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| Title of Meeting | Meeting of the Public Health Agency Governance and Audit Committee |
| Date | 28 February 2020 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
- Mr Joseph Stewart - Non-Executive Director

In Attendance

- Miss Rosemary Taylor - Assistant Director, Planning and Operational Services
- Ms Jane Davidson - Head Accountant, HSCB
- Mr David Charles - Internal Audit, BSO
- Ms Christine Hagan - ASM
- Mr Roger McCance - NIAO
- Mr Robert Graham - Secretariat

Apologies

- Mr Ed McClean - Interim Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Operations
- Mr Paul Cummings - Director of Finance, HSCB

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| 1/20 | Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies | |
| 1/20.1 | Mr Drew welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Mr Ed McClean and Mr Paul Cummings. | |
| 2/20 | Item 2 - Declaration of Interests | |
| 2/20.1 | Mr Drew asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda. No interests were declared. | |
| 3/20 | Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 9 December 2019 | |
| 3/20.1 | The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 December 2019 were approved as an accurate record of that meeting. | |

These minutes will be brought to the PHA Board on 19 March for noting.

4/20 Item 4 – Matters Arising

60/19.1 Family Nurse Partnership Audit

4/20.1 Mr Drew noted that an update on Family Nurse Partnership had been presented to the PHA Board at its meeting on 20 February and that he had raised some of the issues highlighted by the audit. He added that the Board had been advised that some of the recommendations had been implemented. Mr Charles advised that he had received verbal assurances regarding some of the recommendations, but that evidence would be sought as part of the follow up work.

4/20.2 Ms Mann-Kler said that it was interesting to note that many of the meetings were poorly attended because there were no issues that required to be addressed.

5/20 Item 5 – Chair’s Business

5/20.1 Mr Drew said that he had no Chair’s Business.

6/20 Item 6 – Corporate Governance

*Corporate Risk Register (as at 31 December 2019)
[GAC/01/02/20]*

6/20.1 Miss Taylor presented the updated Corporate Risk Register and advised that there had been some changes, with one new risk, relating to the loss of knowledge and continuity at senior management level, being added. She said that two risks had been removed, those relating to EU Exit and industrial action, and that the risk relating to staffing had been downgraded from “high” to “medium” as some of the vacant consultant posts had been filled.

6/20.2 Mr Stewart expressed concern that the risk relating to EU Exit has been removed given that an EU Exit with “no deal” remains a possibility. Mr Drew agreed saying that there is disagreement with the current trade negotiations. Miss Taylor said that this risk had been removed following advice from the Department of Health and in recognition of the work that had been done as part of the planning for a “no deal” exit. She added that PHA had been working closely with health protection colleagues in the Republic of Ireland regarding specific issues. She said that PHA will continue to monitor the situation and would report the Committee’s

- comments back to the Agency Management Team.
- 6/20.3 Ms Mann-Kler said that with regard to the new risk, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the Chief Executive post. Mr Drew said that it is essential that there is an individual in post on 1 April. Miss Taylor agreed to raise this with Mr McClean. Ms Mann-Kler also noted that the Chair's term of office is due to end in May. Miss Taylor said that as a recruitment exercise has not yet commenced, his term may be extended. She added that PHA has raised this with its sponsor branch. Mr Stewart said that from a governance point of view, the Permanent Secretary needs to appoint an Accounting Officer for 1 April. He added that even if this happens, there remains an issue in terms of loss of knowledge.
- 6/20.4 Mr Clayton sought an update on the PHA Intranet and asked about the impact of the site being down, even for a short period, especially during a situation like Coronavirus where it will be important to maintain good communication with staff. Miss Taylor said that she would check if the migration of data is still going ahead in March, but she stressed that this does not relate to the external website and that there are other means of communicating with staff. She said that if there is an issue with the migration of data, the process will be delayed.
- 6/20.5 Miss Taylor advised that following a recommendation from Internal Audit regarding Committee oversight of directorate risk registers, it is intended that these will be brought to the Committee on a rotational basis. Mr Stewart said that these need to be clearly timetabled into the agenda for the Committee. Mr Charles said that in other organisations where this happens, it is common for someone within the directorate to attend to present the register. Mr Drew advised that he had discussed this with Miss Taylor and that Directors would be asked to attend.
- 6/20.6 Members **APPROVED** the Corporate Risk Register.
- 7/20** **Item 7 – Internal Audit**
Progress Report [GAC/02/02/20]
- 7/20.1 Mr Charles advised that one audit has been completed since the last meeting of the Committee, one relating to ICT user behaviour. He said that this audit looked at the behaviour of PHA staff across different sites. He advised that PHA had received a satisfactory level of assurance, with no significant findings, but two key findings which related to the updating

and refresh of policies and procedures, and phishing awareness. He said that there needs to be robust controls on password management as some users have their passwords sets to never expire. He also highlighted issues relating to sharing of passwords, security awareness training and personal use of PHA e-mail addresses. He finished by saying that there were two recommendations, both of which were accepted by management. Mr Drew said that this was a good outcome.

7/20.2 Mr Stewart said that PHA needs to strike a balance between IT security and ease of access and that BSO needs to be involved in this conversation. He said that he was concerned about legacy issues as there does not seem to be a clear policy about how data is stored an issue particularly prevalent when individuals retire. He added that there is a risk about not knowing what information there is. Miss Taylor acknowledged that there are many different systems being used. Mr Drew said that this is an issue in every organisation and said that he is aware of a “joiners/movers/leavers” document within his own organisation which allows confirmation about that employee have carried out a data cleansing exercise. Miss Taylor said that PHA has a leavers checklist which should include information about manual and electronic files. She added that all electronic data should be stored on the central server, but going forward she would like a new records management system, but this should be done in conjunction with other HSC organisations. Mr Stewart said that there are policies, but he was not confident that they are being adhered to. Ms Mann-Kler added that she would like to see an action plan. Miss Taylor said that as a first step people need to be reminded of the guidance. Mr Drew said that this is important given the number of senior staff who are due to leave the organisation.

