

INFO 22-06-01 - ARAC Meeting Summary

This paper gives a summary of discussions at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) that took place on 17 May 2022.

The Committee considered the following:

Annual Report and Accounts

A verbal update was provided in relation to the FSA's annual report and accounts for 2021/22 which noted that the work on the accounts was progressing as planned and that there were no significant issues to report in relation to this. The NAO reported that resources had been mobilised to enable the delayed year-end audit of the FSA to start in September as previously notified and that a detailed timetable for completing the audit would be shared with ARAC at the 16th of June meeting. It was agreed that the decision on how and when the accounts will be signed off for approval would be left until then, however, an initial option for ARAC to sign off the ARA in June with a short teleconference to follow in October to confirm the ARA following completion of the audit was proposed.

Audit Report on follow-up audit of Food Chain Information

The Head of Field operations introduced the audit report, highlighting the work undertaken to date as well as ongoing work to mitigate the risks identified in the report. ARAC discussed the findings of the audit including the short-term and long-term mitigations taken/proposed to address the issues identified in the report. ARAC also discussed the potential risks associated some issues not being addressed immediately because they required long-term term solutions, acknowledging the complexity of the issues and solutions involved and asked for an update on progress for the November 2022 ARAC meeting.

Audit Report on official controls for Post-Mortem Inspection

In introducing the report, the Head of Field Operations explained that the issues identified in the report were mostly related the impact of the Covid pandemic and the UKs departure from the EU on staff turnover and assured ARAC that these were now being addressed. It was agreed that a follow-up audit would be conducted as soon as implementation of agreed actions has been confirmed by Field Operations..

Risk Management Update

ARAC discussed revised risk appetite statements, updated corporate risk register dashboard and the planned introduction of target ratings for risks and had a wide ranging discussion on risk appetite in the context of lessons learnt from the FSA's approach to assessing and dealing with food safety and authenticity risks resulting from food shortages linked to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

Audit Assurance Progress Report

The report summarised the work of the audit teams in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the year to date and noted the ongoing assessments of LA arrangements for implementing the Recovery Plan.

Annual review of ARAC terms of reference

Committee members were asked to comment on the proposed amendment to ARAC's terms of reference ahead of the September meeting when they are due to be formally approved by the Board. The amendment formally recognises ARAC's oversight role in relation to audits of official controls.

Annual review and Approval of the Audit Assurance Charter

Committee members were asked to comment and approve the proposed amendment to the Audit Assurance Team's Charter. The amendment incorporates a minor recommendation from a recent independent assessment of FSA internal Audit practices against UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Date of next meetings:

16th June 2022 -10 am -12 noon