

**Minutes of the Ninth Meeting of the Public Health Agency  
Governance and Audit Committee  
3 June 2011 at 9:15 am  
Conference Room, PHA, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS.**

**Present**

Mrs J Erskine	Chair
Cllr T Mahaffy	Non Executive Director
Mrs M Karp	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 D Linn	Northern Ireland Audit Office
Mr P Cummings	Director of Finance, HSCB
Mr S Christie	AD of Finance, HSCB
Mrs C McAuley	Secretariat

29/11	Declaration of Interests	Action
	Mrs Erskine asked if anyone present had any interests to declare before the commencement of the meeting. None were declared.	
30/11	Chair's Business	
	The Chair advised members that Mr Stephen Nicholl's term as member of the PHA board has ended and he is no longer a member of the GAC Committee. The Chair conveyed her sincere thanks to Mr Nicholl for his contribution to the committee.	

The Chair conveyed her thanks to Mr Cummings and his team for the work undertaken during the Easter and May Day Bank Holiday period to finalise the year end accounts.

**31/11 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 April were agreed subject to one amendment on page 3 paragraph 3 'auctioned' should read 'actioned'.

**32/11 Matters Arising**

17/11 HSCB/BSO Finance Working Group

The Chair asked Mr Cummings if the above meetings would be continuing. Mr Cummings advised the meetings would not be continuing as a new monthly schedule regarding performance had been agreed with the new Director of Finance, BSO.

17/11 Audit Committee Self Assessment

The Chair advised members the Audit Committee Self Assessment had been submitted to the DHSSPS.

18/11 Corporate Governance – Escalation Policy

Miss Taylor advised members a draft escalation policy and procedure in respect of funding to non HSC organisations is currently being developed. Discussions are talking place with the Chair, Directors and Finance colleagues.

Miss Taylor

20/11 Information Governance

The Chair advised the Information Governance Action Plan Update was an agenda item at today's meeting.

**33/11 Corporate Governance  
PHA Corporate Risk Register (GAC/19/06/11)**

Miss Taylor presented the Corporate Risk Register as at 31 March 2011 for approval. She confirmed 3 risks had been removed and are now deescalated to the relevant Directorate Risk Registers.

Miss Taylor advised 5 new risks were identified and placed on the Corporate Risk Register. The provision of fundamental financial services to the PHA under Service Level agreement was one of the new risks added to the register.

In response to a comment referring to ensuring Business Continuity and Emergency Preparedness, Mr McClean agreed to liaise with the PHA regarding bringing a fuller update to board members.

Mr McClean

Mr Linn said he felt it was unusual to see a high number of high risks identified on a Corporate Risk Register. Mr McClean said he welcomed a discussion with Mr Linn on a shared view of methodology used to assess the risks.

Members approved the PHA Corporate Risk Register.

### **Controls Assurance Standard Report (GAC/21/06/11)**

Miss Taylor asked members to note progress for the year 2010/11 on the Controls Assurance agenda for the PHA.

Miss Taylor gave a summary on the Control Assurance Standard Report to members. Of the 22 controls assurance standards, 15 are applicable to the PHA. Four of these were verified by internal audit standards namely Financial Management, Governance, Risk Management and Emergency Planning. She said substantive compliance had been obtained in all but one, records management during this period.

Members noted the report.

### **34/11 Information Governance Action Plan**

Miss Taylor advised members that Joan Farley the new Information Governance Manager has now taken up post. Ms Farley is based in the PHA Armagh Office.

The Chair Suggested that Joan Farley be invited to attend the next meeting of the GAC Committee.

Miss Taylor

Miss Taylor tabled the PHA Information Governance Action Plan to members and gave a verbal update. She said the action plan addressed the recommendations from the Internal Audit report on Information Governance in the PHA up to March 2011 and the PHA Controls Assurance Standard on Records Management Assessment. Progress reports will be brought regularly to GAC.

Miss Taylor

Discussion was held on Freedom of Information requests and adhering to the set timescales given. Mr McClean agreed this would be discussed further at a future board meeting.

Members noted the action plan

**35/11 Internal Audit Progress Report (GAC/22/06/11)**

Mrs McKeown gave a progress report on the internal audit reports since the last GAC meeting including the follow up report on implementation of recommendations from earlier reports.

Members noted the report.

**36/11 Annual Report 2010/11 (GAC/23/06/11)**

Mrs McKeown gave a verbal update on the Head of Internal Audit's Annual report 2011/11 to members for noting.

Members noted the report.

**37/11 Internal Audit Workplan 2011/12 (GAC/24/06/11)**

Mrs McKeown presented the Internal Audit Workplan 2011/12 to members for approval and gave a verbal update.

Members approved the workplan.

**38/11 PHA Annual Report (GAC/25/06/11)**

Mr McClean presented the PHA Annual Report 2010/11 to members for recommendation for PHA board approval. Members recommended the report for board approval subject to minor amendments being made to the figures in the middle column of the table on page 51.

Mr McClean

**39/11 Finance  
Fraud Liaison Report (GAC/27/06/11)(for noting)**

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.

**Final Accounts for year ended 31 March 2011.  
(GAC/27/06/11)(for approval)**

Mr Cummings presented the PHA Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2011 and summarised the report to members.

Members recommended the report for PHA board approval.

**40/11 Statement on Internal Control (GAC/28/06/11)(for approval)**

Mr McClean presented the Statement on Internal Control to members for recommendation for PHA board approval.

Members recommended the report for approval to the PHA board subject to minor amendments on page 8 and 9, as requested by NIAO and Internal Audit.

Mr McClean

**41/11 External Audit  
External Auditor Report to those charged with Governance (GAC/29/06/11)(for Noting)**

Mr Pitt presented the External Auditor Report to those charged with Governance to members for noting and gave a verbal summary of the report including the key risks identified in the Audit Strategy.

Key Risk 3 – Reliance on Third Party Organisations which was given a Priority 1 Rating.

During discussion it was noted that the PHA is significantly reliant on BSO in relation to its transactional processing the audit procedure did highlight a number of control weaknesses.

Mr Pitt advised members that the report recommends that the GAC provides an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements and on the regularity of the PHA.

Members noted the report.

**42/11 Annual meeting with Auditors (External and Internal) – with officers present.**

Officers left the room for this part of the meeting.

**43/11 Any other business**

No other business.

**44/11 Date and time of next meeting**

10 October at 10:00 am  
Conference Room  
18 Ormeau Avenue  
Belfast  
BT2 8HS