti Slavery date is incorrect and should be changed on the Register to 31 Jan 2026.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Policy – After a discussion on the content it was determined that KQ would make amendments and bring back to the next ARAC meeting.</p> <p>Home and Hybrid Working Policy – Committee discussed this and approval was given.</p> <p>Partnership Policy – KQ gave the reasons behind the creation of this policy. Principal is that we will work with others. Future potential. This may be brought to the Board if a contract or a partnership was entered into. Policy was approved.</p> <p>Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent. This is updated every year and is for the Committee reference as it was referred to in the H&S Audit recommendations at a previous meeting.</p>	BMcC
13. Minutes of DAERA Accountability Meeting on 22 Aug 2024	
These are not yet available.	
14. Harbour Health and Safety Meetings	
<p>New member of staff is onboard and working well.</p> <p>Committee discussed the content and in particular details of actions completed since last meetings.</p> <p>HW noted that it should be noted that zero accidents occurred. That needs to be recognised in the minutes. KQ will action at next meetings.</p>	KQ
15. Any Other Business	
<p>KQ advised that we are members of British Ports and the October meeting is being held in Kilkeel</p> <p>Annual review will be forwarded to all before the next meeting.</p>	
16. Date and location of next meeting	
29 November 2024 @ 10am in Ardglass HM Office	