

Title of Meeting	Meeting of the Public Health Agency Governance and Audit Committee
Date	28 February 2019 at 10.00am
Venue	Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

Present

- Mr Leslie Drew - Chair
- Mr John Patrick Clayton - Non-Executive Director
- Ms Deepa Mann-Kler - Non-Executive Director

In Attendance

- Mr Ed McClean - Interim Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Operations
- Miss Rosemary Taylor - Assistant Director, Planning and Operational Services
- Ms Jane Davidson - Head Accountant, HSCB
- Mr David Charles - Internal Audit, BSO
- Mr Brian Clerkin - ASM Chartered Accountants
- Mr Roger McCance - Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Ms Nicola Woods - Boardroom Apprentice
- Mr Robert Graham - Secretariat

Apologies

- Mr Joseph Stewart - Non-Executive Director
- Mr Paul Cummings - Director of Finance, HSCB

		Action
1/19	Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies	
1/19.1	Mr Drew welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1/19.2	Apologies were noted from Mr Joseph Stewart and Mr Paul Cummings.	
2/19	Item 2 - Declaration of Interests	
2/19.1	Mr Drew asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda. No interests were declared.	

3/19 Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 12 December 2018

3/19.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 12 December 2018 were **approved** as an accurate record of that meeting.

4/19 Item 4 – Matters Arising

58/18.7 Transformation Funding / Campaigns

4/19.1 Mr McClean confirmed that PHA was currently running a number of campaigns, but was still awaiting the outcome of discussions regarding the budget for 2019/20. In terms of Transformation funding, he said that Mr Cummings would be better placed to answer specific queries, and this could be picked up at the next PHA Board meeting.

5/19 Item 5 – Chair’s Business

5/19.1 The Chair advised that he had no specific issues to mention under Chair’s Business.

6/19 Item 6 – Corporate Governance

*Corporate Risk Register as at 31 December 2018
[GAC/01/02/19]*

6/19.1 Mr McClean updated members on the work being undertaken by the task and finish group looking at PHA’s procurement processes. He said that the group will be reporting to the Agency Management Team (AMT) shortly and then an update will be given to the PHA Board. He said that this had been a useful piece of work with input from HSCB, BSO and PHA staff.

6/19.2 Ms Mann-Kler asked about the decision to remove the risk regarding the reduction in the PHA budget. Mr McClean said that this was removed as PHA is on target to finish the year within budget, but as the budget for next year has not yet been confirmed, there is the possibility this risk may be placed back on the Register.

6/19.3 Ms Mann-Kler expressed concern about the issue of vacancies within the public health directorate (risk 45). Mr McClean advised that there are two strands of work ongoing. He said that the first of these relates to a piece of work the Director of Public Health is undertaking at the request of the Chief Medical Officer regarding public health input into pieces of work requested by the Department. He added that Dr Mairs is also finalising a paper looking at issues around the

recruitment of public health consultants which has been considered by AMT and is being updated on the back of a need to look at the potential impacts on other parts of the organisation, and any HR implications. Mr McClean added that Miss Taylor is also working on a paper looking at the wider picture and it is hoped that all of this work will be brought to the PHA Board for discussion. Ms Mann-Kler said that she was reassured that this work was taking place, but she asked if there was any risk to the public. Mr McClean said that none had been identified so far. Ms Mann-Kler asked if this was a challenge for other jurisdictions, or solely Northern Ireland. Mr McClean said that in Northern Ireland, it is more difficult to attract applicants, and the number of Public Health trainees coming through is smaller in proportion compared to other areas.

6/19.4 Mr Clayton queried the decision to remove the risk regarding the review of functions and reorganisation. Mr McClean said, similar to the risk around budgets, this risk may come back, but at this moment in time there are no specific risks pertaining to PHA, but any issues will be picked up at Director level.

6/19.5 Mr Drew asked when the outworking of the task and finish group regarding procurement will be brought to the PHA Board. Miss Taylor said that she hoped to bring a paper to a meeting of the Agency Management Team next week, and depending on AMT approval the paper will be brought to the Board in March or April.

6/19.6 Mr Drew asked about cyber security, and whether the PHA has to complete a Network Information Systems (NIS) questionnaire. Miss Taylor advised that she has now become a member of the HSC Cyber Security Programme Board, and that work is ongoing across HSC in respect of cyber security. She added that the NIS Regulations apply to the HSC Trusts, and not to the PHA or other regional HSC ALBS.

6/19.7 Members **approved** the Corporate Risk Register.

