Board of Governance of the Comptroller and Auditor General

MEETING
held via Teams 29 July 2025 at 14:00

MINUTES

Present	Michael Whitehouse	Chair
	Rob Tinlin	Senior Independent Member
	Peter Pichler	Independent Member
	Cosette Reczek	Independent Member
	Lynn Pamment	Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG)
In attendance	Andrea White	Finance and Governance Affiliate (FGA)
	Helen Thompson	Deputy Comptroller and Auditor (DC&AG)
	Andrea Robinson *For Item 07*	Executive Recruitment Business Partner from the Government of Jersey, joined the meeting
Apologies for absence	None	

25/13 Item 01: Declarations of interests

The Board received a presentation highlighting the changes to the Register since the last meeting:

- Entries for Cosette Reczek were updated to reflect changes in their declarations

Michael Whitehouse reported a change in his directorships which should be updated in the Register

The Board:

- **noted the report**

- **noted the change to Michael Whitehouse directorships and requested this be updated in the Register**
- **confirmed there were further changes required to the Register**
- **confirmed here were no interests to be declared relevant to the items on the agenda**

25/14 Item 02: Chair's update

The Chair reported that during his first visit to the island on 09 June 2025 he had met with the Chief Minister, the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Chair of the Jersey Appointments Commission (JAC). During his visit he had:

- gained some insight into the issues that Ministers were facing
- obtained feedback on the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) and her work programme. He was pleased to report on the support the C&AG received both personally and of her office
- discussed progress of the changes in the C&AG Law, implementation of the C&AG's audit recommendations and the Government's plans for the appointment of a new C&AG from 1 January 2027, when the current incumbent's tenure comes to an end
- expressed his gratitude to the C&AG, the Deputy C&AG and the FGA's assistance during his visit and for the opportunity to meet key members of the Government

The Board noted the Chair's update

25/15 Item 03: Minutes of the meeting held on 12 May 2025

The Board received and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 12 May 2025

25/16 Item 04: Risk register

The Board received a presentation highlighting the changes to the register since the last meeting highlighting key changes to the register since 12 May 2025.

The Board noted:

- that all risks had been reviewed by the CAG, DCAG & Finance and Governance Affiliate on 08 July 2025
- that all risks had now been categorized as Strategic or Operational
- the changes to the register and progress against improvement actions as set out in the notes column of the Register
- that there was is one new risk for the Board: BG09 Inadequate transition following the appointment of a new C&AG
- the changes made to individual inherent and residual risk scores as highlighted on the risk register and the change to overall residual risk rating in respect of:
    - Scrutiny and Accountability: R04 description changed to Non compliance with JAO Codes of Conduct and JAO policies. Residual risk and Aspirational risk rating changed from Amber to Green and that the aspirational risk had changed from Green to Amber. The FGA clarified that individual aspirational risk ratings reflected the risk appetite for each risk.
- the proposal to focus on the Board risks in this section and that key changes to operational risks will be reported under the C&AG JAO Strategy Update to the Board
- that Board risks will be reviewed to ensure they reflect all the Boards statutory responsibilities

The Board:

- **noted the changes made to the risk register since the last meeting**
- **agreed the proposed change to how risks are reported to the Board**
- **noted that Board focused risks are to be reviewed to ensure that they reflected the Boards statutory responsibilities**

25/17 **Item 05: Estimates of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General**

Board received an update on the actions taken since the last meeting on submitting the JAO Government Plan estimates for 2026-2029 and noted the correspondence between the C&AG, the Chair of the PAC and the Treasury Minister.

The Board noted that:

- the estimates were based on the tender awarded for the audit of the States of Jersey Accounts and that the C&AG was currently in negotiation with the successful tenderer regarding contractual terms
- the Chair of PAC had endorsed the estimates
- along with all other Accountable Officers the C&AG received a letter from the Treasury Minister requesting that all Government Plan estimates be reviewed and savings identified where possible. The C&AG's response highlighted that the current estimates were based on a new operating model which required the new C&AG Law to passed before it could be implemented
- as part of the Government Plan for 2026 to 2029, the estimates would be submitted to States Assembly for approval
- in response to a query raised by the Board, the C&AG confirm that should additional funding be required for any reason outside of the Government Plan cycle, this could be done via a Ministerial Decision, as has been done in the past

The Board:

- **noted the report**
- **confirmed its endorsement of the 2026-29 Estimates as submitted to the Chair of PAC**

25/18 Item 06: Update on annual Assessment of Board performance

The Board noted that, in accordance with the request at its meeting on 12 May 2025, the Board performance self-assessment questionnaire had been reviewed and proposed changes were put forward for its review.

