

Minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee Meeting
8 December 2011, at 10:00am,
The Conference Room, Public Health Agency,
Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS

Present:

- Mrs J Erskine - Chair
- Mr T Mahaffy - Non Executive Director
- Mrs M Karp - Non Executive Director
- Mr R Orr - Non Executive Director
- Alderman P Porter - Non Executive Director

In Attendance:

- Mr E McClean - Director of Operations
- Ms R Taylor - AD Planning & Operational Services
- Mrs C McKeown - Internal Audit, BSO
- Mr M Pitt - Pricewaterhouse Coopers
- Mr P Cummings - Director of Finance, HSCB
- Mrs M Hinds - Director of Nursing
- Mr G Christie - Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Mrs C McAuley - Secretariat

Apologies:

- Mr S Boyd - Pricewaterhouse Coopers

Action

62/11 Declaration of Interest

None were declared.

63/11 Chair's Business

Mrs Erskine welcomed members and noted apologies. She introduced Mr Christie, NIAO, Alderman Paul Porter, Non Executive Director and Mrs Hinds, Director of Nursing.

Good Practise Audit Training Record

Mrs Erskine advised that it is good practice for GAC members to record relevant training. She circulated a form for recording this information and asked that members to complete this.

Members

DHSSPS Audit Chairs meeting

Mrs Erskine advised members she had attended a meeting of the HSC Audit Chairs Committee and DHSSPS on 29 November 2011. She said the frequency of the meetings was still to be agreed.

64/11 Minutes of the GAC Meeting held on 10 October 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 October were agreed.

65/11 Matters Arising

53/11 Emergency Preparedness GAC/25/10/11

No update available for today's meeting.

56/11 PHA 2010/11 Report to those charged with Governance GAC/28/10/11

This item has been placed on the agenda of the next PHA board meeting 15 December 2011.

66/11 PHA Corporate Risk Register (GAC/33/12/11)

Miss Taylor presented the Corporate Risk Register quarter ending September 2011.

Miss Taylor advised this quarter saw an extensive review of the register and she summarised the activity which included 2 new risks which had been added, 10 risks were removed, 2 of which were de-escalated to Directorate risk registers and 3 risks had their risk rating reduced from high to medium.

The report was approved.

67/11 PHA Risk Strategy and Policy (GAC/34/12/11)

Miss Taylor presented the Risk Strategy and Policy to members. She briefed members on the background for the strategy and policy and said the PHA was committed to developing a robust and effective system of risk management, and that this policy would be subject to regular revision as the risk management process is embedded throughout the PHA, and would be updated as necessary to reflect the changing environment.

The policy was approved.

68/11 PHA Whistleblowing Policy (GAC/35/12/11)

Miss Taylor presented the whistleblowing policy to members and advised members of the purpose and aims. Mrs Erskine had suggested an appendix flowchart be added.

The policy was approved subject to a review and minor amendment to the wording of the Introduction and Confidentiality sections.

R Taylor

69/11 Controls Assurance Update (GAC/36/12/11)

Miss Taylor presented an update to members on the controls assurance standards arrangements for 2011-12.

Miss Taylor said work is ongoing and this paper was to further elaborate on the process by providing a breakdown of self assessment teams and associated timescales. She advised the Senior Operations Manager would be co-ordinating the self assessment activity and that action plans would be reviewed and further developed to address gaps in compliance and evidence files will be created for standards subject to verification by internal audit.

70/11 Information Governance

Miss Taylor gave a verbal progress report to members which included; reporting mechanisms on FOI requests, the development of the e-learning programme for all staff which is being rolled out early January 2012, the establishment of the Records Management Working Group which are reviewing off site records and drafting a Records Management Strategy. The next Information Governance Steering Group is scheduled for 16 December 2011.

Mr McClean raised member's awareness to a PHA Adverse Incident relating to information governance and the possible theft of documents. He said correspondence was sent on 5 December 2011 to all PHA and HSCB staff from Mr John Compton, Chief Executive of the HSCB and agreed with Dr Eddie Rooney, as the incident relates to both organisations.

Mrs Erskine thanked Mr McClean for the update.

71/11 PHA Internal Audit Progress Report (GAC/37/12/11)
Mrs McKeown advised members that following a highly unusual set of circumstances whereby she had received additional information late yesterday afternoon she asked members if the internal audit progress report could be deferred to the next meeting of the GAC.

Members agreed to defer the report to the next meeting.

Mrs McKeown

72/11 Fraud Report (GAC/38/12/11)
Mr Cummings presented the fraud report November 2011 to members and gave a verbal update.

Mr Cummings said there were no new cases of actual or suspected fraud since the last report. The investigations on the audit commission data matches continue. Of the total of 43 matches identified 31 have been investigated by the fraud liaison officer and subsequently closed with no fraud having been identified. The remaining 11 cases are still in progress due to responses being awaited from other public sector bodies.

Members noted the report.

73/11 External Audit Progress Report (GAC/39/12/11)
Mr Cummings presented the PHA report November 2011 which highlights progress in addressing the recommendations in the External Audit Report 2010/11.

Members noted the report.

74/11 Safety and Quality HSC Framework
Mrs Hinds tabled a briefing paper on the Safety & Quality aspects of the HSC Framework document to members. She outlined the role, relationship, resourcing, commissioning and holding to account elements of the paper to members.

Mrs Hinds said the framework document detailed the roles and responsibilities of various organisations within the HSC and their relationship with each other. It also sets out the main priorities and objectives, matters for which the body is responsible the manner in which they discharge functions and conduct its working relationship with the DHSSPS and other bodies and the arrangements for providing the

DHSSPS with information in relation to holding at account HSC bodies. Mrs Hinds said she has sought clarification from the CMO and is working closely with the DHSSPS to develop a framework in respect of safety and quality.

Mrs Erskine thanked Mrs Hinds for the update. Mrs Hinds advised that Safety and Quality would be an agenda item at the next meeting of the PHA board 15 December 2011.

It was agreed that it is essential that appropriate reporting arrangements for Safety and Quality are established in the PHA and that the full PHA board should discuss and agree this.

Mrs Hinds

75/11 Update on SBNI (GAC/40/12/11)

Mr McClean presented an update on the SBNI consultation to members.

He explained the background, the development of regulations to further define the operations of SBNI, the summary of the content of the draft regulations the equality and human rights implications and the response to the consultation.

Members noted the update.

76/11 Date, time and venue of next meeting

16 February 2012 at 9:30am
Public Health Agency
The Conference Room
Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8HS

Signed: _____

Date: _____