*Business Continuity Management revised Plan and Policy
[GAC/02/02/19]*

6/19.8 Miss Taylor advised that the PHA Business Continuity Plan is regularly kept up to date and an annual desktop exercise is undertaken. She said that this year's exercise concentrated on bad weather and a cyber security incident, and that the Plan was updated following the feedback from that exercise. She added that the Department are requiring that all HSC organisations' Business Continuity Plans are up to date in the

- context of EU Exit planning.
- 6/19.9 Mr Drew said that the Plan appeared to be robust and in line with best practice.
- 6/19.10 Ms Mann-Kler asked if the staff involved in the desktop exercise knew about the exercise. Miss Taylor explained that normally the exercise would be carried out with the Agency Management Team, but on this occasion it involved other senior staff from each directorate. She said that the staff would have known that they would be involved, but they would not have known the details of the scenario. Ms Mann-Kler asked if there were any surprises emanating from the exercise. Miss Taylor advised that she had not been actively involved in the exercise, but she understood that there had been good discussions and it helped increase awareness of business continuity planning.
- 6/19.11 Ms Mann-Kler asked how this fits in with the overall governance across the HSC. Miss Taylor said that this is PHA's Business Continuity Plan, but PHA does work closely with emergency planning colleagues in HSCB and BSO for any major issues and would also link with the Department as appropriate.
- 6/19.12 Members **approved** the Business Continuity Management Plan and Policy which will be brought to the PHA Board on 21 March for approval.
- Review of Standing Orders [GAC/03/02/19]*
- 6/19.13 Mr McClean presented the review of Standing Orders and explained that the changes following the review were largely minor ones. Ms Mann-Kler asked about the change in timeframe for the review of the Management Statement/Financial Memorandum and the inclusion of the Director of Human Resources in the membership of the Agency Management Team. Mr McClean said the change in the review period was a Departmental change, and that the addition of the Director of Human Resources was not a new development, but rather an omission which has been corrected.
- 6/19.14 Members **approved** the updated Standing Orders which will be brought to the PHA Board on 21 March for approval.
- Review of Standing Financial Instructions [GAC/04/02/19]*
- 6/19.15 Ms Davidson advised that the changes to the Standing Financial Instructions had been minor and reflected updated

- guidance.
- 6/19.16 Members **approved** the updated Standing Financial Instructions which will be brought to the PHA Board on 21 March for approval.
- Controls Assurance – Process for Providing Assurance for Year Ending 31 March 2019 [GAC/05/02/19]*
- 6/19.17 Miss Taylor reminded members that the previous Controls Assurance Standards process ceased on 31 March 2018, but there has not yet been clarity from the Department in terms of how assurances will be obtained in future. She said that there are different approaches across different policy leads and that to date three have developed new templates, in the areas of emergency planning, information management and research governance.
- 6/19.18 Miss Taylor said that for the remaining previous controls assurance standards that were applicable to PHA, PHA will self-assess against previous templates. Internal Audit are auditing the process this year. She said that it is hoped to have the process completed by the next Governance and Audit Committee meeting.
- 6/19.19 Mr Drew acknowledged that the new process is evolving. Mr Charles said that Internal Audit will carry out a review across all HSC organisations and will focus on two areas, where previously the focus had been on three or four areas. He advised that Internal Audit will be looking at the process of how assurances are provided.
- 6/19.20 Mr Clayton expressed surprise that there is no clarity in the approach to be taken, and he asked about timelines. Miss Taylor said that the timelines will be the same as previous years with the aim of being able to provide the necessary assurances for the draft Governance Statement which will be brought to the next meeting.
- 6/19.21 Members noted the process.
- 7/19 Item 7 – Internal Audit**
- Progress Report [GAC/06/02/19]*
- 7/19.1 Mr Charles said that there were no new audits to report on at this meeting, and that at the next meeting there will be a full report on all of the year's work.
- 7/19.2 Members noted the Internal Audit Progress Report.

Shared Services Update [GAC/07/02/19]

- 7/19.3 Mr Charles advised that a follow up audit of the payroll shared services had been carried out in September, but that the substantial audit is currently being undertaken. He said that an audit of recruitment shared services has resulted in a satisfactory level of assurance being given, which showed good progress as a previous audit had given an unacceptable level of assurance.
- 7/19.4 Mr Drew said that he looked forward to receiving the report on the latest audit of payroll shared services given the latest pay award had recently been processed. Ms Davidson said that she had been involved in the work around the recent pay award and commended the project planning that has gone into ensuring that this was a much smoother process than in previous years. She highlighted the improved communications with staff.
- 7/19.5 Members noted the Shared Services update.

8/19 Item 8 – External Audit – PHA Audit Strategy 2018-19 [PHA/08/02/19]

- 8/19.1 Mr McCance advised members that ASM have been awarded the contract to carry out the PHA audit, which will be led by Mr Clerkin. He invited Mr Clerkin to present the audit strategy.
- 8/19.2 Mr Clerkin said that he was delighted that ASM have been reappointed to carry out the audit and he took members through the strategy document. He highlighted the key risks and explained that the level of materiality has been set at 2%. He added that the audit approach will remain unchanged, with the Comptroller and Audit General signing off the overall audit opinion.
- 8/19.3 Mr Clerkin advised that one of the risks that will be looked at relates to confidence and supply funding. He added that fraud will also be reviewed as will shared services. He said that the timetable for the audit has been put together in liaison with HSCB finance and mirrors last year's timetable. He explained that this will be his last year as lead Director on the audit and that next year Christine Hagan will take on this role.
- 8/19.4 Mr Clayton said that he was pleased to see that there would be a focus on Transformation funding. He asked if there was an update on the potential retraction of funds. Mr McClean said that there is a lot of work ongoing with PHA leads reporting back to the Department on the status of a range of

projects and initiatives, and that this is a critical period, but he assured members that PHA has done everything required of it in terms of Transformation funding. He highlighted the recruitment off staff as being one of the main issues in terms of initiatives not being completed.