The Board made the following observations

- statement 16 The Board receives regular updates on progress for all programmes and projects judged high risk by the office, should be updated to reflect that this refers to internal projects
- the proposal in relation to statement 17 The Board is provided with details of timely stakeholder feedback on the C&AG's work programme, should also reflect benefit realisation
- that there are differences between that achieving value for and implementing the C&AG's recommendations
- areas that have not received full agreement in the past have tended to be those where there is a lack of comparative performance information enabling a rounded assessment to be made. The C&AG proposed that she could report to the Board on how JAO costs compare to the costs of other similar agencies.
- the questions should reflect the remit of the Board. The Board noted that the questionnaire had been provided as part of the last independent review of Board performance. It acknowledged that a more fundamental review of the self-assessment statements should be undertaken as part of the next independent review
- that statement 33 The Board has considered and voiced any concerns relating to the culture of the Office is capable of being evidenced through the following means:
    - a direct line of report from the DC&AG and the FGA to the Board, should it be considered necessary
    - an annual meeting between the Board, the Deputy C&AG and the FGA
    - the Senior Independent Director's annual meetings with individual members of the Board

The Board

- **noted the report**
- **agreed that the Chair of the Board should approve further amendments to questionnaire prior to its circulation to the Board for completion**
- **agreed that a full review of the questionnaire should be undertaken as part of the next independent Board performance review**
- **requested that the C&AG periodically report to the Board on JAO costs compared with other similar agencies**
- **the meeting between the Board and the Deputy C&AG and the FGA should take place following its meeting in the Autumn**
- **the Senior Independent Director should arrange individual meetings with each member of the Board and feed back to the Chair nearer the end of the 2025**

Andrea Robinson, Executive Recruitment Business Partner from the Government of Jersey, joined the meeting

25/19 Item 07: Recruitment of the new C&AG

The C&AG reported to the Board that she had agreed to be an independent member of a panel for the recruitment of the next Auditor General of the Audit Wales. The recruitment timetable for this post is not dissimilar to the timetable for the recruitment of the C&AG for the States of Jersey.

The Board received a verbal update from Andrea Robinson on the Government of Jersey's (GoJ) plans for the recruitment of a new C&AG.

The Board noted that:

- the draft candidate brief had been approved by the Chair of the C&AG Board, the C&AG, the Chair of PAC, the Chair of the Jersey Appointments Commission and was expected to be approved shortly by the Chief Minister

- six recruitment agencies were approached to tender for the recruitment search, one declined, the remaining five responded. A range of tenders ranged prices had been received.
- the Chair of the C&AG and Andrea Robinson will independently assess the tenders using an assessment matrix. The assessment criteria is made up of 70 % qualitative measures and 30% based on cost
- all the recruitment agencies appeared content with the recruitment timetable
- risks around the time lag between recruitment and taking up office were discussed and acknowledged. This could be mitigated by pro-active communication within the intervening period
- both the recruitment agencies and prospective candidates had and would have access to Lynn Pamment for the purposes of being briefed on the role
- the recruitment process would involve a psychometric test for the shortlisted candidates
- the starting point and the development of interview questions, which tended to be competency based. All members of the C&AG Board were invited to make proposals for interview questions

The Board discussed the risks:

- relating to the stability of the existing JAO team during a change of C&AG. During the last recruitment this was addressed by asking the shortlisted candidates to present how they would address this risk upon taking up office.
- relating to handover arrangements more generally between the incoming and outgoing C&AG. The Board noted that this had been included on the risk register and that the DC&AG would be preparing a handover plan and would be involved in handover arrangements

The Board noted that the independence of the C&AG's role should be clear at all times and that there was no provision in law for two C&AG's to hold the post at any time.

