

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 10 January 2023

Members of the Commission present:

Mr Richard Bacon, in the Chair

Peter Grant
Dame Meg Hillier

Jerome Mayhew

In private

1. Minutes of last meeting

The Commission agreed the minutes of the meetings held on 29 November and 6 December 2022.

2. Publication of correspondence

The Commission agreed to publish the following document:

- Letter from Dame Fiona Reynolds to the Chair, regarding the presentation of a candidate for the NAO Board, dated 22.12.22.

3. Consideration of topics for NAO auditor's 2023 economy, efficiency and effectiveness examination

The Commission noted the topics longlisted by the NAO's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for the NAO auditor's 2023 economy, efficiency and effectiveness examination.

The Commission agreed to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's proposal that 'Financial management of the NAO's Financial Audit work' should be the subject for the 2023 examination.

4. Discussion of lines of questioning

In public

5. Appointment to the NAO Board

Dame Fiona Reynolds, Chair, National Audit Office presented Mr Alistair Conner as a candidate for appointment to the NAO Board, to replace Ms Janet Eilbeck whose term ended in October 2022.

The Chair, on behalf of the Commission, recorded his thanks to Ms Eilbeck for her 6 years of service at the NAO.

Dame Fiona and Mr Alistair Conner gave oral evidence.

In private

6. Consideration of appointment of candidate to the NAO Board

The Commission agreed to Dame Fiona's recommendation, and appointed Mr Alistair Conner as an NAO Board member for a three-year term, beginning on a date to be determined by agreement between the Chair and the Chair of the National Audit Office.

The Commission further agreed that Mr Conner's remuneration should be a non-pensionable fee of £20,000 per annum.

7. Any other business

There was no other business.

[Adjourned till a date and time to be fixed by the Chairman.]

Wednesday 1 March 2023

Mr Richard Bacon, Jack Brereton, Peter Grant, Dame Meg Hillier met informally for a private briefing from Alex Knight (Scrutiny Unit) on the NAO's Main Estimate for 2023-24.

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 8 March 2023

Members of the Commission present:

Mr Richard Bacon, in the Chair

Jack Brereton
Clive Efford

Dame Meg Hillier

In private

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 were agreed to.

2. Publication of correspondence

The Commission agreed to publish the following correspondence:

- Letter from the Treasury Officer of Accounts, regarding advice on the NAO Estimate for 2022-23 (dated 23.02.22)
- Letter from the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts, to the Chair, regarding advice on the NAO's Estimate for 2023-24 (dated 7.02.22).

3. Consideration of annual report

The Commission agreed its annual report for 2022, *Work of the Commission in 2022* (HC 1212). The Commission agreed to lay the report before the House of Commons.

4. Consideration of Public Accounts Committee and HM Treasury advice on NAO Estimate

The Commission considered the Public Accounts Committee's and HM Treasury's advice on the NAO's Main Estimate for 2023-24, and the progress update on its 2020-21 to 2024-2025 Strategy.

5. Discussion of lines of questioning for public session

In public

6. Public evidence session: NAO Main Estimate 2023-24

Gareth Davies, Comptroller and Auditor General, Dame Fiona Reynolds, Chair, and Daniel Lambauer, Executive Director, National Audit Office gave evidence on the NAO's Main Estimate for 2023-24 and progress against the 2020-21 to 2024-25 Strategy.

In private

7. Consideration of NAO Main Estimate 2023-24

The Commission agreed to lay the NAO Main Estimate for 2023-24 before the House of Commons.

8. Any other business

There was no other business.

[Adjourned till a date and time to be fixed by the Chair]

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday 5 July 2023

Members of the Commission present:

Mr Richard Bacon, in the Chair

Clive Efford
Peter Grant

Mrs Sharon Hodgson

In private

1. Notification of membership changes, introductions and declarations of interests

Mrs Sharon Hodgson was introduced as a new member of the Commission, following her appointment on 8 March. Mrs Sharon Hodgson did not declare any interests in addition to those already declared in the Register of Financial Interests.

