

# Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Meeting

on

**Friday 29 November 2024 at 10am**

**In Harbour Masters Offices, Portavogie**

<b>Present:</b>	Maynard Mawhinney (MM) – ARAC Chair David Knott (DK) – Board Member Robert Ryans (RR) – Board Member Lynn Gilmore (LG) – Board Member
<b>In attendance:</b>	Kevin Quigley (KQ) – Chief Executive Belinda McCaughey (BMcC) – Accounts Administrator
<b>DAERA Internal Audit</b>	Eveline Doherty (ED) (Teams)
<b>DAERA Sponsor Branch</b>	Jennifer Weir (JW) (Teams)

	Action
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>	
MM welcomed all to the meeting. Apology received from Harry Wick.	
<b>2. Declaration of Interests</b>	
No declarations made.	
<b>3. Minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2024</b>	
Slight amendment to wording on Item 11. BMcC will change. Minutes were approved.  Matters Arising - All action points have been completed or are on today's agenda.	BMcC
<b>4. Overview and Emerging Issues</b>	
MM updated the Committee on an ARAC Members Event he attended earlier this month. Main points covered were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Role of ARAC within NIFHA. Technical role but also the role of being part of change and driving change. Move away from the concept of doing what was always done.</li><li>- NIAO Update</li><li>- Board Effectiveness</li></ul>	

	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raising Concerns</li> <li>- Working on Cyber Security</li> </ul> <p>Recommendations all for ARAC Committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre meeting with Auditors at least annually</li> <li>- Self Assessment to be completed annually</li> <li>- Conflicts of Interest to be declared</li> <li>- Keep a database of Audit Recommendations</li> <li>- Annual Report on the Work of the Audit Committee</li> <li>- Dear Accounting Officer Letters – guidance to be tabled at meetings</li> <li>- Consideration of NIAO public report.</li> </ul> <p>In the future AI may be used for the taking of minutes at meetings. Every word spoken would be recorded. This would change the dynamics of discussions.</p> <p><u>Emerging Issues</u></p> <p>KQ advised that JW from DAERA has confirmed that we are exempt from using CPD for grant funded projects – already gone through a procurement process.</p> <p>KQ updated the Committee on a meeting with DAERA on Climate Change and help available. By 2027/28 all work should be underway</p> <p>At this meeting DAERA noted that there would be a need for a member of staff to concentrate on research. Is funding available and is it real? This is the start of the conversation and will be taken to Board to further consider.</p> <p>DAERA are organising a meeting with Stephen and Kevin to discuss FSDP.</p> <p>Two vessels have been scheduled for dismantling before year end. The removal of the wreck within harbour limits in Ardglass will be funded by their Insurers.</p> <p>JW confirmed that the issue around the Harbour Order on the legal side is that it sits with DoI not DAERA. Last year the decision was taken not to move this forward. After the joint Board Meeting there has been slight movement.</p> <p>KQ affirmed that control of a fishing vessel needs to be through the fishing licence to prevent abandonment.</p> <p>Ladder Access – an issue arose in England with regard to ladders being too short and causing a fatality – we are checking our ladders.</p>	

	Action
<p>Ladder Access to Slipways – Progressing.</p> <p>Fish Pass – 13 months in and still who is responsible for undertaking the repairs remains at a preliminary stage.</p> <p>Committee endorsed that has been done so far and will continue to keep this at the forefront.</p> <p>JW noted that DAERA have a route to finding a resolution – much broader. Specification has been agreed and sent to the legal team to address. Onus may be on the two ministers to sort this out. Hopefully information may be available before the December Board Meeting.</p> <p>KQ advised there was no agreement from NIFHA as to this specification. Decisions were made between DAERA and DoI.</p> <p>KQ confirmed Accountability Meeting will now revert to a six monthly meeting as per the Partnership Agreement.</p>	
<b>5. Board Training</b>	
<p>GDPR training will be arranged before financial year end.</p> <p>MCA are currently carrying out a health check of the PMSC. Unfortunately they are applying the logic of big harbours to our small ones.</p>	
<b>6. HR Issues</b>	
<p>KQ updated the Committee on current absences due to sick leave.</p> <p>The Environment Officer will go on Maternity leave in February 2025 - there are no plans to recruit a temporary replacement.</p> <p>KQ discussed the way forward with staff.</p> <p>Quinquennial Review still ongoing (JW confirmed draft is due to be with DAERA today). KQ noted HM's may be expected to carry out more Admin duties than what is currently happening.</p>	
<b>7. Equality and Good Relations Report</b>	
<p>KQ presented the Report. MM queried how the Committee know these have been completed? KQ advised backing information is available for all tasks confirmed as being completed.</p> <p>ED confirmed that this could be addressed at the next planning meeting but noted that statutory requirements are covered within every audit.</p> <p>A question was asked re Pictogram signs. KQ will check that these are still in place.</p> <p>With the Environment Officer on Maternity Leave there will be fewer Beach Cleans and postings on Facebook will be less frequent.</p>	KQ

	Action
<b>8. Risk Register – November 2024</b>	
<p>KQ noted the changes are highlighted in purple and most are improving or at least static. MM confirmed register is clear and concise and colour coding is very helpful.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Risk Register in its current format together with the Evidential Support Document</p> <p>LG noted succession planning needs to be included. Risk Assessments for the HSMS and MSMS need to be included.</p>	
<b>9. Risk Register – Condensing the Risks</b>	
<p>KQ discussed the risks which could be combined.</p> <p>MM noted the drive to reduce the number of risks and look at the previous 26 to ensure all are still covered.</p> <p>LG confirmed that all 26 risks are included between the current 13 risks and the evidential support document.</p> <p>LG and DK both looked at different ways to combine the risks.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the condensing of risks in much detail.</p> <p>MM summarised Risks into the following Categories – Governance, Safety, Environment, People (to include succession planning), Finance, IT and External (Industrial specific risks and geopolitical).</p> <p>This is to be taken to the Board as a work in progress and will come to next ARAC meeting for final confirmation.</p> <p>Approved to take to the next Board Meeting.</p>	<p>KQ</p> <p>Board</p>
<b>10. Policy List</b>	
No policies were updated since the last meeting.	
<b>11. HSMS Annual Performance Review</b>	
<p>KQ confirmed we were well behind last year but now are back on track.</p> <p>Committee reviewed the Responsibilities. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HM's – The fishermen's paperwork is better than in the past.</li> <li>- Any accidents reported tend to be by our own staff.</li> </ul> <p>DK queried incident levels?</p> <p>KQ confirmed a quarterly report will be presented to the ARAC meeting on total absence due to ill health.</p> <p>On the external audit all the recommendations were low level. This reflects well on the Organisation.</p>	

	Action
<b>12. Internal Audit 2023/24 Recommendations Update</b>	
KQ gave an update on all recommendations.	
<b>13. Minutes of DAERA Accountability Meeting on 22 Aug 2024</b>	
KQ took questions on these minutes..  Board Re-Appointments – JW confirmed the submission was ready to go to the Minister for approval. Appraisals on all have been received.	
<b>14. Any Other Business</b>	
DK asked about FOI requests and the need for the ARAC committee to monitor these.  Few received and any appropriate ones will be brought to the Committee.	KQ
<b>15. Date and location of next meeting</b>	
To be determined at Board Meeting in December.	