The Board:

- **noted the report**
- **agreed to forward potential competency based interview questions to Andrea Robinson**

- **requested that candidates should be asked to outline how they would address the risk to the stability of the JAO team during a change in C&AG**

Andrea Robinson left the meeting

25/20 Item 08: Matters arising

The Board received a presentation on the progress made on matters arising including:

- the extension of the contract for the audit of the JAO accounts
- development of the Board skills matrix

The Board:

- **noted that all items are on track or are completed**
- **noted the contract for the audit of the Jersey Audit Office accounts had been extended to 2026, and that the current auditors would audit the accounts for the years ended 31 December 2025 and 31 December 2026.**
- **requested that a reminder be noted on future business to alert the Public Accounts Committee when a retender exercise for the audit of the JAO accounts is required**
- **discussed the proposed Board Skills Matrix and agreed that Board members should feedback to the FGA on any additional skills areas they would like to be included on the matrix**

25/21 **Item 09: Jersey Audit Office Strategy Update**

The Board received the following presentations on the activities being undertake in relation to each of the JAO's key strategic aims

High performing audit organisation

The Board received a presentation on the activities being undertaken to progress objectives in the following areas:

- Deliver and enhanced Audit Quality Framework
- Enhancement of JAO project management and use of technology, including peer review arrangements

The Board made the following observations:

- they endorsed the C&AG's approach to the contract negotiations for the States of Jersey audit
- they noted the agreement for an independent audit office to carry out peer reviews of JAO performance work that this is expected to highlight improvements that can be made in the documentation and approach
- they noted that the JAO participates in a Public Sector Audit Quality Group with other audit bodies and aims to collect information on different approaches to ensuring quality in performance work

The Board noted the report on activities relating to achieving a high performing audit organisation

Supporting effective scrutiny and accountability

- Work closely with the Public Accounts Committee (PAC)
- Work effectively with internal audit, audit committees and with other independent bodies and office holders
- Hold stakeholder events to share our findings and discuss best practice
- Hold outreach events to engage Islanders in the work of the JAO

The Board noted the report on activities relating to supporting effective scrutiny and accountability

Making a difference

- Make effective recommendations
- 2025 Performance Audit Plan
- Share good practice more proactively
- Implement our Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy
- Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the JAO in 2025, including:
    - Events schedule

The Board discussed and noted the report on activities relating to making a difference

Building a more resilient organization

- Support the Board of Governance to perform its role effectively, including
    - Management Accounts for the 5 months to May 2025
    - Project work programme
    - Target operating model
- Implement effective succession plans for the Chair of the Board of Governance and the C&AG as they reach the end of their terms of office
- Refresh policies and procedures including the service level agreement with the States of Jersey
- Support the drafting and implementation of an updated C&AG (Jersey) Law

The Board discussed the report and noted:

- that the C&AG did not have any current concerns about the overall budget position
- that the budgeting and monitoring of individual projects was a work in progress
- Affiliates are involved in the creation of project specifications

- the level of involvement in drafting reports varies as does the level of involvement required by the C&AG and / or Deputy C&AG to ensure the final quality of the published reports
- the proof-reading function for the Office has provided continuity between C&AGs
- policy and procedure work on data retention and data protection remains ongoing

The Board discussed the current position of the C&AG Law and noted the following:

- that the draft updated C&AG Law and Explanatory Note had been received and were included in this agenda for review and comment
- the C&AG's regulatory authority for the quality of audits undertaken of States owned and established entities remained within the Code of Audit Practice
- the complexities of the interplay between the Law and the Code of Audit Practice
- the impact of changing the Office to a corporation sole includes:
    - the Board of Governance being renamed as an advisory board. This does not change the responsibilities of the Board and does not change the substance of the current position of the Board.
    - does not impact on the C&AG's independence and it will regularize her ability to sign contracts on behalf of the Office

In response to a question from the Board, the C&AG confirmed that the C&AG is not a Crown appointment.

The Board:

- **noted the report on activities relating to Building a more resilient organization**
- **endorsed the C&AG's approach in progressing the C&AG Law**

25/22 Item 10: Items relating to future meetings

The Board received and considered:

- the forward look
- dates of future meetings

The Board discussed the next meeting which was to be on island. It observed that the most helpful activities of an on island visit included:

- observing a meeting PAC
- meetings with Ministers and Officers
- the opportunity to consider and discuss key matters in greater depth
- briefings and insights into the unique ways in which the States of Jersey operate

Representation at the PAC networking event on 07 November 2025 was discussed.

The Board:

- **noted the forward look schedule**
- **agreed the next meeting to be on island 15-16 October 2025**
- **noted that it would be helpful for Peter Pichler to represent the Board at the PAC networking event on 07 November 2025 as he resident in Jersey**

Andrea White and Helen Thompson left the meeting

25/23 Item 09: Jersey Audit Office Strategy Update

Building a more resilient organization - Target operating model

The Board received an update on the progress towards the target operating model.

A separate note of this item has been recorded by the C&AG.

The meeting closed at 16:50