

Title of Meeting	164 th Meeting of the Public Health Agency Board
Date	16 May 2024 at 1.30pm
Venue	Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

Present

Mr Colin Coffey	- Chair
Mr Aidan Dawson	- Chief Executive
Dr Joanne McClean	- Director of Public Health
Ms Heather Reid	- Interim Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals
Ms Leah Scott	- Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Mr Craig Blaney	- Non-Executive Director
Mr John Patrick Clayton	- Non-Executive Director
Ms Anne Henderson	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Robert Irvine	- Non-Executive Director
Professor Nichola Rooney	- Non-Executive Director
Mr Joseph Stewart	- Non-Executive Director

In Attendance

Dr Aideen Keaney	- Director of Quality Improvement
Mr Robert Graham	- Secretariat

Apologies

Mr Brendan Whittle	- Director of Community Care, SPPG
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54/24 | Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

54/24.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Mr Brendan Whittle.

54/24.2 The Chair undertook to write to SPPG concerning the attendance of SPPG officers at future PHA Board meetings (**Action 1 – Chair**).

55/24 | Item 2 – Declaration of Interests

55/24.1 The Chair asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda.

55/24.2 Mr Clayton declared an interest in relation to Public Inquiries as Unison is engaging with the Inquiries.

55/24.3 The Chair advised that there will be a discussion later in the meeting regarding avian flu and felt it appropriate that he should declare an interest given his role as Chair of the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and Mr Stewart also declared an interest given his role as Chair of the Livestock and Meat Commission.

56/24 Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 18 April 2024

56/24.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 April 2024 were **APPROVED** as an accurate record of that meeting.

56/24.2 The Chair advised that he had discussed the issue of recruitment of public health consultants with the Department and that the Chief Executive also raised this at the Ground Clearing meeting on Wednesday afternoon. Mr Clayton asked if formal correspondence was going to be sent to the Department, but the Chief Executive advised that this would not be required given the issue was discussed yesterday and will also be raised at the Accountability Review meeting in June. He added that Dr McClean had prepared a paper on staffing issues and it was agreed that this would be shared with members (**Action 2 – Secretariat**).

57/24 Item 4 – Actions from Previous Meeting / Matters Arising

57/24.1 An action log from the previous meeting was distributed in advance of the meeting.

57/24.2 The Chair advised that for action 1, the Procurement Plan was discussed at the Planning, Performance and Resources (PPR) Committee, and will continue to be an area of focus.

57/24.3 The Chief Executive advised that the issues around Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs) and safety and quality were flagged with the Department at the Ground Clearing meeting as part of a discussion on the HSC Framework Document, and these were noted.

57/24.4 Professor Rooney said that she welcomed the fact that a paper outlining the timeline for the Corporate Strategy had been brought to the PPR Committee and suggested that there should be regular updates at the Board (**Action 3 – Ms Scott**).

58/24 Item 5 – Reshape and Refresh Programme

58/24.1 The Chair reported that he was content with progress on the Reshape and Refresh Programme following the last Programme Board meeting. He said that there are three key dates for the Agency Management Team (AMT) to meet. He advised that by the end of June, the outcomes

of the assessment of the grading for the new Director posts should be known, and then by the end of September the Deputy Directors should all be in post, and by June 2025 the Programme will be completed with the new structures in place.

58/24.2 Mr Blaney noted that there was discussion about a staff celebration event and the Chair echoed this. The Chair said that there is a need to have a Corporate Plan in place by then. He added that at the next Board meeting, Ms Gráinne Cushley will be attending and he expected that there will be a presentation outlining how all of the recommendations from the EY report that were accepted and signed off have been progressed.

58/24.3 Mr Stewart said that he would like to also see a gap analysis which shows how the outputs of the Hussey Review have also been implemented as that review was the instigator for the Reshape and Refresh Programme. Professor Rooney advised that this was discussed at the Programme Board meeting, and consideration was also given to what recommendations may come out of Module 1 of the COVID Inquiry. Mr Clayton commented that it would be helpful to ensure that Trade Union involvement throughout this process as well as for the development of the Corporate Plan.

