

Minutes of the fourth Meeting of the Public Health Agency Governance and Audit Committee held at 10.00 am on Thursday 4 March 2010, in the Conference Room, PHA, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS

Present

Mrs J Erskine	Chair
Mr S Nicholl	Non-Executive Director

In Attendance

Ms M McMahon	Chair (PHA)
Mr P Cummings	Director of Finance, HSCB
Mr E McClean	Director of Operations
Mr M Pitt	Partner, Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Mrs C McKeown	Head of Internal Audit, BSO
Ms A Kane	National Audit Office
Miss R Taylor	Assistant Director Planning & Corporate Services
Mrs C McAuley	Secretariat

Apologies

Mr R Orr	Non-Executive Director
Mr T Mahaffy	Non-Executive Director

10/10 Chair's Business

The Chair welcomed Ms Mary McMahon, Chair of the PHA to the meeting.

10.1 Final Accounts Timetable 2009/10 (draft)

Mr Cummings updated members on the timetable, advising that while it was still extremely challenging some flexibility has now been built in.

A new date for the next Governance and Audit Committee and special board meeting to approve the final accounts will be arranged in line with the timetable.

10.2 Department Oversight of Arms Length Bodies – Core Information Requirements correspondence was tabled to members for information.

The Chair advised that the PHA will be complying with this.

Action

11/10 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January 2010 were agreed.

12/10 Matters arising

12.1 Lay membership

The Chair advised shortlisting will take place on Tuesday 9 March at 2 pm.

It was agreed that an Induction process should be established following recruitment of successful applicants.

Mr McClean
Mr Cummings

12.2 PHA Final Accounts Update

Mr Cummings advised members that the Annual Accounts schedule had been agreed with the DHSSPS.

12.3 NAO Audit Committee Self Assessment Checklist (GAS/03/10)

The Chair advised members that the National Audit Office Committee Self Assessment Checklist (GAC/01/10) had been submitted to the DHSSPS however no feedback has been received to date. The Self Assessment Checklist is included in G&AC papers for member's information.

13/10 Draft Action Plan arising from the Governance and Audit Committee's Self Assessment of Committee Effectiveness in January 2010 (GAC/04/10).

The Chair advised members she recently met with Ms C McKeown, Head of Internal Audit, BSO to discuss aspects of the completed self assessment and assist in drafting this action plan.

Given that the PHA was created in April 2009, the Governance and Audit Committee has not yet completed a full year's cycle of Committee business. Self assessing the Committee's effectiveness at this early stage has however guided the development of the action plan to ensure that the GAC meets best practice.

Following discussion members approved the Action Plan and agreed to keep as a standing agenda item.

Mrs McAuley

14/10 Governance

14.1 Information Governance Policies (GAC/05/10) for approval

Miss Taylor advised members the following policies were interim

whilst a fuller Information Governance Strategy would be developed over the coming months, with an associated training programme and mechanism for monitoring implementation.

The following policies were discussed:

- Freedom of Information Internal Review Procedures
- Guidance on Transferring Hard Copy Personal Information
- Records Management
- Data Protection / Confidentiality
- Retention and Disposal Schedule
- Data Breach Incident Response

It was agreed that that flowcharts would be developed for quick reference, easy reading and training purposes

Members approved the draft policies subject to a number of amendments.

Miss Taylor

14.2 Controls Assurance Standards

Miss Taylor advised members that Controls Assurance Standards were currently being self assessed. It is expected that all will be satisfactory with the possible exception of Records Management. Mr Cummings added that this is an extremely demanding standard and would have been very difficult to meet at this stage. Internal audit will be verifying those standards requiring external verification at the end of March.

14.3 Risk Register

Miss Taylor advised that the Interim Corporate Risk Register had been revised to include the risk relating to final accounts. It was noted that procurement of vaccines should be included in the risk register as while the PHA holds the budget for some vaccines it does not 'control' procurement.

Miss Taylor

Miss Taylor explained that the new Directorate Risk Registers had been developed in line with the paper brought to the June 2009 Governance and Audit Committee. Risks were assessed using the risk assessment tool which was developed from the legacy Boards' risk assessment tools and updated inline with the DHSSPS "An Assurance Framework: A Practical Guide for Boards of DHSSPS Arm's length Bodies" which all HSC organisations are required to comply with.

Members approved the risk assessment tool and the Directorate Risk Register subject to a few amendments.

A new corporate Risk Register will be developed based on the

Miss Taylor

Directorate Risk Registers and the 2010/11 Corporate Plan.

15/10 Internal Audit Update (GAC 07/10)

Ms McKeown updated members on the Internal Audit Progress Report 2009/10. She advised she would be meeting with Mr McClean and Miss Taylor to develop a work programme for 2010/11 and then with the Chair to agree it. The Workplan will be brought to the next Governance and Audit Committee.

Ms McKeown

16/10 External Auditors Plan for 2009/10 (GAC/08/10)

Mr Pitt gave members an overview of the External Auditor's 2009/10 Audit Plan for the PHA which included an analysis of key risks, audit strategy, reporting and audit timetable.

The Chair thanked Mr Pitt and members noted the document.

17/10 Any Other Business

Ms Kane informed members that "Statement on Internal Control: A Guide for Audit Committees" was available from the NAO. Ms Kane will forward to Miss Taylor for circulation to members.

Ms Kane

18/10 Date and time of next meeting

Tuesday 1 June at 11:00 am, Conference Room, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast.

Signed: _____ (Chair) Date: _____