



**Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the Public Health Agency
Governance and Audit Committee
13 April 2011 at 10:30 am
Conference Room, PHA, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS.**

Present

Mrs J Erskine	Chair
Cllr T Mahaffy	Non Executive Director
Cllr S Nicholl	Non Executive Director
Mr R Orr	Non Executive Director

In Attendance

Mr E McClean	Director of Operations, PHA
Miss R Taylor	AD of Planning & Operational Services, PHA
Mr M Pitt	Partner, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (External Audit)
Mrs C McKeown	Head of Internal Audit, BSO
Mr D Charles	Deputy Head, Internal Audit, BSO
Mr B McCambridge	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Mr P Cummings	Director of Finance, HSCB
Mrs T McCague	
Mrs C McAuley	Secretariat

Apologies

Mrs M Karp	Non Executive Director
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14/11	Declaration of Interests	Action
	Mrs Erskine asked if anyone present had any interests to declare before the commencement of the meetings. None were declared.	
15/11	Chair's Business The Chair gave a verbal update on the following matter: ALB Audit Committee Chair's Event Notes and Presentation: (GAC/09/11)	

The minutes of the 1st meeting of the ALB Audit Committee Chairs' Event of 22 February 2010 had previously been circulated to GAC members for information.

ALB Audit Committee Chairs meetings are currently held 6 monthly; this may be subject to change to 3 monthly.

16/11 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 January 2011 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

17/11 Matters Arising

- HSCB/BSO Finance Working Group Update
Mr Cummings advised members that the HSCB/BSO Finance Working Group are now meeting on a daily basis.

Mr Cummings advised members that these meetings were not formally minuted, as they were at operational level. Mr McClean and Mr Cummings will communicate regularly via email to keep the PHA informed of progress.

Mr Cummings
Mr McClean

This was agreed.

- Audit Committee Self Assessment
(GAC/10/11)
Mrs Erskine thanked Miss Taylor and her team for the work which had been undertaken to complete the Audit Committee Self Assessment. This will be submitted to the DHSSPS by 15 April 2011. An action plan will be developed.

Miss Taylor

GAC approved the Self Assessment report.

Mr Orr raised a question relating to Additional Skills (Principle 3). In response to Mr Orr's question Mrs Erskine advised members the successful candidate had declined the offer of appointment as Joint HSCB/PHA Lay Advisor.

18/11 Corporate Governance
PHA Corporate Risk Register (GAC/11/11)

Miss Taylor presented the Corporate Risk Register as at 31 December 2010 for approval. She confirmed that 2 risks had been removed Working in Partnership and ECCH. These are now descalated to the relevant Directorate Risk Registers.

Mr Cummings advised members of the possible failure regarding accurate and timely delivery of PHA financial information from BSO finance. This has been placed on the risk register as a High risk grade.

Corporate Risk 10: Contract for Lifeline.
During discussion members agreed that this was less of a risk given the work that has been undertaken in respect of this contract over the past year. However Mrs Erskine raised a concern about the wider risk relating to funding voluntary and community organisations, with the need for appropriate controls and monitoring to ensure problems are identified and actioned at an early stage. She asked that Managers give appropriate consideration to including this in the next corporate risk register.

GAC also requested that an escalation policy and procedure in respect of funding to non HSC organisations be developed and presented to the PHA board in May or June.

Mr Pitt suggested to members that in keeping with good practise an additional page identifying emerging risks could be placed into the Corporate Risk Register.

Corporate Risk 5: Location
Mr Orr raised his concerns regarding the current PHA accommodation.

Mr McClean

Mr McClean advised a Strategic Outline Case had been completed and submitted and approved by the DHSSPS and that work was currently ongoing in developing an Outline Business Case which when completed will be submitted to the DHSSPS for approval.

GAC approved the Corporate Risk Register.