58/24.4 The Chief Executive advised that he has regular meetings with Ms Cushley and at the next staff engagement event on the first Tuesday of the month, he would like to do an update on the COVID Inquiry and how it links to the Hussey Review and the Reshape and Refresh Programme. He said that it is important that staff see how this links together. He added that there will be a series of engagements with staff at the end of June and he encouraged Non-Executives to attend (**Action 4 – Chief Executive**).

59/24 Item 6 – Reports of New or Emerging Risks

59/24.1 The Chief Executive advised that the biggest risk for PHA continues to be around the recruitment of public health consultants.

59/24.2 The Chief Executive invited Dr McClean to give members an update on H5N1.

59/24.3 Dr McClean explained that H5N1, “avian flu”, whilst primarily a disease in birds, would be a concern if it were to evolve and spread to humans and that it has a mortality rate. She advised that UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency) has set up groups, which PHA is contributing to, while PHA is also establishing contingency plans with SPPG and the Department. She stated that the overall risk of human transmission remains low, but there is a need to be prepared and to be clear on responsibilities.

59/24.4 Mr Stewart asked how PHA would handle media interest. The Chair

pointed out that the biggest risk is for DAERA and the Chief Executive added that this would be a Government issue that health would not be leading on, but PHA has to be prepared from a public health perspective.

- 59/24.5 Mr Clayton noted that PHA will liaise with SPPG and the Department, but asked about capacity issues within health protection. In terms of the multi-agency response, he asked if there is clarity in terms of who is taking the lead. The Chief Executive replied that both of these issues were discussed at the Ground Clearing meeting yesterday. He reiterated that PHA will work on its responsibilities from a public health perspective, but it is the Department and DAERA who would lead. The Chair said that it is important that PHA can evidence its preparedness, and Dr McClean advised that there is already a pandemic preparedness group, but noted that PHA may have to pause other work.
- 59/24.6 Professor Rooney noted the reference PHA possibly pausing work and asked how PHA can raise concerns about what work it would have to pause. Dr McClean said that services would not be stopped, but PHA would have to look at its business continuity plan. Professor Rooney noted from the Performance Management Report that work in areas such as cancer and suicide prevention is stalled due to staffing shortages so sought assurance about other work. Dr McClean reiterated that this is where business continuity is important. The Chief Executive said that he hoped that PHA had learnt from COVID and that staff understand that they have 2 roles, and need to step up into a different role for business continuity arrangements. Professor Rooney said that she was querying if there was a way of bringing in other staff.
- 59/24.7 The Chair said that given his declared interest in this area with his role in AFBI, he asked that Ms Anne Henderson would become the nominated Board member for contact in the event of any management decisions needing to be communicated to the Board.

60/24 Item 7 – Raising Concerns

- 60/24.1 The Chief Executive reported that there were no new concerns to be brought to the attention of the Board. He advised that RQIA is hosting a round table event on the theme of raising concerns and that he would be in attendance.
- 60/24.2 Mr Clayton noted that PHA has a policy on raising concerns and that previously Ms Deepa Mann-Kler was the nominated contact. The Chair asked if he could be sent a copy of the policy so as to determine a new contact (**Action 5 – Secretariat**).

61/24 | Item 8 – Updates from Board Committees

Governance and Audit Committee

- 61/24.1 The Chair advised that while PHA had received an overall satisfactory level of assurance from Internal Audit, he had made it clear to Mr Peter Toogood that the Board was not comfortable with the number of limited assurances that PHA had received and that he would like to see these areas dealt with. The Chief Executive added that, at the Ground Clearing meeting, Directors faced questions on those areas as well. He noted that work has progressed to address the recommendations around complaints and Ms Scott advised that she would be taking work forward in the areas of procurement and cyber security.

Remuneration Committee

- 61/24.2 The Chair advised that the Remuneration Committee has not met since the last Board meeting.

