

Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Audit Board held on 18 September 2024 at 12.30pm in Q1.03, The Scottish Parliament

Present: David Watt, Chair
Claire Robertson
Siobhan White

In Attendance: David McGill, Clerk/Chief Executive
Michelle Hegarty, Deputy Chief Executive
Sara Glass, Group Head of Financial Governance
Lis Craig, Financial Controller
Anne Hamilton, Financial Accountant
Carole Grant, Audit Scotland
Liz McConnachie, Audit Scotland
Gillian McCreadie, Audit Scotland
Tommy Lynch, Head of Resilience
Andy Munro, Head of Internal Audit
Lisa Creamer, Secretariat

Apologies: Steve Renwick
Claire Baker MSP
Jackson Carlaw MSP

Item 1: Declarations of Interests

1.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

Item 2: Minutes of Meeting from 18 June 2024

2.1 AAB members approved the minute as drafted.

2.2 There were no matters arising.

Item 3: Strategic Risk Update

AAB(SEP24)01 – Risk Update

3.1 Tommy Lynch provided an update on the risk register explaining the current focus of ensuring risks are proportionate to the organisation.

3.2 The AAB noted the update.

Item 4: Finance Office

AAB(SEP24)02 – SPCB Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24

- 4.1 Lis Craig confirmed that Audit Scotland and the Finance Office had agreed the timetable for the completion and signing of the Annual Report and Accounts. These will be presented to the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body's meeting on 26 September 2024 for formal approval and signed by the Clerk/Chief Executive shortly thereafter.
- 4.2 AAB members recorded their appreciation of the significant efforts of Lis Craig and her team in completing the annual report and accounts within the period set.

Item 5: Audit Scotland

AAB(SEP24)03 – 2023/24 Annual Audit Report

- 5.1 Liz McConnachie presented the audit report and confirmed that there were no remaining outstanding items or items to draw attention to the AAB's attention. Ms McConnachie further advised that Audit Scotland had not undertaken any non-audit related services.
- 5.2 On behalf of Audit Scotland, Carole Grant thanked SPCB staff, and the Finance Office in particular, for their assistance during the audit.

AAB(SEP24)04 – ISA 580: Letter of Representation

- 5.3 Liz McConnachie presented the letter of representation confirming that this requires to be signed by the Clerk/Chief Executive as the Accountable Officer of the SPCB.
- 5.4 The AAB noted the letter of representation.

Item 6: Internal Audit

AAB(SEP24)05 – Review of Reimbursement of Members' Expenses

- 6.1 Andy Munro presented the internal audit review of the reimbursement of Members' expenses. Mr Munro confirmed that following detailed testing across a targeted sample of transactions, no exceptions were identified, and internal controls are in place and continue to operate effectively.
- 6.2 The AAB welcomed the positive findings from the review and approved the report.

AAB(SEP24)06 – Review of Catering Service

- 6.3 Andy Munro presented the internal audit report, noting that one recommendation was implemented immediately and the other two would be implemented in early course.
- 6.4 The AAB noted the review and approved the report.

AAB(SEP24)07 – Review of High Value Contracts

- 6.5 Andy Munro presented the internal audit report, noting that three recommendations have been made to enhance existing contract management arrangements.
- 6.6 The AAB noted the review and approved the report.

AAB(SEP24)08 – Annual Assurance Report to the Accountable Officer 2023/24

- 6.7 The AAB noted and approved the Annual Assurance Report to the Accountable Office.

AAB(SEP24)09 – AAB Annual Report to the SPCB 2023/24

- 6.8 The AAB approved the AAB Annual Report to the SPCB.

Item 7: AAB: Future Agenda Planner and AOCB

AAB(SEP24)10 – Future Agenda Planner and AOCB

- 7.1 The AAB noted the future agenda planner.

Item 8: Time and date of next meeting

- 8.1 The next meeting will be held on 22 January 2025.

Meeting Date	Issue	Action Required	Lead Official	Planned Completion Date	Status	Comments
AAB – June 2020	Review of Officeholders: Governance and Accountability	Andy Munro/Mark Taylor to discuss the timings of officeholder audits in future years.	Andy Munro	March 2021	In progress.	SHRC and Standards Commission audits will sign off before SPCB. SPSO and Biometrics will sign off shortly after however the work on these two audits will be complete. The remaining officeholders are not scheduled to complete their audits until 31 October 2024. We will continue to seek audit sign off for all officeholders prior to SPCB sign off in 2024/25.
AAB – March 2022	AAB(MAR22)02 – Fraud and Whistleblowing Policy	Andy Munro to bring updated policies on fraud and whistleblowing to AAB for further review and comment following review and approval by Leadership Team. Estimated June 2023 meeting.	Andy Munro	2022/23	Complete.	Included in AAB agenda in March 2025.
AAB – June 2024	AAB(JUN24)06 – Cyber Security	Andy Munro to invite BIT to attend a future AAB meeting to provide an update on the work being done to enhance the SPCB's cyber defences.	Andy Munro	2024/25	In progress.	Director of Operations and Head of BIT invited to attend future AAB meeting.