

MINUTES

**Minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee
Thursday 5 December 2013 at 2 pm,
held in Conference Room, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast,
2nd Floor, Linenhall Street, Belfast, BT2 8HS**

PRESENT:

Mrs Julie Erskine	(Chair)
Mr Thomas Mahaffy	Non-Executive Director
Alderman Paul Porter	Non-Executive Director
Mr Brian Coulter	Non-Executive Director

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Edmond McClean	Director of Operations
Miss Rosemary Taylor	AD Planning & Operational Services
Mr Simon Christie	AD Finance, HSCB
Mr Gary Christie	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Ms Laura Allen	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Mrs Catherine McKeown	Internal Audit, BSO
Dr Gerry Waldron	PHA (For Item 12)
Mrs Cathy McAuley	Secretariat

APOLOGIES:

Mrs Miriam Karp	Non-Executive Director
Mr Owen Harkin	Director of Finance, HSCB
Ms Dorinnia Carville	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Mr Mark Anderson	Sponsor Branch DHSSPSNI

70/13 | Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

Mrs Erskine welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies. Mrs Erskine advised Mr Mahaffy would be slightly late for today's meeting.

71/13 | Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

Mrs Erskine asked if anyone had any interests to

declare relevant to any items on the agenda.

None were declared.

72/13 Item 3 – Chair’s Business

Mrs Erskine shared with members two documents for information as below:

- The Three Lines of Defense in Effective Risk Management and Control.
- Report on the NIFRS report of accounts 2011/12.

73/13 Item 4 – Minutes of the GAC Meeting held on 3 October 2013

Members agreed the minutes of the GAC meeting held on 3 October 2013 as an accurate record of the meeting.

74/13 Item 5 – Matters Arising

Item 9 - 64/13

Mr G Christie confirmed the word ‘draft’ was removed from the title.

75/13 Item 6.1 – Corporate Risk Register

Mr McClean presented the Corporate Risk Register as at 30 September 2013 for noting and summarised the report as follows;

One new ‘medium’ risk grading has been added;

- Implementation of new Information Management Controls Assurance Standard;

Two risks have been removed from the register;

- Risk 27 - Delays affecting PHA public information campaign programme
- Risk 28 - Staff capacity to procure services in line with Public Procurement Policy and the law

Members noted the Corporate Risk Register.

76/13

Item 6.2 – Gifts and Hospitality Register

Mr McClean presented the Gifts and Hospitality Register update for noting.

Members noted the update.

77/13

Item 6.3 – Controls Assurance Standards

Miss Taylor presented the Controls Assurance Standards: Independent verification of standards for 2013/14 for noting. She advised that two additional standards relevant to the PHA have been added to the three core standards;

- Environmental Cleanliness
- Management of Purchasing

Members noted the update.

78/13

Item 7 - Information Governance Action Plan Update

Miss Taylor updated members of the progress made regarding completing the information governance template. She said that no further guidance has been issued by the Department since the workshop on 23 September 2013.

Miss Taylor advised that a number of the standards were not applicable to the PHA (ie: those relating to patient systems).

Mrs McKeown said she appreciated that the scale of the new CAS was daunting and acknowledged the progress being made by the PHA.

Mrs Erskine said that this was positive news for the PHA, but asked members to be mindful that the PHA has only one Information Governance Manager and there is a large volume of work still to be undertaken by the PHA.

Mr Coulter asked if the new information management CAS had been placed on the Corporate Risk Register. Mrs Erskine confirmed this.

Miss Taylor added a further progress update would be brought to the next GAC meeting and that this item would remain on the agenda.

Members noted the update.

Mr Mahaffy arrived at 2.20pm.

79/13

Item 7.1 – FOI Internal Review Procedures

Miss Taylor presented the FOI Internal review procedure update to members for approval.

She advised the original policy had been updated to reflect the changes in;

- Paragraph (5. 5.1) - The expanded examples of queries received and the updating of address details for the Information Governance Manager
- Paragraph (5 5.2) - The role of the review panel.

Miss Taylor advised that 38 FOI's had been received from 1 January 2013 – 30 September 2013.

Alderman Porter asked if colleagues receive a list of the FOI's requested and by whom. Miss Taylor replied that a list was available which ranged from current and potential providers of services to students undertaking research projects.

Mr Coulter asked if there was an analysis of FOI's (ie: patterns or trends). Miss Taylor replied that it was a mixture of issues across all areas ie: ICT to Health Improvement.

Members approved the FOI Internal Review Procedures.

