



Minutes of the 99th Council meeting of the Patient and Client held on 18th July 2023 via Zoom:

Open session: 10am – 1pm

Present:

Ms Ruth Sutherland (Chair)
Mr Stephen Mathews
Mr Alan Hanna
Mr Tom Irvine
Mr Paddy Farry
Cllr Martin Reilly (Co-opted member)

In Attendance:

Ms Meadhbha Monaghan, Chief Executive
Ms Carol Collins, Head of Business Support
Ms Clare McGlone, Executive Assistant
Mr Martin Quinn, Regional HSC PPI Lead, PHA

Apologies:

Ms Michelle Tennyson, PHA
Mr Paul Douglas

1. Welcome

2. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted there were apologies from Mr Douglas who sadly had a family bereavement. The Chair would send the Council's condolences.

The Chair welcomed Mr Martin Quinn (PHA) to the meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th May 2023 and matters arising

The Chair advised of a slight delay with the Annual Report and Accounts and asked Ms Collins to explain further. Ms Collins advised that ASM and NIAO reviewed the report on 17th July 2023 and PCC had received amendments late, although at this stage these were minor changes to formatting and grammatical sentences. Ms Collins did not have time to make additional amendments and suggested deferring approval and reconvene over the next two days. Ms Collins proposed a quick 30-minute meeting to review the Report to Those Charged with Governance and Annual Report and Accounts and formally approve. Ms Collins would circulate a table with the amendments made since ARAC in June 2023.

The Chair thanked Ms Collins and agreed with this suggestion.

Mr Farry confirmed and supported Ms Collin's position as he had been working with Ms Collins over last few days was assured it was minor changes required to the Annual Report and Accounts.

Ms Collins would send the documents and Ms McGlone would be in contact members to arrange a Council meeting. The Chair thanked Mr Farry and Ms Collins for their work and the Annual Report and Accounts, it was a very good read and useful to get an overview.

4. Declaration of Interests

None noted.

5. Chair's Update

The Chair wanted to note that she appreciated the warm welcome from staff and Council. Everyone had been welcoming and accommodating. The Chair's priority was to build relationships and was hoping to move towards building relationships externally. The Chair was reading documents and getting her head around information and was hopeful to have finalised the first year objectives by September 2023.

The Chair provided a recruitment update to Council. There were currently 11 vacancies on the Council and it had been difficult to get to the point of opening recruitment. The Chair advised that this would open at the start of August and close at the end of August, however the Chair had asked for this to be extended. It was important for PCC to stimulate interest and the Chair appealed to Council to use their own networks to publicise this.

The Chair was keen to include strategic discussion on the Council meeting agendas. There were some important topics to debate and there should be room in the Council meetings for these discussions. The Chair was also keen for Council members to propose topics and avoid duplication of Committee and Council agendas where possible.

6. Chief Executive's Update

With the absence of a Head of Operations Ms Monaghan wanted to provide an update on work and thought it would be helpful to structure this around the four key objectives she had set out as immediate term priorities at the workshop in June.

Stability

Over the past few months, work has been going on to get key posts recruited and consider development of posts. Ms Monaghan provided an update on new staff in post. Mr Hutchinson had joined as Senior Policy Impact and Influence Manager who would lead in the development of this function and would also be part of EMT and would attend Council meetings. A Head of Operations had also been appointed and they would be commencing in September 2023. The Band 6 Project manager would be joining in September 2023 and would be a great asset to the Business Support function particularly as work continues on MAHI and the Covid Inquiry progresses. Ms Monaghan highlighted that recruiting a receptionist had been challenging however interviews were taking place shortly.

The second stage is embedding the new staff, and Ms Monaghan been working with Service Managers and Business Support. The role of the Engagement and Impact Coordinator had been re-evaluated and re-banded which would allow the postholder to expand her responsibilities in the organisation and work with Mr Hutchinson to develop the website. The Communications and Public Affairs manager would also be returning from maternity leave in July meaning Mr Hutchinson would have a full team in place.

