

Minutes of the fifth Meeting of the Public Health Agency Governance and Audit Committee held at 11:00 am, on Tuesday 1 June 2010, in the Conference Room, PHA, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast. BT2 8HS

Present

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

In Attendance

Mr P Cummings	Director of Finance, HSCB
Mr E McClean	Director of Operations
Miss R Taylor	Assistant Director Planning & Corporate Services
Mr S Boyd	Pricewaterhouse Coopers (External Auditor)
Mr N Gray	Director, Northern Ireland Audit Office
Mr S Christie	Assistant Director Finance, HSCB
Mrs J McCaw	Internal Audit, BSO
Mr D McAleese	Internal Audit, BSO
Mrs C McAuley	Secretariat

Apologies

Mr M Pitt	Partner, Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Cllr C Mulligan	Non-Executive Director

19/10 Chair's Business

The Chair drew members' attention to the following documents for information;

- Circular HSC(F) 11/2010 Internal Audit Arrangements – Relationships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies
- Circular HSC (F) 20/2010 Statement of Internal Control – additional guidance
- The National Audit Office The statement on Internal Control, A guide for Audit Committees.

Action

20/10 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 March 2010 were agreed subject to the following amendment;

List of Attendees

Ms A Kane, Audit Manager, NIAO.

21/10 Matters arising

12.1 Lay Membership

The Chair advised interviews were complete and the DHSSPS have been notified of the successful applicant.

The successful applicant will not be notified until the DHSSPS confirms approval.

12.2 Information Governance Policies

Miss Taylor advised members that amendments had been made to the interim policies as agreed at the previous meeting and these policies were now available on the PHA intranet.

22/10 Public Health Agency 2008/09 IFRS Shadow Financial Statements report to those charged with governance

Mr Cummings presented the paper IFRS Shadow Financial Statements of the PHA and advised this process was now completed. He advised the the results of the examination of these financial statements by NIAO had been satisfactory.

23/10 Action Plan arising from the Governance and Audit Committee's self assessment of committee effectiveness in January 2010

The Chair presented the action plan arising from the Governance and Audit Committee's self assessment of committee effectiveness in January 2010.

The chair advised that progress against the action plan work is ongoing and this item would remain of the agenda as a standing item.

The Chair will meet with Mr Cummings and Miss Taylor.

J Erskine

J Erskine
R Taylor
P Cummings

24/10 PHA Corporate Risk Register

Miss Taylor presented the draft of the new PHA Corporate Risk Register. This was developed from the interim corporate Risk Register and the directorate Risk Registers and has been approved by AMT.

Members approved the PHA Corporate Risk Register.

Miss Taylor advised that the directorate and Corporate Risk Registers will now be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

25/10 Controls Assurance Standards– End of year report

Miss Taylor presented the Controls Assurance Standards end of year report which detailed 22 standards, 15 of which were applicable to the PHA. She explained the DHSSPS requirement for 2009-10 is that HSC organisations achieve substantive compliance.

The PHA achieved a substantive level of compliance for all standards with the exception of Records Managements where a moderate level of compliance was achieved.

Miss Taylor explained that in addition, the DHSSPS determined that the following standards be subject to independent verification by Internal Audit.

- Financial Management
- Risk Management
- Governance
- Records Management
- Information Communication and Technology

Mr McClean highlighted the importance of Records Management illustrated by the high level of Assembly Questions received from the DHSSPS which required detailed information to be accessed within very tight timescales.

The Chair and members agreed recognition of the importance of compliance with Records Management was needed within the PHA and this must be reflected in adequate support within the structures of the PHA.

The Committee noted the position in respect of achieved PHA compliance with Controls Assurance Standards for 2009/10.

26/10 Internal Audit

Mrs McCaw presented the following internal audit reports on behalf of Mrs McKeown, Head of Internal Audit:

- Progress report to the Audit Committee
- Internal Audit Annual Report
- Draft Internal Audit Work Plan 2010/11

Mrs McCaw represented the progress report, including internal audit reports on Risk Management, Performance Management and ECCH and Information governance. It was noted that satisfactory level of assurance was given for all with the exception of limited assurance on information governance. An action plan will be developed to implement the recommendations.

Miss Taylor

The opinion of the head of Internal Audit in the Annual Report is that for the year ended 31 March 2010 there is a satisfactory system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives. However, limited assurance has been provided in respect of information governance. The internal audit work plan for 2010/11 was agreed with the caveat that the distribution of days across some of the audit areas may need to be revised.

Mrs McKeown

The Chair thanked the Internal Audit team for all their work in producing the reports.

27/10 Financial Accounts

Mr Cummings gave members an overview on the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Mr Cummings thanked Pricewaterhouse Coopers for their collaborative approach to the auditing of the PHA accounts. He advised it was a particularly challenging audit as they had to consolidate 4 legacy ledgers into 1.

Mr Cummings highlighted the key risk areas, accounts preparation; financial performance, security of data, reliance on third party organisations, new accounting requirements.

The Chair and members noted the PHA Financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010.

The PHA Financial accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010 will be signed at a special meeting of the PHA board following today's meeting.

28/10 External Auditor Report to those charged with governance

Mr Boyd presented the PHA External auditor report to those charged with governance for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Mr Boyd reported on key risks identified, the audit response and outcomes and conclusions of the report. The opinion of the external auditor is that the financial statements give a true and fair view; the financial statements have been properly prepared, the part of the remuneration report to be audited has been properly prepared and the information given in the Directors' report and Management commentary for the financial year is consistent with financial statements.

PHA and HSCB officers withdrew from the meeting for ten minutes to allow the GAC members confidential discussion with internal and external auditors.

Referring to page 23 of the report (item 5.9) it was agreed that the wording should be revised.

28/10 PHA Annual Report

Mr McClean presented the PHA annual report to members for information. This will be brought to the PHA board meeting for approval and signature.

29/10 GAC Annual Report

Miss Taylor presented the draft GAC Annual report to members for information.

30/10 Date and time of next meeting

It was agreed dates would be trawled to members as soon as possible.

J Erksine

Signed: _____

Date: _____