Planning, Performance and Resources Committee [PHA/01/05/24]

- 61/24.3 The Chair reported that the PPR Committee had considered the Performance Management Report which will be discussed later in the meeting.
- 61/24.4 The Chair said that it is important that the Executive Directors attend PPR meetings to answer queries on specific issues and that the timing of meetings links with operational meetings. He noted that the PHA budget is due to be discussed at the next meeting. He commented that some of the areas where PHA had received a limited assurance were areas where Non-Executives had previously expressed concerns.
- 61/24.5 Ms Henderson advised that there was a paper produced on the development of the Corporate Plan and that there is a need to commit the necessary resources. She added that there had been a discussion around the length of the Plan and that it should be a 5-year Plan. The Chair advised that he had discussed with Mr Toogood the need for PHA to be in control of its own destiny and this view had been respected.
- 61/24.6 The Chair asked that when the Financial Plan is developed, there should be a high-level outline of the cost of the Reshape and Refresh Programme. Ms Scott advised that this will be included, but noted that there will be a marginal impact in 2024/25. The Chair said that the importance of PHA having its own Director of Finance should not be underestimated. He added that it is important that the PPR Committee functions effectively. He noted that there need to be a discussion around the delegation of authority to the Committee to approve certain items (**Action 6 – Chair**).

Screening Programme Board

61/24.7 The Chair noted that the Screening Programme Board has not met since the last Board meeting.

Procurement Board

61/24.8 The Chair noted that the Procurement Board has not met since the last Board meeting.

Information Governance Steering Group

61/24.9 The Chair noted that the that the Information Governance Steering Group has not met since the last Board meeting.

Public Inquiries Programme Board

61/24.10 Professor Rooney advised that she had not been able to attend the last meeting of the Public Inquiries Programme Board but that the main update is that Dr McClean had made her appearance at the Inquiry which is currently in Northern Ireland.

61/24.11 The Chair asked about the morale of staff. Dr McClean said that she was very conscious of the criticism being directed at PHA, for example around death data, but noted that these were not areas of PHA responsibility. She added that PHA was not responsible for testing. The Chief Executive said that he hoped that the Board members had found the updates helpful.

61/24.12 Professor Rooney commended Dr McClean for her work and noted that the Counsel had corrected a witness when an incorrect statement had been made about PHA's role. She asked whether Dr McClean will be submitting any additional information to the Inquiry and Dr McClean replied that she will be submitting some correspondence regarding care homes.

61/24.13 Members had a brief discussion regarding the Inquiry's view that there was a strained relationship during the pandemic between the PHA and the Department with Non-Executives suggesting that they were not being fully apprised of all the issues during the pandemic. The Chair felt that there was learning for the Board to be taken from the Inquiry. The Chief Executive advised that he felt that relationships had improved since the period the Inquiry was referring to.

61/24.14 Dr McClean reiterated that the two key issues from the Inquiry were around death data and the notion of 500 tracers.

