

TRUSTEES' AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE

Meeting No 104

Paper No 27/2024

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

AT A MEETING

ON 1 MAY 2024

AT 02.00 P.M.

Present

Harris Bokhari OBE (Chair)
Shahpur Kabraji
Colin Hudson – independent member
Luke Fairless – independent member

In Attendance

Sir Patrick Vallance (Chair)
Dr Douglas Gurr (Director)
Helen Whitehouse (Chief Operating Officer)
Melissa Clifford-Turner (Head of Finance)
Kevin Coughlan (Internal Audit Manager)
Dr Sarah Long (Head of Registry) for item 4
Eleanor Pirie (Head of Health and Safety) for item 10
Richard Hinton (Chief Information Officer) for item 11
James Downs (Head of Security) for item 11
Chris Sleep (Information Security Manager) for item 11
Timothy Cousins (Interim Data Protection Officer) for item 11

External representatives

Alex Macnab (Director, DCMS audit, National Audit Office)
Shannon Holmes (Audit Manager, National Audit Office)
Colin McInnes (Deputy Director of Finance, DCMS)
Claire Ashby (IIA External Quality Assurance Reviewer)

Secretariat

Rosalind Glass (Chief of Staff)

Apologies

Robert Noel, Professor Dame Jane Francis DBE FRS

Preliminary Items:

1 MEMBERS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS (15/2024)

Declarations of Interest and changes to the Register of Interests were made and recorded by the Board Secretary.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2024 (16/2024) AND MATTERS ARISING (17/2024)

The minutes of the meeting of the Trustees held on 8 February 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed off by the Chair.

All matters arising were noted as completed or scheduled for a later date.

3 DIRECTOR'S REPORT: KEY STRATEGIC RISKS 24/25 (18/2024)

The Director summarised the Director's Report having recently reviewed major strategic risks as part of the Q4 Operating Plan Quarterly Review. Action for secretariat to add column in Key Strategic Risk report to show target risk category (red/amber/green) for each risk title to help the committee understand realistic aims for each item.

Annual Items:

4 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS ASSURANCE 23/24 (19/2024)

The Chair gave an update on the formation of a new Collections committee for NHM which would be an additional subcommittee to the Board of Trustees, responsible for how the museum puts its collection to use.

The Head of Registry summarised the Annual Collections Assurance 23/24 report which included follow ups on items from the 22/23 report. The committee discussed challenges around Access & Benefit Sharing, protection of the collection and collection environments, as well as activities relating to Museum Accreditation. Action for the Head of Registry to include assurance around the growing digital information relating to the collection as a result of Unlocked and DiSSCo UK, for the next financial year. Action for Head of Registry and Chief Operating Officer (with Director of Estates) to add short narrative in report against masterplan of collections conditions once NHM Unlocked project is complete. Concerns around institutional knowledge would be partially mitigated by the recruitment of a Director of Collections by 2025.

5 FINANCIAL REVIEW 23-24 (20/2024)

The Head of Finance summarised the Financial Review for 23/24, highlighting surpluses above forecast and budget, successes in Q4 on both self generated income and rates rebates, and plans for those rebates.

6 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS UPDATE 23/24 (21/2024) AND DRAFT GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Head of Finance provided an update on annual accounts for 23/24.

The Head of Finance summarised the draft governance statement, for which the committee provided feedback. Action for Head of Finance to amend wording on regular audit reports received, to include annual item on review of financial controls by the committee, and to remove final paragraph in the paper.

7 RISK AND ASSURANCE ANNUAL PLAN/PRIORITIES 24-27 UPDATED (22/2024)

The Internal Audit Manager presented the annual plan and priorities for the coming years, including comments and feedback received from the committee when it was shared in January. Action for Internal Audit Manager to refine wording around external provision to give more clarity, and to amend wording and table to be consistent. Other items to be addressed in external effectiveness review of the committee to be presented in the next committee meeting in June.

8 INTERNAL AUDIT MANAGER'S ANNUAL REPORT 23/24 (23/2024)

The Internal Audit Manager summarised the annual report, noting a similar outcome to last year's version. Concerns over quality assurance in the audit report would be addressed in the external effectiveness review of the committee to be presented in the next committee meeting.

9 DRAFT AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 23/24 (24/2024)

The Internal Audit Manager presented the annual report requiring approval from the committee. Action for Internal Audit Manager to correct member total, to add Colin McInnes (DCMS) and to remove the item on Covid 19, Brexit etc disclosures. Approval was pending until presentation of the effectiveness review of the committee.

10 ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT 23/24 (25/2024)

The Head of Health and Safety summarised the Health and Safety report, highlighting the museum's new health and safety auditor, and new health and safety system. The committee thanked The Head of Healthy and Safety and team for their hard work as clear improvements could be seen.

11 ANNUAL SECURITY REPORT 23/24 (26/2024)

The Head of Security gave an overview of the Annual Security Report, including a new partnership with other sites on Exhibition Road and a new Visitor Management system. The report now included a maturity model to better illustrate progress.

The Information Security Manager gave an update on cyber security. The Chief Operating Officer said the museum via the Chief Information Officer primarily had been engaging with DCMS on cyber security on a monthly basis for some time. The committee were reassured on plans to build capability to effectively use the cloud. Action for the Chair and Luke Fairless to discuss the cyber section in the report in further detail.

The Interim Data Protection Officer summarised the data protection report, including records management and intellectual property.

The Chief Information Officer explained the museum's progress on data retention and its cost to the museum. The Director committed to bringing a paper to The Board of Trustees on ICO (action for secretary).

Concluding Items:

12 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The committee's external effectiveness review would be an item for the next meeting in June. Any further items would be agreed between the Chair and the secretariat after the meeting.

IDENTIFICATION OF EMERGING RISKS

The committee had reviewed emerging risks in the meeting papers therefore no further discussion was required.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair thanked the Committee and secretariat for their time and preparation. The Chair of the Board of Trustees thanked the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for all he had done during his term and bid him farewell on behalf of the committee.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 25 June 2024
- 30 Oct 2024
- 29 January 2025