**MINUTES**

**Audit and Risk Committee Meeting**

**Date:** 20 May 2020

**Venue:** Zoom,Virtual

**Present:** David Clarke (Chair)

James Norton (Member)

Dr Susan Tranter (Member)

Owen Vallis (Member)

**In attendance:** Anne Longfield, Children’s Commissioner

Alice Miles, Director of Strategy and Policy

Haroon Chowdry, Director of Evidence

Janette Threapleton, Head of Business Services

Jenny Wilcocks, Financial Controller

Seb Groth, Engagement Director - NAO

Karen Murray, Partner – Mazars

Stuart Frith, Senior Manager – Mazars

Ashley Norman, Head of Internal Audit OCC [TIAA]

**Apologies:** Brian Tytherleigh, Member

Colin Wilcox, Portfolio Director - NAO

Chris Porter, Audit Principal – NAO

Nasim Clark, DfE Sponsor Team

**Board**

**Secretariat:** Karen Bryant

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|  | Summary of discussion |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Introductions** |
|  | The Chair welcomed members and attendees. |
| **2.** | **Declaration of Interests** |
|  | JN – Member, Board of Governors Mount St. Marys College from (April 2020) |
| **3.** | **Draft Minutes of 26 February, Summary of Actions and Matters Arising** |
|  | The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2020, were approved.  **Action:** None  **Matters Arising**  Members registered concern about the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the timeline to appoint a new Commissioner. AL advised that she has asked the Permanent Secretary to clarify.  **Action:** AL to follow up with NED link.  The Chair will consider writing to the Department |
| **4.** | **Budget and Management Accounts [March 2020]**  **- Maintaining financial controls during lockdown/remote working** |
|  | The management accounts for March 2020 were reviewed. There were no matters to raise.    The organisation has adapted its operations in the light of the coronavirus crisis.  All staff are working from home in response to lockdown restrictions. This has worked well, with minimal impact on the efficiency of the organisation due to having robust IT infrastructure and strong engagement and communications. Demands on the organisation have increased as a result of the emergency, and a revised work-plan focusing on the priorities of vulnerable children has been put in place.  OCC provided short-term support of a small number of policy and evidence staff to DfE and Cabinet Office for a limited period during this period.  **Action:** None |
| **5.** | **Annual Internal Audit Report and Head of Audit Opinion**  **- Outstanding IA Recommendations** |
|  | The Head of Internal Audit’s Annual Report stated that he is satisfied that, for the areas reviewed during the year, the Office of the Children’s Commissioner has ‘reasonable and effective risk  management, control and governance processes in place’.  **Action:** None |
| **6.** | **NAO/Mazars Interim Update on External Audit Assignment** |
|  | The NAO final external audit is currently in progress and on track, with ongoing dialogue and information sharing via secure file transfer, in the absence of on-site visits.  **Action:** None |
| **7.** | **Review of draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20** |
|  | The 2019-20 draft Annual Report and Accounts was reviewed and received positive feedback.  **Actions:** Feedback to inform subsequent revisions. |
| **8.** | **AOB**  **a. Staff Survey [for information]**  **b. Data Protection Annual Report 2019-20 [for information]**  **c. ALB CEO Meeting 07/05/2020 – DfE for the Future [for information]**  **d. NAO Value for Money** |
|  | a. The annual staff survey illustrated improvement on previous results and positivity amongst the workforce.  b. It was confirmed that the office now meets GDPR and Data Protection requirements, and assurances in relation to the DfE’s IT security measures have been received by OCC.  c. The ALB CEO meeting with DfE was discussed.  d. NAO Value for Money paper and delay on activity due to Covid-19 restrictions, was discussed.    **Action:**  **a.** The annual survey to be followed up with a pulse survey with a focus on wellbeing during lockdown.  **b.** The Commissioner to discuss the requirement for more evidence of DfE’s IT security approach with NED representative.  **c.** None  **d.** None |

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| **Future meeting dates** | |
|  | * Wednesday 18 June 2020 * Wednesday 23 September 2020 * Wednesday 25 November 2020 * Wednesday 24 February 2021 * Wednesday 19 May 2021 * Wednesday 23 June 2021 |