62/24 Item 9 – Operational Updates

Chief Executive's and Executive Directors' Report

- 62/24.1 The Chief Executive said that he would like a representative from the Board to sit on the new Vaccination Programme Board. Ms Henderson noted that this area is one which is rated “red” in the Performance Management Report. The Chair agreed to create a matrix of the different groups that Non-Executives currently sit on (**Action 7 – Chair**). He added that there should be a new Non-Executive Director in post by September/October. Mr Clayton suggested that the need to have a new Non-Executive should be raised at the Accountability Review meeting (**Action 8 – Chair**).
- 62/24.2 The Chief Executive noted that there was a campaign for the MMR vaccine and that he had asked if there was any data to suggest if this had an impact on uptake. Dr McClean advised that not all of the data is available, but from the data on the Vaccine Information System, it was clear to see that the campaign had resulted in an improved uptake in the vaccine.
- 62/24.3 Ms Henderson noted that PHA has written to the Department regarding campaigns and suggested that members should see that. The Chief Executive advised that Mr Stephen Wilson is putting together a paper on campaigns and this will be raised at the Accountability Review meeting.
- 62/24.4 Mr Clayton asked about the section on workforce issues, and the Chief Executive explained that this relates to public health consultants.
- 62/24.5 Ms Henderson asked about the cervical screening review and if PHA is content with the progress made and the aim to have this completed by the summer. She also asked about the invasive cancer audit.
- 62/24.6 Dr McClean that PHA is overseeing the cervical screening audit along with the Department and that it is progressing well with over 77% uptake. She anticipated that this would increase to 80% by next week and would be completed by the summer. With regard to the invasive cancer audit, she explained that Trusts have fallen behind for a range of reasons and so they have been asked for plans for how they will catch up. She said she believed that the backlogs have now been cleared.
- 62/24.7 Dr McClean advised that the reconfiguration of laboratories remains a work in progress and that NHS England has been asked to carry out a review, but PHA is awaiting confirmation this can be undertaken as NHS England is currently undergoing a reorganisation.
- 62/24.8 Ms Henderson said that the Cervical Cytology Review reports are a useful governance tool and added that PHA's role in this area needs to be clearly documented as it appears PHA is carrying out a lot of the work.

- 62/24.9 Dr McClean explained that invasive cancer audits have been in place for many years but have become more formalised in recent years and that PHA's role is to identify where opportunities may have been missed. She said that the focus is on patient safety and encouraging Trusts to carry out audits. Ms Henderson asked if PHA liaises with the Department but Dr McClean explained that PHA would link with Trust Medical Directors. Dr McClean advised that there are audit guidelines which date back to 2014, but these are applied differently across Trusts. Ms Henderson asked if RQIA has a role in this area as the Department needs to be assured that PHA is carrying out its responsibilities. Dr McClean advised that PHA is in close contact with the Department. She said that there is a backlog in audit, and that there are staffing issues for both PHA and the Trusts, but once the backlog has cleared there will be a better process. She added that the overall responsibility for safety and quality lies with the Trusts.
- 62/24.10 Mr Clayton noted that PHA does not have the powers of a regulator so he asked what PHA can do with regard to quality assurance. He suggested that this could be teased out as part of the review by NHS England. The Chair asked what outcome PHA needs from this process and what assurance it needs. Dr McClean advised that PHA needs to have a peer evaluation carried out of its quality assurance processes and the current proposal is that this is carried out by NHS England.
- 62/24.11 Mr Stewart said that, driven by the current financial situation, and staffing vacancies, the Board needs to address what PHA's business is and to ensure that PHA is carrying out its statutory functions. He added that this is linked to the confusing situation where it is impossible to understand the different roles of PHA, SPPG and the Department. The Chief Executive agreed and said that this is why he has pushed with the Department to get PHA's Partnership Agreement finalised and the HSC Framework Document updated. He said that PHA has sent back extensive comments on the Framework Document and when the next iteration is shared with PHA, it will be shared with Board members.
- 62/24.12 Professor Rooney noted the update on prison health but said that cognisance needs to be taken about the lack of psychology expertise in PHA. Ms Reid agreed and noted that one third of prisoners are currently on remand and they would be the most vulnerable. She said that this is a big area of work and psychological support needs to be included.
- 62/24.13 The Chief Executive outlined the proposed pairings for the next phase of the Board "buddy" programme. It was proposed that Ms Scott would work with Professor Rooney; Dr McClean with Ms Henderson; Ms Reid with Mr Stewart and Mr Irvine; Dr Keaney with Mr Blaney; and Mr Clayton would work with Mr Stephen Wilson.
- 62/24.14 The Chair said that the aim of this initiative is for both parties to learn from each other. He suggested that this should run for a number of months and then be reviewed. He asked Non-Executives to engage as

much as possible.