The Chair notified the Commission that Anthony Browne had provided notification of his intention to resign from the Commission. Having notified the Commission of this fact, the Chair noted that Anthony Browne was no longer a member of the Commission, with effect from 5 July 2023.

2. Consideration of NAO auditor's VfM report

The Commission was briefed by Richard Evans, Crowe, on the NAO auditor's (Crowe) economy, efficiency and effectiveness examination of the NAO, on the subject of the NAO's financial management of financial audit work.

3. Scrutiny Unit briefing on NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

The Commission was briefed by Alex Knight, Scrutiny Unit, on the NAO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23, ahead of the public evidence session on 11 July.

4. Any other business

There was no other business.

[Adjourned till Tuesday 11 July 2023]

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 11 July 2023

Members of the Commission present:

Mr Richard Bacon, in the Chair

Jack Brereton
Clive Efford

Dame Meg Hillier
Mrs Sharon Hodgson

In private

1. Notification of membership changes

The Chair notified the Commission that Jerome Mayhew had provided notification of his intention to resign from the Commission. Having notified the Commission of this fact, the Chair noted that Jerome Mayhew was no longer a member of the Commission, with effect from 11 July 2023.

2. Laying of NAO auditor's VfM study

The Commission agreed to lay before the House of Commons the NAO auditor's economy, efficiency and effectiveness examination of the NAO, on the subject of the NAO's financial management of financial audit work.

3. Consideration of topics for NAO auditor's 2024 VfM study

The Commission noted that the Comptroller & Auditor General had written to the Chair, proposing that the topic of the NAO auditor's 2024 economy, efficiency and effectiveness study should be on the Audit Transformation Programme.

The Commission agreed that a study on this topic would be of particular interest and value to the Commission, and that the Chair to reply to the Comptroller & Auditor General in those terms.

4. Discussion of lines of questioning for public evidence session

In public

5. NAO Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

Gareth Davies, Comptroller & Auditor General, Dame Fiona, Chair, and Daniel Lambauer, Executive Leader, Strategy and Operations, National Audit Office gave evidence on the NAO's Annual Report and Accounts for 2022-23.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

[Adjourned till a date and time to be determined by the Chair]

Friday 10 November 2023

The Chair visited the National Audit Office, Spark Building, Newcastle, in connection with the Commission's scrutiny work and the NAO's Audit Transformation Programme.

Minutes of Meeting on Tuesday 28 November 2023

Members of the Commission present:

Mr Richard Bacon, in the Chair

Jack Brereton

Dame Meg Hillier

Clive Efford

Sharon Hodgson

Peter Grant

In private

1. Minutes of last meeting

The Commission agreed the minutes of its meeting held on 11 July 2023.

2. Reappointment of the Commission's expert audit adviser

The Commission agreed to reappoint Lynn Pamment for a further year as its expert audit adviser.

3. Discussion of lines of questioning for appointment hearings.

The Commission considered its line of questioning to the candidates.

In public

4. Appointments and re-appointments to the NAO Board

Peter Grant declared that he was a qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE, Chair, National Audit Office, Hetan Shah, candidate for appointment, and Gaenor Bagley and Sir Martin Donnelly, candidates for re-appointment to the board of the National Audit Office, gave oral evidence.

The Chair, on behalf of the Commission, recorded his thanks to Dame Clare Tickell for her six years of service at the NAO.

In private

5. Consideration of appointment of candidate to the NAO Board

The Commission agreed to Dame Fiona's recommendation on the reappointment of Ms Gaenor Bagley and Sir Martin Donnelly to the NAO board for a final three-year term.

It was agreed that the Chair write to Dame Fiona to seek clarification that a review of Mr Shah's social media profile and previous public statements had been conducted and to request written confirmation that nothing untoward had been found that would affect his nomination.

6. Any other business

There was no other business.

[Adjourned till a date and time to be determined by the Chair]

Appendix: Lynn Pamment – Declaration of interests

“I was formally a partner of PwC (until 31 December 2019) and I note that the two Board members of the NAO are also former partners of PwC. I have no working relationship with either of these NAO Board members and have again concluded that this has no impact on my ability to act in an independent capacity in this advisory role.”

Lynn Pamment, November 2023