80/13

Item 8 – Internal Audit

81/13

Item 8.1 – Progress Report

Mrs McKeown presented the Internal Audit Progress Report to members for noting.

Mrs McKeown gave a summary of the progress report and advised the internal audit of Procurement & Contract Management had received a satisfactory level of assurance and that three priority two weaknesses were identified.

Mrs McKeown added the scope of the audit was to select a sample of expenditure exceeding £30K per annum (excluding voluntary organisations) and to test for effective procurement of the related expenditure.

Mrs McKeown advised the committee that all recommendations had been accepted by management.

Members noted the report.

82/13

Item 9.1 – Fraud Liaison Officer Update report

Mr S Christie gave a summary of the report which detailed one new case of suspected fraud reported and that this brought the live case list to two at 26 November 2013. He said the new case was in relation to information received from one of the Community and Voluntary organisations which is funded by the PHA.

Mr S Christie informed the committee that in respect of the NFI review to date that 117 cases (37.6%) had been investigated and that 107 of these were now closed. He noted that there are currently no concerns in respect of this.

Mr S Christie said that Fraud Awareness Month was launched by the Minister for Health on 2 October

2013, and a circular issued by the DHSSPS detailing the Counter Fraud responsibilities of all HSC employees would be issued to all staff.

Alderman Porter asked about the sharing of information across HSC organisations about potential fraud. Mr Christie confirmed there were regional working arrangements to ensure this.

Members noted the report.

83/13

Item 9.2 - PHA Progress Report on Implementation of recommendations of the report to those charged with governance –

Mr S Christie presented the progress report on the implementation of recommendations of the report to those charged with governance and summarised the report to members.

Members noted the report.

84/13

Item 9.3 – Progress report on post implementation issues (HRPTS) & (FPL)

Mr S Christie presented the progress report on post implementation issues (HRPTS) & (FPL) for noting. He said that progress was being made and that systems were embedded, however there had been some recent concerns regarding the scanning system but this was being addressed in an action plan agreed with HSCB finance.

Members expressed concerns about the performance management of the systems. Mr S Christie assured members that additional controls, including manual checking had been put in place and finance would continue to monitor the system. Mr S Christie, in response to questions from Mrs Erskine and Mr Coulter, confirmed that the risks associated with the new system were more reputational than financial. He also noted that the PHA accounts had not been qualified by external

audit. He also noted that prompt payment performance on all invoices will be kept under close review.

Members noted the progress report.

85/13 **Item 10 – Corporate Business Continuity Plan**

Miss Taylor presented the Corporate Business Continuity Plan to members for approval. She said the plan was kept under continuing review. She added a joint PHA/HSCB desktop exercise was held on 2 September 2013 which resulted in a number of areas being updated.

Members approved the Corporate Business Continuity Plan for PHA Board approval on 19 December 2013.

86/13 **Item 11 – SBNI Declaration of Assurance**

Mr McClean said the PHA is corporate host to the SBNI. He added the SBNI was formed in September 2012 under the Safeguarding Board NI Act 2011. He said the SBNI Declaration of Assurance was being brought to this committee for noting and related to those areas directly related to PHA that SBNI was adhering to set governance requirements.

Mr Coulter asked about the process for internal and external auditing. Mr McClean explained SBNI fell under PHA arrangements for those areas associated with 'corporate host' functions, other areas would fall to the DHSSPS Internal Audit.

Members noted the SBNI Declaration of Assurance.

87/13 **Item 12 – Draft Emergency Preparedness & Response Annual Report**

Mrs Erskine welcomed Dr Gerry Waldron to the meeting and invited him to update members on the draft Emergency Preparedness and Response

Annual Report.

Dr Waldron gave an overview of the report and the action plan for the next 12 months to manage identified risks and areas of concern raised during the responses to actual incidents (E-coli outbreak and the severe weather).

Mrs Erskine asked whether the learning outcomes could be included in the report. Dr Waldron said that this was an important comment and advised he would feed this back to colleagues.

Mr McClean highlighted the importance and benefits of close working relationships with local government councils and asked whether the transition to 11 councils was being discussed with health protection. Dr Waldron indicated that no formal engagement had incurred to date, and thanked Mr McClean for support by keeping this on the agenda with local government meetings.

88/13 Item 13 – Items to be brought to PHA Board

GAC/59/12/13 - Corporate Business Continuity Plan

R Taylor

89/13 Item 14 – Date of next meeting

Date:	6 February 2014
Time:	10:00 am
Venue:	PHA Conference Room 18 Ormeau Avenue Belfast BT2 8BS

Date: 6 February 2014

Signed: