

SCOTTISH CRIMINAL CASES REVIEW COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024 @ 10:30, HYBRID MEETING FOR DISCLOSURE VIA THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

In line with the Commission's Disclosure policy, various paragraphs may have been edited or deleted from these minutes as the information contained therein relates to specific case information and/or personnel-related matters. Where the summary of discussion has been edited or the names have been deleted, this is indicated at the start of the relevant paragraph or section.

There were no edits on this version of the minutes.

Members of the Audit Committee:

Mrs Elaine Noad (Chair) – Video Conference
Ms Laura Reilly – Video Conference
Mrs Suzanne Mertes – Video Conference
Mr Finlay Young (Member/Observer) - Video Conference

In attendance:

Miss Kerry Nelson, Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland – Video Conference
Mr Dougie Shepherd, Senior Internal Auditor Manager, Scottish Government – Video Conference
Mr Glen Bissett, Internal Audit Manager, Scottish Government - Office
Mr Michael Walker, Chief Executive & Accountable Officer - Video Conference
Mr Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services, SCCRC – Office
Mrs Kirsty MacDonald – Senior Admin Officer (minutes) – Office

1.1 Apologies

There were no apologies.

Mrs Noad welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed that Mrs Mertes would be taking over as Chair from January 2025 and that Mr Young would become a Member of the Audit Committee from January 2025.

1.2 Conflicts of Interest/Declarations of Interest/Gifts & Hospitality

Members were asked to declare any known conflicts of interests or gifts and hospitality.

There were no declarations of conflicts, gifts or hospitality.

1.3 Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 18 April 2024

The Audit Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2024, subject to minor amendment. The Audit Committee also approved the version for the publication scheme, subject to the same minor amendment.

1.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1.5 Internal Audit

2024-25 SCCRC Internal Audit

- 1.5.1 Mr Reddick presented the 2024-25 SCCRC Internal Audit report which was previously agreed.

2024-25 Internal Audit Progress Report

- 1.5.2 Mr Bissett discussed the Internal Audit Report which includes performance controls and finance monitoring. Mr Bissett confirmed he had scheduled a commencement review with Mr Reddick in the coming week
- 1.5.3 Members discussed the horizon scanning risks report which had been circulated. Mr Reddick noted that it was assuring that a number of the Commission's top 10 risks featured in this report, demonstrating commonality in some areas across the sector. Mr Shepherd provided details of how the top 16 risks are determined and provide to circulate an update.

1.6 Audit Committee:

Terms of Reference

Mr Reddick confirmed that the terms of reference had been amended to take account of the Audit Committee's ability to co-opt members of specialist expertise. After discussion, the Audit Committee approved the updated terms of reference.

1.7 Risk Management

Corporate Risk Register – Quarter 2 Update

Mr Reddick circulated the risk register and confirmed that a number of minor amendments had been made since it had been considered by the Board in October 2024. Members discussed the impact on risk number 6, particularly in respect of potential Section 274/275 cases. Mr Reddick confirmed resource and capacity planning would be discussed at the next quarterly meeting with Justice Directorate and at the November Board meeting.

1.8 Business Continuity Plan

Updated Business Continuity Plan (redacted)

Mr Reddick presented the redacted version of the updated Business Continuity Plan. He reported a minor incident with one of the on-premise servers, which had been detailed within the incident log. He provided a brief overview of the issue and how it had been resolved, without any impact on service. The Audit Committee noted the updated plan.

1.9 Best Value

Best Value Action Plan – Progress Report 2024-24

- 1.9.1 Mr Reddick confirmed that staff would be undertaking wellbeing training in January 2025.
- 1.9.2 Mr Reddick provided Members with a progress update on the various Best Value Actions, confirming that the majority of these had been incorporated within the business plan objectives for the year ahead. The Audit Committee noted progress against the plan.

1.10 AOCB

Audit Committee – Training and Development

- 1.10.1 Mr Reddick confirmed that details of possible Audit Committee training resources had been supplied by Mr Shepherd and that he would liaise with Mrs Mertes and Mr Young to take forward suitable training.

Resource & Capacity Planning

- 1.10.2 Mr Reddick provided an update in respect of some of the key trends and issues affecting resource and capacity planning at the Commission, which included the significant increase in case volumes combined with reducing staff resource. As not previously, he confirmed that this would be discussed in detail at the next quarterly meeting with Justice Directorate and at the November Board meeting.

Oracle Cloud Update

- 1.10.3 Mr Reddick advised the new HR & finance system for Scottish Government launched in October. He provided a full update on the roll out of the new system and outlined a number of issues with regard to Commission access which were still being resolved. He confirmed admin had been heavily involved in the process and they continued to work closely with Scottish Government to resolve the outstanding issues.

Cyber Essential Accreditation/Penetration Testing

- 1.10.4 Mr Reddick noted that the cyber essential accreditation was received in July 2024. He also informed Members that he would be investigating independent penetration testing in the new year as a source of additional assurance.

1.11 Date of Next Meeting

Mr Reddick agreed to circulate proposed dates for the next meeting.

Kirsty MacDonald
14 November 2024