

Report from the Risk and Audit Committee

Issue

1. The board is kept informed of the work of its Risk and Audit Committee by receiving a report on the outcomes of each meeting. The attached report summarises the outcomes of the Risk and Audit Committee meeting held on 25 February 2020.

Recommendations

2. The board is invited to receive the report of the Risk and Audit Committee.

Further information

3. Available from Kate Lander. Full minutes of the meeting are available to members on request.

Risk and Audit Committee report

February 2020

Risk management

4. The committee considered an updated register of OfS's strategic and principal risks, [exempt from publication].
5. We noted that the board will be considering a project proposal for taking forward the Data Futures programme at its meeting in March. [Exempt from publication]. The committee agreed to consider the proposal going to the board outside the normal meeting schedule and any comments will be presented orally to the board. At the next committee meeting we are due to undertake a 'deep dive' into the dependency risk associated with the DDB.
6. We received a presentation from the OfS's Head of Legal on the high level corporate risks in his area. In response, we carried out a 'deep dive', enabling us to better understand and challenge the process for identifying and reporting on these risks. At this stage we can assure the board that these risks are being well managed with appropriate mitigations in place. [Exempt from publication].
7. We derived significant assurance in carrying out this deep dive and will continue this approach at future meetings, looking into other groupings of risks.
8. We were also provided with an updated assurance map setting out the assurance activities mapped across the three lines of defence for each strategic risk and were assured that management had undertaken a thorough process in developing this. For future meetings we will focus on risk areas where there is no assurance or where there has been significant change.

Internal Audit update

9. Although no completed reports were presented to us at this meeting, we received an update on the work carried out by internal audit since our last meeting and were assured that there was nothing of concern to be flagged to us. We were advised by the Head of Internal Audit that the 2019-20 plan is on track to be completed by the end of the financial year and will inform our own end of year assurances. We also noted the proposed internal audit plan for 2020-21. The final plan will come back to our next meeting.

OfS interim accounts 2019/20

10. Following completion of the recent interim audit, we received the OfS accounts for the 9-month period to 31 December 2019 and a progress report from the NAO on their work. Final accounts will come to the committee in May. We were assured that management are addressing any issues identified during the interim audit and are engaging with the NAO on matters relating to the final audit.

11. We also considered a working draft of the OfS corporate governance report and agreed to provide comments on this outside of the meeting. We will look at the report again at our next meeting.

Draft Risk and Audit Committee annual report 2019-20

12. We considered a first draft of our own annual report to the board and formal opinion for 2019-20 and agreed to provide comments outside of the meeting. We will finalise our report at our next meeting in May.

Counter fraud annual update

13. We noted a paper setting out the OfS's activity on counter fraud and advising progress on meeting the government functional standards on counter fraud. We also formally confirmed that the accountable individual for counter fraud in the OfS, the Director of Resources, Finance and Transformation, has discharged their responsibility in respect of the government functional standards for counter fraud

Kate Lander
February 2020