Finance Report [PHA/02/05/24]

- 62/24.15 Ms Scott advised that the Finance Report closes out the current financial year. She reminded members that PHA began the year with a deficit of £650k as well as £5.3m of savings. She advised that PHA received some additional allocations and that through collaboration with the Department, PHA ended the year with a small deficit of £80k. She said that the Report sets out a more detailed analysis of the figures and that she was pleased with the outturn. She added that focus is now on the 2024/25 budget.
- 62/24.16 The Chair said that he had asked for a meeting to be able to better understand the budget, and that he and Ms Henderson had had a useful discussion with Ms Scott and Mr Lindsay Stead. He noted that there will be challenges, but he wanted to be clear in terms of what the assumptions are, and what the challenges are. He added that he had given Mr Toogood an assurance that PHA would have a balanced budget.
- 62/24.17 Mr Clayton noted that the budget is flat cash, but sought clarity on how that impacts on campaigns. Ms Scott explained that there is a directive from the Department that campaigns are paused. The Chief Executive added that this is Government-wide. Mr Stewart commented that he was surprised at this as he is aware of a wide campaign being undertaken around EU agricultural policy. The Chief Executive suggested that some Departments may have exceptions.
- 62/24.18 Ms Henderson asked if PHA is planning any other campaigns apart from vaccinations. The Chair said that he is content to make representation from PHA on this once PHA has clarity on its budget. Professor Rooney commented that a blanket ban on advertising makes no sense and gave the example of advance care planning, where there is a good rationale for a campaign. She noted that going forward the budget will support the new directorate structure and there may be some slippage. Ms Scott advised that she is starting to consider whether the budget sits with Directors, or with strategic teams. She added that it is important that the budget reflects the needs of decision makers. Mr Blaney commented that the detriment of not doing a campaign will not be seen now, but possibly in 5/10/20 years' time.
- 62/24.19 Mr Stewart advised that he and Mr Blaney had represented the PHA at the Balmoral Show yesterday and said that there should be engagement with the Minister. The Chair said that he has asked for a meeting with him. He added that PHA's new Sponsor lead, Mr Toogood, also understands the importance of public health. He said that Local Council Chief Executives are also happy to assist PHA to get its messages out.
- 62/24.20 Mr Clayton noted that there is no planned uplift for pay and price for

2024/25, but that PHA is normally resourced to give uplifts if there is an increase in the national living wage, or the real living wage as that is Executive policy. He said that this will need factored into procurement exercises going forward. Ms Scott advised that any increases in pay are funded centrally and historically this would also have applied to contracts. Mr Clayton said that he was thinking about organisations that PHA already has contracts with and it may not be resourced to apply uplifts to them. Mr Irvine advised that he has come across this issue before and that the guidance states that organisations “should” pay the living wage rather than “must” pay, so it is not enforceable. Mr Clayton replied that this is a Department of Finance instruction. Ms Scott suggested that this could be discussed at the PPR Committee.

62/24.21 The Board noted the Finance Report.

63/24 Item 10 – Complaints Report [PHA/03/05/24]

63/24.1 The Chief Executive advised that, following an Internal Audit recommendation, PHA has completed an Annual Report on complaints, a report that should have been compiled previously. He noted that there is a small number of complaints and some learning has been included in the Report.

63/24.2 The Board **APPROVED** the Complaints Report.

64/24 Item 11 – Performance Management Report [PHA/04/05/24]

64/24.1 Ms Scott presented the final Report for 2023/24 and said that at the year-end, 7 actions were rated “red”, 7 were rated “amber” and 23 were rated “green”. She noted that the overriding caveat to most of those actions rated “amber” or “red” relates to resources. The Chair advised that members of the PPR Committee had considered this Report.

64/24.2 Ms Henderson said that there is a need for fewer actions, and fewer KPIs and that the information here will form part of the Annual Report. She noted that one of the actions rated “red” relates to a cancer prevention strategy and asked if PHA will get the resources that it needs. Dr McClean said that the recommendation is that PHA should continue to do what it is doing and bring a strategic focus to this work. She explained that there is a reorganisation going on within Health Improvement which will allow for a better focus on this work.