7/20.3 Ms Mann-Kler asked whether any of the issues highlighted in the audit could be incorporated into future training. Miss Taylor explained that the current training is a regional package and is being updated by the regional group. She said that if there are key messages that need to be reinforced, this could be done through other means, e.g. the Intranet or the weekly staff newsletter.

7/20.4 Mr Clayton asked whether there was merit in discussing with staff why particular habits are creeping in. He also asked whether PHA would foresee any issues in implementing the recommendations. Miss Taylor said that there should not be and that some of the regional policies are close to being finalised. In terms of phishing and password management,

- she said that PHA would work with BSO.
- 7/20.5 Ms Mann-Kler asked whether any learning could be fed back into the regional training. Miss Taylor said that this is being done by the auditors as there is a IT auditors who sits on the regional cyber security programme board. Mr Charles confirmed that there is an auditor who links with the Trusts. He added that the findings of this audit have been consistent across many HSC organisations so there are some consistent issued to be addressed.
- 7/20.6 Members noted the update from Internal Audit.
- 8/20 Item 8 – External Audit – PHA Audit Strategy 2019-20 [GAC/03/02/20]**
- 8/20.1 Mr McCance explained that the purpose of the PHA Audit Strategy is to outline the approach for undertaking the PHA audit in 2020. He advised that while NIAO is the statutory auditor, this audit will be sub-contracted to ASM. He invited Ms Hagan to take members through the strategy document.
- 8/20.2 Ms Hagan advised that no significant risks of material misstatement have been identified, and that materiality has been set at £1.4m. She outlined the approach to the audit saying that NIAO is independent, will manage personal data appropriately, will sub-contract the audit to ASM, and will liaise closely with Internal Audit. She said that two significant risks have been identified, misstatement and presumed risk of fraud. In terms of other risks, she highlighted confidence and supply funding, governance and management structures and use of shared services.
- 8/20.3 Ms Hagan said that she did not expect there to be any changes in terms of the layout of the accounts and she outlined the timetable for the completion of the audit.
- 8/20.4 Members noted the PHA Audit Strategy.
- 9/20 Item 9 – Finance**
- Timetable for the Annual Accounts and Report Process 2019/20 [GAC/04/02/20]*
- 9/20.1 Ms Davidson presented the proposed timetable for the preparation of the Annual Accounts and Report. She said that following receipt of the Circular it does not appear that there will need to be a special Board meeting in June in addition to the regular meeting.

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| 9/20.2 | Mr Clayton asked if there is any impact on the timetable now that the Assembly is back in place. Ms Davidson said that there would not be. Mr Drew noted that in recent years there has been work undertaken to improve the narrative and the layout of the Report. |
| 9/20.3 | Members noted the timetable for the Annual Accounts and Report process. |
| 10/20 | Item 10 – Information Governance |
| | <i>Records Management Policy [GAC/05/02/20]</i> |
| 10/20.1 | Miss Taylor advised that the Records Management policy has undergone its scheduled review and had been agreed at the recent meeting of the Information Governance Steering Group. She said that the main changes including an overhaul of the appendices, removing those that were no longer required. |
| 10/20.2 | Mr Stewart welcomed the fact that the policy has been shortened. Mr Drew commented that the principles of the policy are sound, but suggested that as an organisation PHA is data rich, but information poor and he queried whether PHA is making the best decisions it can based on the information available. Miss Taylor said that there are practical guidelines for staff which operate alongside this policy. Ms Mann-Kler said that if PHA wishes to treat data as an asset the value needs to be attributed to it and that a piece of work should be done in this area. Mr Drew agreed that PHA is only starting to realise the value of quality data. |
| 10/20.3 | Mr Clayton said that within the appendices, the title “administrative law” seemed very broad and should be reviewed. Miss Taylor agreed and undertook to review this. |
| 10/20.4 | The Committee APPROVED the Records Management Policy. <i>Information Governance Action Plan Update [GAC/06/02/20]</i> |
| 10/20.5 | Miss Taylor presented the updated Action Plan and said that training and awareness remains an ongoing issue. She said that there has been an improvement, and that Information Asset Owners (IAOs) are receiving lists of their staff who have not completed the training. In terms of Personal Data Guardian (PDG) training, she said that the new Director of Public Health will complete this training shortly. |
| 10/20.6 | Miss Taylor advised that a review of Information Asset |

Registers is currently taking place, and that PHA is meeting its obligations with regard to FOI, but is currently looking at the implications of GDPR vis-à-vis PHA contracts. Mr Clayton asked whether this was with provider organisations. Miss Taylor said that PHA is working with legal and that this relates to data flows.

10/20.7 Mr Stewart asked about the PDG training. Miss Taylor advised that this is regional training that takes place once annually. She advised that Ms Karen Braithwaite undertook the training last year as the Acting Director of Public Health was not available.

10/20.8 Members noted the Information Governance Action Plan update.

11/20 Item 11 – Any Other Business

11/20.1 There was no other business.

12/20 Item 12 – Details of Next Meeting

Thursday 23 April 2020 at 10am

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

Signed by Chair:

Joseph Stewart

Date: 20 May 2020