

SCOTTISH CRIMINAL CASES REVIEW COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE ON THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2023 @ 13:30, 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.

Members of the Audit Committee:

Mrs Elaine Noad (Chair) – Video Conference
Ms Laura Reilly – Office
Mrs Suzanne Mertes – Video Conference

In attendance:

Ms Gillian McCreadie, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland - Office
Mr Kenny Adam, Auditor, Audit Scotland – Office
Mr Glen Bissett, Internal Audit Manager, Scottish Government - Office
Mr Michael Walker, Chief Executive & Accountable Officer - Office
Mr Chris Reddick, Director of Corporate Services, SCCRC (minutes) – Office
Mrs Kirsty MacDonald, Senior Administration Officer, SCCRC - Office

1.0 Apologies

Mr Jim Montgomery, Senior Internal Audit Manager at Scottish Government, had submitted his apologies.

2.0 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.

3.0 Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 11 May 2023

The Audit Committee noted the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2023. The Audit Committee also noted the version for the publication scheme.

4.0 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5.0 External Audit

2022-23 Draft Annual Accounts

- 5.1 Mr Reddick provided the Audit Committee with an overview of the annual audit process which he confirmed had been extremely smooth. He also thanked the external audit team for their continued assistance, and noted that the audit programme should be reverting to normal from next year. He then took the Audit Committee through the draft accounts on a page by page basis, noting that the format and content was relatively consistent with the previous year, with the exception of the full implementation of IFRS16. In this regard he noted that various updates to the draft accounts had been required and thanked the external auditors for their input.
- 5.2 The Audit Committee confirmed that they were happy to recommend the signing of the Accounts to the Accountable Officer, subject to the finalising of any outstanding matters raised within the audit reports. Mrs Noad noted that the Commission had successfully met its various targets and operated within budget for the year which was impressive and thanked staff for their ongoing work and diligence.

Independent Auditor's Report & ISA580 – Letter of Representation

- 5.3 Ms McCreadie presented her independent auditor's report to the Audit Committee, confirming that a revised set of annual accounts had been received and reviewed and that she was now in a position to issue an unqualified audit opinion. She also provided an overview of the draft ISA260 and confirmed that there were no unadjusted misstatements to be corrected.
- 5.4 Ms McCreadie also summarised the Letter of Representation (ISA580) which was appended to her report and confirmed that this would be submitted by the Accountable Officer with the signed accounts.

Draft Annual Audit Report 2022-23

- 5.5 Ms McCreadie and Mr Adam presented the draft Annual Audit Report for 2022-23 to the Audit Committee. In particular, they provided an overview of the various exhibits covering materiality values, significant findings from the audit of the financial statements and resulting recommendations, and an update on prior year recommendations, which had all been fully implemented.
- 5.6 Mr Adam noted that there was one good practice recommendation in respect of senior staff declarations of interest. After full discussion Mr Reddick confirmed that senior staff would now be included in the updated declaration of interests procedure currently in place for Board Members.
- 5.7 Mr Reddick referred to paragraph 38 of the report and noted the reference to certificates of assurance. For clarification, he set out the current approach to the preparation of the assurance statement and the assurance report prepared for the Accountable Officer based on the various sources of assurance.
- 5.8 Ms McCreadie concluded by thanking Mr Reddick and his team for their assistance in effectively facilitating the audit. Mrs Noad thanked the auditors

for their work. She noted the various constructive and useful comments and in particular the confirmation of the Commission's effective financial planning arrangements. After full further discussion the Audit Committee noted the external audit reports.

6.0 Internal Audit

2023-24 SCCRC Internal Audit Progress Report

- 6.1 Mr Bisset thanked Mrs Noad for the welcome and presented his Internal Audit Progress Report for 2023-24. He confirmed that the annual assurance review would be taken forward in quarter 4 with the terms of reference for the audit work to be agreed with Mr Reddick prior to the end of December 2023. He noted that this work would include a review of succession planning, culture and wellbeing, and a follow-up review of prior year recommendations.
- 6.2 In respect of strategic matters, he provided a brief overview of the ongoing corporate transformation programme at Scottish Government and its likely impact on smaller bodies such as the Commission.

Quarterly Bulletin – Issue 18 – October 2023

- 6.3 Mr Bisset also provided a summary of the latest quarterly bulletin which included some useful information on assurance mapping and links to certificates of assurance. He noted that this may be of use to the Commission although recommended a level of proportionality given the size of the Commission.
- 6.4 The Audit Committee was advised that Scottish Government had undertaken a review of its Internal Audit Service, and an update would be provided at the next meeting. Mrs Noad thanked Mr Bisset for his updates.

7.0 Audit Committee

Terms of Reference & Draft Annual Report 2022-23

- 7.1 Mr Reddick confirmed that he had reviewed the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference and, subject to any comments from Members, had made no recommended changes. The Audit Committee confirmed that they were happy with the current version.
- 7.2 Mr Reddick also summarised the Annual Report for 2022-23 and in particular noted the main sources of assurance and basis for opinion. He confirmed that the report also reflected the Audit Committee's approval of the draft annual accounts and the recommendation for the Accountable Officer to sign the accounts. After full consideration the Audit Committee approved the 2022-23 Annual Report.
- 7.3 Mrs Noad noted that the Audit Committee had the opportunity to meet privately with the auditors if anyone felt this was necessary. The Audit Committee and the auditors agreed that they had nothing to discuss privately.

8.0 Risk Management

- 8.1 Mr Reddick provided the Audit Committee with an update on the various changes made to the Corporate Risk Register following the risk workshop which had been held in March 2023. He also set out the various additional control actions which had been taken forward and confirmed that he had proposed no changes to the actual risk scores.
- 8.2 Mrs Noad referred to risk 4 in respect of Board expertise and noted that the latest recruitment round had appointed an additional Lay Member who would be taking up their position in April 2024 and provide continuity for one of the leavers in December 2024. She also noted that the Chairman and a Legal Member would also be concluding their appointment in December 2024 and the recruitment process would need to be commenced. Mr Reddick and Mr Walker confirmed that this had been raised with Sponsor Team and would be flagged at the next quarterly meeting.
- 8.3 Mrs Mertes suggested that consideration could be given to the visual aspects of the register by possibly adopting an arrow system to denote changes to risk scores over time. Mr Reddick agreed to look at this further.

9.0 Business Continuity Plan

- 9.1 Mr Reddick presented the redacted version of the updated Business Continuity Plan, confirming that the majority of updates were in respect of staffing details and contact information. He also confirmed that the recent succession planning work had been incorporated into the plan.
- 9.2 Mr Reddick also confirmed that the testing schedule for the plan had been updated to reflect the most recent tests undertaken and provided an update on subsequent planned testing.

10.0 AOCB

Mr Reddick confirmed that he would be taking forward a full Best Value review in quarter 4 of 2023-24 in accordance with the agreed Business Plan Objectives for the year. Ms McCreadie confirmed that external audit still had a role in considering compliance with the Best Value Duty.

11.0 Date of Next Meeting

Mr Reddick agreed to circulate proposed dates for the next meeting once the internal audit work had been scheduled and approximate completion dates known.

Chris Reddick
30 November 2023