Controls Assurance Standards Update (**GAC/12/11**)
Miss Taylor presented an update on the process for the self assessment of all 15 controls assurance standards applicable to the PHA for the period 2010/11. She advised that PHA had worked closely with HSCB colleagues as a number of standards, including records management, finance and emergency planning, are closely aligned with HSCB activity.

For the year 2010/11 four of the standards (Risk management, Governance Financial Management and) are subject to verification by Internal Audit. It was noted that all are expected to achieve substantive compliance with the exception of Records Management.

GAC were asked to note progress to date on the Control Assurance agenda for PHA for the period 2010/11.

GAC noted the update.

20/11 Information Governance

Information Governance Action Plan Update
(**GAC/12/11**)

Miss Taylor advised members that Joan Farley had been offered and accepted the post of Governance Manager for the PHA and will be taking on Information Governance duties and responsibilities.

Miss Taylor circulated the Information Governance Action Plan and gave an update. She informed the committee that progress was still limited due

primarily to lack of staff but hoped that this would improve once the new Governance Manager has taken up post.

In light of the importance of information governance and the amount of work that is required with a small resource, Mr McClean asked if the committee could have the work plan for the year ahead.

Mrs Erskine welcomed this.

Miss Taylor agreed to take this forward and a plan for the year ahead will be brought to the next meeting of the GAC Committee.

Miss Taylor

Miss Taylor also informed the committee that progress on training in Information Governance had taken place during February and March for all staff.

GAC noted the report.

21/11 Internal Audit

Progress Report (GAC/13/11)

Mrs McKeown gave a progress report on the internal audit reports since the last GAC meeting.

GAC noted the report.

22/11 Draft Annual Report

Mr McClean presented the Draft PHA Annual Report 2010-11 to the committee. He thanked Gavin Bell for the tremendous work involved in producing the report.

GAC approved the report.

23/11 Standing Financial Instructions

Mr Cummings introduced Tracey McCaig to the meeting; Mrs McCaig gave the committee a verbal briefing on the SFI document. She said the SFI was a live document and therefore it will be kept under regular review.

GAC approved the report and this will now progress

Mr McClean

to the April PHA board meeting for approval.

24/11 Finance

Fraud Liaison Update (GAC/16/11)

Mr Cummings gave a verbal briefing of the report which detailed no new cases of actual or suspected fraud since the last report to the GAC committee. Existing case 1 has now been closed on the opinion of the Counter Fraud Service and case 2 is awaiting a decision by the PSNI.

Timetables for 2010-11 Final Accounts

Mr Cummings informed the committee that he had asked the DHSSPS to extend the deadline for the submission of accounts to the DHSSPS, unfortunately this suggestion was not possible.

Mr Cummings said that he recognised the significant pressure which has been put on staff and the sacrifices they will be making throughout the Easter period.

25/11 External Audit Strategy (GAC17/11)

Mr Pitt gave a verbal briefing on the External Audit Strategy report; he highlighted materiality, regularity and propriety, timetable and fees and key risks. The draft external audit report will be forwarded to PHA as early as possible prior to the next GAC meeting.

Mr Pitt

Mr Pitt advised the committee that the New NIAO Assignment Director was Denver Lynn.

Members approved the External Audit Strategy.

26/11 Health and Safety Policies

Miss Taylor gave a verbal briefing on 3 Health and Safety Policies, Health and Safety, Security and Fire Safety. She advised that a near miss incident policy was being developed in parallel with the HSCB and would be available in the next few months.

A number of comments were made in respect of

Miss Taylor

reporting to GAC and first aid liabilities. Miss Taylor agreed to follow these up.

Members approved the policies with the above amendment.

27/11 Any other business

Mrs Erskine tabled 2 documents to members for information;

- Payment Fraud and other Risks
- National Fraud Initiative – Notification of Fraud Cases

28/11 Date, time and venue of next meeting

Date: 3 June 2011

Time: 9:15 am

Venue: Conference Room
Public Health Agency
18 Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8HS

Signed by Chair _____

Date 3 June 2011