64/24.3 Mr Clayton asks how PHA keeps track of those actions that are rated “red” at the end of the year and how these are taken forward. He suggested that they may go into directorate business plans. Ms Henderson said that there should be an action plan for those actions rated “red”, along with a timeframe. The Chief Executive suggested that he take this away for further consideration (**Action 9 – Chief Executive**).

- 64/24.4 | The Chair noted that the report will be in a different format this year. He added that if PHA cannot do everything that it is being asked to do, then the Board will make a decision on what work will be taken forward, based on a recommendation by AMT. Professor Rooney agreed and added that this is where the Corporate Strategy is important and it also links to previous discussions about staff redeployment. The Chair said that the Board needs to be aware of the challenges.
- 64/24.5 | The Chair asked if there is a plan on how PHA moves forward in terms of measuring performance. The Chief Executive said that the Strategic Planning Teams (SPTs) will help PHA make more efficient use of its resources.
- 64/24.6 | Professor Rooney sought clarity on the date that the Procurement Board considered the PID for Protect Life 2 and it was noted that this should read "December 2023". Ms Henderson advised that the Procurement Board did not endorse the PID as that was not its role. She noted that she could not see how the gap in procurement was going to be closed within the next 6/9 months and said that this represents a risk to PHA. She added that PHA needs to determine what it is doing with respect to Protect Life 2 and put a dedicated team in place. Dr McClean advised that there is a team focused on this work, but Ms Henderson said that there are a number of Direct Award Contracts (DACs) in place, some of which go back a number of years, hence this area requires greater focus. Dr McClean reiterated that there is a team in place and advised that last week the tender for SHIP closed so that should resolve some of the DACs. She said that there is work in progress, but more staff time is needed. Ms Henderson said that PHA needs to determine what resources it needs.
- 64/24.7 | The Chair said that this issue needs to be dealt with and the Board needs to be satisfied that PHA has a plan. Ms Henderson suggested that this should be undertaken before the next Procurement Board meeting and that all the senior team should be there. The Chief Executive agreed that this is a priority for the Executive Team and it need to be driven by the Director of Finance. He said that there has previously been a cultural issue where DACs are accepted as the way to do business, but added that the culture around DACs and procurement needs to change. Ms Scott agreed that this is not an area that has been given focus, but it will be more given more profile.
- 64/24.8 | Ms Henderson noted that members had received an update on cancer screening programmes, but asked if the backlogs from the pandemic have been cleared. Dr McClean advised that she did not think that this was the case. Mr Clayton said that it would be helpful to know this **(Action 10 – Dr McClean)**.
- 64/24.9 | The Board noted the Performance Management Report.

65/24 Item 12 – ALB Self-Assessment [PHA/05/05/24]

- 65/24.1 The Chair advised that this self-assessment has been completed and sought members' approval.
- 65/24.2 Mr Clayton noted that there is reference to a Board Development Programme, but that he was not certain if this took place during 2022/23. He added that when completing the 2023/24, there should be a reference to the delay in completing this assessment. He also noted that further work needs to be done around involvement with external stakeholders. The Chair said that these are areas that can be looked at as part of the session in September. He added that there is a need to look at individual training.
- 65/24.3 The Chair said that he and Mr Graham would review the assessment for 2023/24 which will be brought to a future meeting (**Action 11 – Chair/Secretariat**). He added that going forward he would like to carry out a Board assessment as well as member assessment.
- 65/24.4 The Board **APPROVED** the ALB Self-Assessment for 2022/23.

