



AN TÚDARÁS PÓILÍNEACHTA
POLICING AUTHORITY

Minutes of Meeting of Audit and Risk Committee

Date: 22 February 2022

Venue: Remote Video-Conference

Attendance:

Committee	Moling Ryan (Committee Chair), Ronan Nolan, Melanie Pine
Secretary	Mark Nother
Executive	Helen Hall (Chief Executive), Aoife Clabby, Clare Kelly, Claire McElroy, Anne Keeley – for items 4, 5 & 6
Visitors	Vincent Tao, Partner, Crowleys DFK (Internal Audit Provider) - for item 4.

1. Closed Session

Committee members did not exercise the standing option to conduct a closed session.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

The agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved by the Committee. With regard to the former, it was agreed that the scheduled in-depth review of the Risk Register would be deferred to an additional, dedicated meeting in March.

The Executive provided a verbal update to the Committee on matters pertaining to the Authority and the oversight of the Garda Síochána, including: the ongoing work relating to the review of the unwarranted closure or cancellation of CAD incidents; the drafting of the business plan for 2022; the transition of the Authority's ICT services from the Department of Justice to the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer; the procurement of future legal services; and, a brief update on matter relating to the Garda Internal Audit Service.

In addition, a verbal update on the transition to hybrid working was provided by the Executive, including: arrangements for meetings of the Authority and its Committees; hybrid working arrangements for staff; IT and accommodation infrastructure preparations; and, an update on staff engagement on matter pertaining to the move to hybrid.

In this context, the Committee agreed to continue with the practice of remote meetings of the ARC in the short term and to keep such under ongoing review in line with wider Authority policy and procedure.

3. Governance

A verbal update was provided by the Committee Chair on the approval by the Authority of amendments to the Code of Conduct – as part of the wider Governance Framework review undertaken in 2021 – as previously considered by the Committee.

The Committee was provided with the results of the annual self-assessment evaluation undertaken by the Authority and its committees – in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies – in the form of a summary report and the anonymised individual results of the Authority and each committee.

Overall, it was noted, the survey results were largely positive across the Authority with two primary concerns arising regarding: the appropriate delegation of duties for management, and ways in which to increase delegation of matters to the Executive; and, the volume of meetings papers, including the late provision of papers from the Garda Síochána.

The Committee heard that the Executive had established a number of changes to ways of working which had begun to answer concerns regarding both of the above and that the Authority had in the intervening period since undertaking the survey delegated a number of standing oversight activities to the Executive.

Regarding the committees, results also were positive overall with two issues arising regarding appropriate induction, mentoring, training and assistance in professional development; and interaction between Committee and Garda Síochána representatives. The Committee heard that the matters pertaining to the former were under consideration as part of a large training approach for 2022 and that induction specifically had undergone an update in 2021. On the latter, it was further developed that this referred to the effective provision by the Garda Síochána of materials in advance of meetings and information during meetings.

The Executive also outlined that a calendar of meeting agendas and standing monthly engagements on such had been established with the Authority Chairperson and the Chairs of the two special committees (Policing Strategy and Performance and Organisation Development) to ensure greater alignment and an improved strategic approach.

The draft proposed Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report was accepted by the Committee without amendment.

4. Audit

The Committee were informed that the Procurement/Value for Money Audit had faced a number of delays relating to volume of information and availability on the part of the IAP and therefore would be presented to the Committee at the March meeting.

An update on the implementation of audit recommendations was provided to the Committee. It was noted that there were no issues of concern regarding the recommendations. There was a brief discussion in relation to a recommendation which advises that simulated security exercise take place periodically for all staff and how that may be conducted.

The Internal Controls Audit report was discussed by the Committee. The Internal Audit provider outlined that there was reasonable assurance in respect of the internal controls and that there were six 'low' findings which management have accepted or partially accepted.

5. Finance

The Finance Officer presented the Draft Appropriation Account for 2021 to the Committee.

The monthly Financial Report was considered by the Committee and a verbal update was provided concerning the financial position at the end of January 2022. The Committee were provided with clarifications and further detail as per their queries.

6. Risk

The Committee noted the changes made to the Risk Register, which were highlighted in the Risk Management Report for December. The Committee agreed that the in-depth review of the Risk Register would take place during the meeting in March 2022.

7. AOB

There were no items for discussion under this item.