


HIGHLAND NHS BOARD	Assynt House Beechwood Park Inverness IV2 3BW Tel: 01463 717123 Fax: 01463 235189 www.nhshighland.scot.nhs.uk	
MINUTE of MEETING of the NHS Board Audit Committee Board Room, Assynt House	10 November 2020 2.00pm	

Present: Mr Alasdair Christie, NHS Board Non-Executive (In the Chair)
 Mr Alexander Anderson, NHS Board Non-Executive
 Mrs Ann Clark, NHS Board Non-Executive

Also Present: Ms Sarah Compton-Bishop, NHS Board Non-Executive

In Attendance: Mr I Addison, Head of Area Accounting
 Mr Chris Brown, Azets
 Ms Jo Brown, Grant Thornton
 Mrs Ruth Daly, Board Secretary
 Mr David Garden, Director of Finance
 Miss Stephanie Hume, Azets

1 WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had an interest to declare in relation to any item on the Agenda for this meeting. The following declarations were made:

Mr A Christie advised that being an elected member of the Highland Council he had applied the test outlined in paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 of the Code of conduct and concluded that this interest did not preclude his involvement in the meeting.

The Committee **Noted** that the meeting would be audio recorded for administrative purposes and that the recording would be deleted once the Minutes had been completed.

2 MINUTE AND ACTION PLAN OF MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

The minute and action plan of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 were **Approved**.

With regards to the action plan, two actions remained opened:

- Laboratories Service Redesign Management Actions – David Garden agreed to follow up and close down the actions with Katherine Sutton.

The Committee:

- **Approved** the Minute of the meeting held on 8 September 2020.
- **Noted** the rolling action plan.

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

4 INTERNAL AUDIT

4.1 Internal Audit Summary Report (attached) Report by Azets, Internal Auditors on behalf of David Garden, Director of Finance

Chris Brown provided an update on the internal audit plan. It was confirmed that progress was on track to deliver all audits by June 2021. An additional 80 free days had been left flexible in the plan and discussions had been held with the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance as to how this time could be best utilised. A report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee confirming this year's plan and commenting on the entries in Audit Plan for 2021/22.

Attention was drawn to the current progress against the Plan and it was hoped that five reports could be ready for the next scheduled meeting which represented a higher number than expected.

In response to a question from the Chair, it was confirmed that proposals to use the 80 free days could be brought to the December meeting.

The Committee noted the progress against the Internal Audit Plan.
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4.2 Update on Audit Recommendations Update from David Garden

Iain Addison provided an update of progress in closing off audit recommendations and spoke to the circulated report. It was confirmed that as at October 2020 there were 7 outstanding actions from previous years and 22 outstanding actions from reports issued during 2019/20. Financial management recovery actions had been completed and would now be removed from the register.

The report highlighted 11 reports, the oldest of which was patient records management and had been the most difficult to complete. Further detail could be provided on request and it was confirmed that the ownership of the audit had now been agreed to sit with the Director of eHealth. Given the time lapse since the original audit, it would now be beneficial to reconsider whether the original recommendations were still valid or agree a new set of actions. The Director of eHealth had agreed to revisit the recommendations. Alex Anderson asked whether there was a process in place to avoid situations such as this happening again. Dave Garden confirmed that this particular audit had suffered from its timing and history, and it was not indicative of other outstanding audits. The Chair asked for clarification to be submitted to the next meeting on the pathway to getting this particular audit completed.

Ann Clark sought an update on the audit on Community Planning Issues and asked if the recommendations were still applicable as they were dependent on other things which may/may not happen. She sought an update on this audit as it was one that might require further revision. Iain Addison confirmed that Cathy Steer had been involved and that further partnership development would be necessary prior to the audit being finalised. The Chair asked for an update on this at the next meeting.

In relation to the Counter Fraud audit, clarification was sought on whether the Board members would be asked to carry out the fraud self-assessment in the Board Development session. Further details would require to be sought on this point. If time

permitted in the Development Session it might be useful to complete the self assessment form at the same time, if not then a short return date should be established. Ann also emphasised that it would be helpful to provide the Fraud Policy and the self-assessment to Board members in advance of the Development Session to prepare them for the briefing from Counter Fraud Services. Ann also commented that it was also important to ensure that the need to ensure that organisational training should be owned by EDG rather than the Fraud Liaison Officer.

The Committee noted the work undertaken and Audit recommendations and that further reports would be brought to the next meeting on the following audits:

- Patient Records Management
- Community Planning Issues

5 SECTION 22 UPDATE **Report by David Garden, Director of Finance**

Dave Garden reminded the Committee that NHS Highland's annual accounts for 2018/19 had been presented to Parliament in September 2019 with a Section 22 report from the Auditor General. This had been subject to a debate in PAPLS Committee in November 2019 followed by an evidence gathering session which had been delayed until October 2020. A Section 22 Action Plan had been generated, progress against which had been held in abeyance due to COVID19.

The briefing pack to the PAPLS session in October 2020 had been circulated for information showing the progress that had been made. It was commented that the pack had identified audit committee training as a notable weakness and this would be addressed just prior to the Audit Committee meeting in December 2020.

Ann Clark commented that another potential weakness was the need to establish strategy and sustainable models of service. It was recognised that sessions had been held with the Board on this particular subject and it was queried whether this had been raised during discussions on use of the internal audit 80 free days. Dave Garden commented that Internal Audit colleagues had provided assistance with the remobilisation plan and it was acknowledged that further assistance with phase 2 might be possible.

Ann Clark also asked to what extent an integrated approach was taken when planning redesign work – mapping the capacity in acute, elective and community services.

The Committee noted the position.

6 Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee update **Update from Dave Garden**

It was confirmed that at the October 2020 PAPLS evidence gathering session, a range of information was sought from NHS Highland as follows:

1. Communication on Flu Vaccination Programme – issued to MPs, MSPs and The Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council elected members on 20 October 2020.
2. Financial information and the costs, operation and success of our Project Management Office
3. NHS Highland Remobilisation Plan

4. Performance information relating to cancellations due to COVID19 and the Cancer 3-year position
5. Elective Care Centre Workforce Plan
6. Commentary on unfilled vacancies
7. Board Risk Register

Committee members shared their views of the PAPLS Committee session. It was noted that discussions had ranged over a wide timeframe and topics. The PAPLS committee were aware that there was now a new leadership team.

It was understood that the Auditor General did not intend to plan a follow-up Section 22 report on 2019/20. This would allow the new leadership team to become established and reflected acknowledgement of the progress that had been made.

The Committee noted the additional information sought by PAPLS Committee and **agreed** that the information pack should be provided to the Audit Committee once it had been issued and attach it to the Audit Committee agenda for December.

7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

There was no other competent business.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 8 December 2020 at 2pm, by Teams.

The meeting closed at 15:00pm