66/24 Item 13 – Items for Noting

Overview of Budget Planning for 2024/25 [PHA/06/05/24]

- 66/24.1 The Chair noted that this has been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Our People Plan [PHA/07/05/24]*
- 66/24.2 Mr Clayton noted that the People Plan is not a workforce plan, although it does cover areas such as retention and culture, but that it would be useful to have a workforce plan from the point of view of future proofing, and that it should cover areas such as equality and diversity.
- 66/24.3 Mr Stewart said that the Board has always had a concern in situations where PHA ends up with vacant posts, but there has not been the foresight to plan for these. He added that there needs to be succession planning. He commented that any organisation should be looking at the future and when it is known that staff are leaving, to have plans made well in advance. The Chair noted that in terms of the public health side, there is an awareness of the issues that need to be addressed.
- 66/24.4 The Chair said that as part of the Corporate Plan, there should be an operational element, but also a staffing element which outlines what PHA is doing for its staff in terms of supporting them and developing them.
- 66/24.5 Ms Scott advised that she is working on a workforce plan that will sit alongside the budget and within her own department, she is starting to look at how to transition to a different way of working, but added that this

will be a challenging year.

- 66/24.6 Ms Reid noted that many posts are vacant because there was a recommendation not to fill them until the new structure emanating from the Reshape and Refresh Programme is known. The Chair said that this can be discussed as part of Ms Cushley's presentation next month.

67/24 Item 14 – Chair's Remarks

- 67/24.1 The Chair advised that he had met with Mr Toogood and that Mr Toogood is very supportive of what PHA is aiming to achieve. He said that he had met with PHA staff in Armagh and that he would be visiting the Gransha office again shortly. He encouraged other Board members to visit PHA offices.
- 67/24.2 Mr Blaney noted that as part of the Reshape and Refresh Programme, expressions are being sought for staff to volunteer. The Chief Executive confirmed this and advised that when an e-mail was issued seeking interest to be involved in organising a celebration event, there was a good response.
- 67/24.3 The Chief Executive gave an overview of some data relating to staffing. He reported that for 2023/24, PHA's overall headcount increased by 3.7% with temporary staff reducing by 24% and permanent staff increasing by 8.5%. He reported that turnover was 10.07% with 33 staff leaving, 18% being retirements and 76% being resignations. He advised that appraisal compliance was 95%.
- 67/24.4 The Chair advised that he is continuing his series of meetings with Local Council Chief Executives. He said that stakeholder engagement is vital for PHA. He added that Local Councils are keen to work with PHA to see how PHA can make a difference in local communities. He explained that once he completes a series of informal meetings, he and the Chief Executive will have more structured meetings. He added that he intends to meet with representatives from the community and voluntary sector.
- 67/24.5 Mr Irvine noted that what the Chair had outlined is essentially community planning and that from a strategic point of view, there should be a more co-ordinated approach through SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives). He added that PHA should ask what Local Councils are doing in terms of community planning and that there should be a look at how a shared budget can work in terms of shared outcomes. The Chief Executive advised that he has met with the Chair of SOLACE to look at the roles of PHA and Local Councils and that a further meeting has been set up for August. He said that there is a need to ensure that between PHA staff and Council staff there is alignment in work rather than duplication. He added that PHA is undertaking a lot of work with Councils through the Health Improvement team and the Health Improvement leads will likely be on the new Area Integrated Programme Boards.

68/24 | Item 15 – Any Other Business

- 68/24.1 Mr Stewart noted that members had received the paper on IT systems in screening which had been requested by the Governance and Audit Committee. He said that the paper did not provide him with the assurance he was seeking that PHA is on top of this situation as some of the systems could collapse and may not be able to be fixed. He asked that this paper is brought to the next meeting for fuller discussion.
- 68/24.2 The Chief Executive advised that a review has taken place and this issue will be part of the work of the new digital directorate. He said that this is an interim report which looks at the risks and how PHA will bridge the gap. Mr Stewart said that he would like to see some timelines included in the paper (**Action 12 – Dr McClean**).

69/24 | Item 16 – Details of Next Meeting

Thursday 20 June 2024 at 1.30pm

Meeting Room, County Hall, Ballymena

Signed by Chair:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Col. Callaghan', with a horizontal line underneath.

Date: 20 June 2024