8/19.5 Members noted the External Audit Strategy.

9/19 Item 9 – Finance

*Timetable for the Annual Accounts and Report Process
2018/19 [GAC/09/02/19]*

9/19.1 Ms Davidson said that this timetable had been developed based on the previous year's timetable with similar dates to last year in terms of Governance and Audit Committee and PHA Board meetings.

9/19.2 Mr Clayton asked if there was going to be a change in terms of the format of the Annual Report as this had been suggested previously. Miss Taylor said that this year there will be an attempt to reduce duplication by not having the report structured along directorate lines, but rather by objectives in the PHA Business Plan. She conceded that there is not a lot of scope to change the format. Mr Drew said that it would be better to see a more joined up approach.

9/19.3 Members noted the timetable for the annual accounts and report process.

Fraud Liaison Officer Update Report

9/19.4 Miss Davidson advised that work has begun in terms of the National Fraud Initiative and that NFI have outlined their five key fraud-fighting strategies for the next four years.

9/19.5 Miss Davidson advised that there are no new cases of fraud, and that the one previous case that was ongoing is now closed from a PHA perspective.

9/19.6 Members noted the Fraud Liaison Officer update report.

**10/19 Item 10 – Information Governance Action Plan Update
[GAC/10/02/19]**

10/19.1 Miss Taylor informed members that the Information Governance Steering Group had met in January. She said that one of the main issues relates to training, but that reminders are sent regularly to Information Asset Owners to advise which staff have and have not completed the training.

- She advised that in the absence of regional training for SIRO and IAOs, PHA arranged its own training through the HSC Leadership Centre. She added that the Cyber Security Programme Board is discussing arranging specific regional training for SIROs.
- 10/19.2 Miss Taylor said that Personal Data Guardian (PDG) training takes place once a year, but the Acting Director of Public Health was unable to do the training, hence this action is rated as “red”. With regard to the information asset registers, she said that a workshop took place to help IAOs have a better understanding of these, however not all of the reviewed registers have been returned. She added that work on contracts and GDPR is progressing in conjunction with PALS and DLS.
- 10/19.3 Ms Mann-Kler noted that almost a third of the actions are rated as “amber” or “red”, and asked if there were any underlying concerns, and what could be done to encourage training. Miss Taylor advised that there has been an increase in the take-up, and reminders have been sent to staff and to IAOs. Ms Mann-Kler asked what the barriers are. Mr McClean said that as an organisation PHA has tried a range of approaches to get buy-in to the information governance agenda, but he noted that staff are busy. Mr Charles said that recent audits of information governance in other HSC organisation have highlighted similar issues in terms of staff training. Miss Taylor advised that the training is based on a regional programme, and the information governance element has been reduced from three modules to one module.
- 10/19.4 Members noted the Information Governance Action Plan update.
- 11/19 Item 11 – Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy and Guidance [GAC/11/02/19]**
- 11/19.1 Miss Taylor advised that under GDPR, there is a requirement that public authorities carry out a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for any project large or small that involves the collection of personal information, particularly where a type of processing is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals. She said that a lot of work has been done over the last year which has resulted in the development of a policy and guidance which takes staff through a series of steps to help them determine if a DPIA assessment is required, and there is also a flowchart and template. Miss Taylor acknowledged that this is a learning process and the documentation will be kept under review.

11/19.2 Ms Mann-Kler asked if the Governance and Audit Committee, or the PHA Board, will receive an annual report in terms of what assessments have been carried out. Miss Taylor said that it is proposed to bring a report to the Information Governance Steering Group (IGSG), but a report can be brought to GAC if requested. Ms Mann-Kler felt that it should, in the same way that annual reports on equality screenings and rural proofing will come to the Board.

11/19.3 Mr Clayton commented that this process feels similar to the requirements under Section 75, therefore the challenge is to get staff to understand their obligations. He asked about dissemination of the policy and associated templates. Miss Taylor said that this has been on the agenda of IGSG, a forum which is attended by all IAOs. She said that documentation will be put onto the Intranet, and that the cover sheet for papers coming to the Agency Management Team has been updated so that staff are reminded to consider whether a paper is required to have an equality screening, rural proofing or a DPIA. She added that staff have been coming forward asking if they are required to do a DPIA, so there is good awareness.

11/19.4 Members **approved** the Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy and Guidance which will be brought to the PHA Board on 21 March for approval.

12/19 Item 12 – Any Other Business

12/19.1 There was no other business.

13/19 Item 13 – Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 April 2019 at 10am

Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast.

Signed by Chair:

Leslie Drew

Date:

17 April 2019