

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY PHSO BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, 13 JUNE 2013

15th floor, Millbank Tower

12.45-1.00pm

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

Dame Julie Mellor DBE, the Ombudsman

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

Sacha Deshmukh, Interim Director of External Affairs and Strategy

Gwen Harrison, Interim Director of Operations

Gavin McBurnie, Interim Director of Operations (Business Development)

Helen Hughes, Chief Operating Officer

Mike Procter, Executive Director of Business Transformation

NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

Peter Freedman

Sharmila Nebhrajani

Sir Jon Shortridge KCB

Helen Walley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Brown, Head of Executive Office and Governance

Joy Higgins, Executive Assistant to the Ombudsman (minutes)

Graham Payne, Director of Finance, Planning and Performance

Tye Wright, Risk and Assurance Manager

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chair informed the Board that the Audit Committee had reviewed the draft 2012-13 Annual Report and Accounts at its last two meetings. The Chair then asked Sir Jon Shortridge, Chair of the Audit Committee, to feed back to the Board the Audit Committee's deliberations and recommendation.

2. Audit Committee's consideration of the PHSO 2012/13 Annual Report & Resource Accounts

- 2.1 Sir Jon Shortridge stated that the Audit Committee had given very thorough consideration to the draft Annual Report and Resource Accounts at its May and June meetings. The draft Report had been substantially amended and improved since the May meeting. The Committee endorsed its clarity and excellence of drafting.
- 2.2 The Committee had given long and detailed consideration to an item in the Accounts raised by the National Audit Office (NAO): the compromise agreement signed with the former Deputy Ombudsman. The wording had been extended to clarify the

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timing of her departure. The NAO had confirmed that the current wording was sufficient in terms of propriety and regularity. The Audit Committee recommended that the Board consider whether further information should be included, noting they would be content if the Board felt the information was sufficient.

- 2.3 The Audit Committee had requested that the Financial Controller review some of the figures in the Resource Accounts and would provide minor drafting suggestions outside of the meeting. Overall, the Committee declared itself satisfied by the draft Annual Report and commended the Finance Team for the preparation of the Resource Accounts. The Committee recommended the draft 2012/13 Annual Report and Resource Accounts to the Board.

3. PHSO 2012/13 Annual Report and Resource Accounts

- 3.1 The Board thanked the Audit Committee for their thorough consideration and reviewed each section of the draft Report.
- 3.2 The Board requested:
- inclusion of an explanation for the move from conducting hundreds to thousands of investigations
 - that after the reference to our failure to meet one of our six service standards, our actual achievement (of 88% against a standard of 90%) be stated
 - that consideration be given to further clarifying the timing of the Deputy Ombudsman's departure.
- 3.3 The Chair commended the work of the staff in securing positive comments from the NAO on the process for producing the resource accounts and the quality of the accounts.
- 3.4 Subject to the above amendments, the Board unanimously agreed the 2012/13 Annual Report and Resource Accounts.