Visibility and continuity

Ms Monaghan had met with the Permanent Secretary in the last few weeks and had introductory meetings with CNO Maria McIlgorm with a focus on addressing health inequalities. Ms Monaghan had attended the CNO Conference, PSA Roundtable and worked with the Open University. Ms Monaghan highlighted key pieces of work operationally. PCC also had input into the regional resettlement summit and hoped to share this work with Council in the future.

Key strategic drivers

The Partnership Agreement was with the Governance Unit before it would go to the Department of Finance for scrutiny. It was Ms Monaghan's understanding that PCC were the first organisation to reach this stage.

The Strategic Outline Case was presented to Sponsor Branch earlier in the month and Sponsor Branch were happy with the direction and made recommendations about how best to position the Strategic Outline Case. The PCC would be working with Sponsor Branch to produce a brief paper for the Top Management Group (TMG).

Financial planning, Governance and Accountability

Ms Monaghan had completed her Accounting Officer training and had a ground clearing meeting with Sponsor Branch and the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO). This meeting had been positive and there were no issues to go forward to the Accountability meeting. It was noted that the Plan, Do, Review approach was welcomed by the CNO and should be highlighted for the meeting with the Permanent Secretary. Ms Monaghan had taken this opportunity to raise the issue around Council membership and Ms McIlgorm wanted it on record her thanks to the Council members for their patience and dedication, Ms McIlgorm understood the difficulty of operating with few members and congratulated the Chair on her appointment. The CNO was aware of ongoing challenges and this was on the agenda for the Accountability meeting with the Permanent Secretary. Ms Monaghan added that none of the agenda items for the Accountability meeting were contentious.

Mr Irvine congratulated Ms Monaghan and the team for getting around to filling the vacancies as it can be a difficult process. Ms Monaghan thanked Council members for their support in this process and appreciated time put in by council members around recruitment of key posts. The Chair agreed.

7. Strategic discussions

The Chair wanted to draw the Councils' attention to papers circulated.

DOH Departmental Strategic Business Plan 2023-2024

Ms Monaghan advised this was useful and important to consider at a Council and EMT level. In terms of the PCC direction of travel, the Council were asked to look at how it aligned to the document. On reviewing this, the Chair added there was very good strategic alignment which was reflected in discussion at ground clearing.

Mr Irvine noted that PCC were one of 16 ALBs on page 36 and wanted to draw attention to the funding of PCC. Mr Irvine highlighted it was important to ensure that PCC were recognised for their work. The Chair agreed this was a great point and added there seemed a mismatch between objectives and priorities.

Council members further discussed the content of the business plan and the deliverables.

Key messages from recent events to mark 75th anniversary of the NHS

As part of this celebration there were events and messages regarding the NHS. Ms Monaghan and Mr Hutchinson attended an event and provided an update of the discussions.

Ms Monaghan highlighted a key objective reflected in commentary was the development of relationships with the Public with patients being more active participants in healthcare. Ms Monaghan noted there was a need to have more challenging conversations with PCC being a mediator for some of these and this would align with the Peoples' Priorities Committee. The leveraging of resources in the community and voluntary sector aligned with the network of networks approach.

Ms Monaghan highlighted key recent developments in the HSC sphere, including the decision to close Muckamore Abbey Hospital by June 2024. PCC had carried out engagement work with families and sat on the Muckamore Departmental Assurance Group (MDAG). Ms Monaghan provided an overview of the work completed by Ms Kelly with the Learning Disability platform and understanding family and carer experience to date. A collective voice paper was produced and presented by a member of the platform to the Regional Learning Disability Resettlement summit, this included what members of the platform would seek to need in resettlement services going forward.

The WHSCT had also shared their findings following consultation of changes to General Surgery in SWAH. WHSCT decided the changes to General Surgery would continue in the current format.

Ms Monaghan also highlighted two recent judgements which may impact on services PCC deliver.

8. Final Annual Report, Accounts and Governance Statement 2022 – 2023

This was deferred.

9. Report to those Charged with Governance

This was deferred.

10. Finance

Financial Plan 2023-24

Ms Collins highlighted that the Financial plan for 2023 – 24 needed to go through Business Committee which was scheduled for 25th July 2023. Ms Collins highlighted that at the moment, PCC were looking at an underspend of £75k largely due to recruitment challenges and underspend on MAHI related costs. Ms Monaghan would be having a budget meeting with the Leadership Management team to address the possible underspend and minimise this. As the bulk of this was related to MAHI, this would depend on how PCC input to the MAHI and the requirement of MAHI on PCC developed but Council would be kept updated.

Finance Update - Month 3

Ms Collins highlighted that it was early in the year so things could change. At the moment, the PCC were forecasting an overspend but there was a meeting arranged to review this.

Ms Collins drew attention to the opening RRL and as part of the retraction were asked to make savings. At the moment, PCC were sitting with a slight surplus but there was nothing to note. Ms Collins confirmed the underspend was £36k from core and £39k

from MAHI budget due to the recruitment challenges and legal costs not being as high as anticipated. The legal costs would be monitored closely and PCC were in regular contact with DAC Beachcroft to ensure forecasting was as accurate as possible.

Ms Collins drew attention to the actions for June 2023 in the paper. Ms Collins would be meeting with the Service managers to look at the budget and would be able to report at a later date how PCC would spend this. Retractions would be made earlier in the year. Mr Hanna queried the retraction from capital. Ms Collins advised that this was an accounting treatment, Ms Monaghan had sought clarity on this also.

11. ARAC

Mr Farry provided an update that the Committee had met a few times in the last few months with the main focus being Audit and the Annual Report and Accounts. The Internal Audit annual opinion was satisfactory. Ms Collins added that external audit report was also clean, as advised at the previous ARAC. ARAC had also reviewed and approved the internal audit plan for next year.

Mr Farry asked that with Council approval, Risk was a standing item on the Council agenda as it was Council that owned this. Mr Farry added that an enormous amount of work had been carried out by the team to assist ARAC. The Chair queried if the cyber security section of the ARAC Self-Assessment was being worked on. Ms Collins confirmed this was part of an action plan and would be addressed during the year.

The Chair agreed that Risk should be addressed at Council level as this belonged to the Council and wanted a strategic approach.

Assurance Framework

Mr Hanna queried if whistleblowing should be something to take note of. Ms Collins agreed this is something to be added, a paper would be going to Business Committee on safeguarding issues and Ms Collins would be looking at a template where raising concerns and whistleblowing issues are recorded. Ms Monaghan agreed that the assurance framework should be amended to reflect this.

The Council reviewed and approved with amendments on safeguarding and whistleblowing.

ACTION: Assurance framework to be updated with whistleblowing issues.

ARAC Terms of Reference

The Council reviewed and approved the Terms of Reference.

12. Business Committee

Mr Hanna welcomed Mr Mathews to the Business Committee. At the last Business Committee, a self-assessment had been completed, although not as detailed as ARAC. This would be finalised at the Business Committee on 25th July 2023.

Mr Hanna highlighted that sometimes there was duplication of the Business Committee and Council agendas however the format of this meeting had changed that.

Mr Irvine thanked Ms Collins for her work on the self-assessments.

Martin Quinn left the meeting at 11.25am.

13. Business Support/ Governance

Register of Council members interests

Ms Collins advised this was an annual process and Council members had been asked to complete. There were two interests for noting.

14. AOB

The Chair was keen to get feedback from Council members following meetings and wanted to improve where possible.

The next Council meeting would be on 12th September 2023.

15. Close

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

Signed:

Ruth Sutherland

Date: 12th September 2023