

HTA Board meeting, 5 December 2024

Agenda item	5.2 ARAC Chair's Report
For information or decision?	Information
Decision making to date?	Routine reports on ARAC proceedings brought to Board meetings by ARAC Chair
Recommendation	To note
Which strategic risks are relevant?	Risk 1: Regulation Risk 2: Sector Risk 3: Staff Risk 4: Financial Risk 5: Digital
Strategic objective	Efficient and Effective
Core operations / Change activity	Core operations
Business Plan item	Audit and Risk – coordination of appropriate organisation controls to facilitate scrutiny and oversight by stakeholders
Committee oversight?	ARAC
Finance and resource implications	N/A
Timescales	Routine quarterly report
Communication(s) (internal/ external stakeholders)	N/A
Identified legislative implications	N/A

ARAC Chair's Report

The Audit and Risk Committee met on 16 October 2024. I will provide readout at the Board meeting. Draft minutes of the meeting have been circulated to attendees, and copies are available to Board Members on request from Private Office. A summary (similar to that shared soon after the meeting with all HTA staff) is below.

- All ARAC members, SMT (with apologies for absence from Director, Regulation), key staff, and representatives from the Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) were in attendance.
- The meeting started with the usual **opening administration**: declarations of interest, minutes, actions, plus revisions to ARAC terms of reference and handbook.
- The Committee then reviewed **audit reports**, with GIAA reporting a 'moderate' opinion that we had adequate and effective systems of control, governance and risk management in place for the reporting year 2023/24. Members were briefed on our audit tracker and members discussed timelines for the payables/receivables and health and safety audits. An external audit update was provided by KPMG.
- **Key updates** were provided by staff. The Committee provided feedback on Louise's quarterly cyber security overview, noting work completed to date and future planned work to maintain and further strengthen our approach. The Committee was briefed on the Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF) and how HTA, as a small ALB, is working to meet its requirements. An update on our management of health and safety was provided, and the Committee agreed a mechanism for reporting on health and safety matters.
- The Committee discussed **risk**. It reviewed our strategic risk register, and provided advice and feedback on our approach to managing and mitigating risks across the organisation. The Committee received briefing on current policies and procedure, including in relation to gifts, hospitality and declarations of interest, and noted the fraud risk assessment conducted in September 2024.
- Under **closing administration**, ARAC members noted ARAC Chair's Annual Report and their attention was drawn to the HM Treasury handbook for all ARACs, and HTA's ongoing work to meet the Government Functional Standards.
- ARAC members noted the hard work and thought that had gone into the papers and discussion at the meeting and thanked staff for their efforts.

ARAC's third and final meeting of the year is on 11 February 2025. I will provide a brief look-ahead to likely agenda items at the Board meeting.

Gary Crowe, Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee