



Minutes of the 132<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board

Held on Thursday, 6 December 2018 at 10:30

**safefood**, Dublin office

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**PRESENT:**

Ms Helen O'Donnell (HOD) (Chair)

Mr Paul Gibbons (PG) (Vice Chair)

Dr Mary Upton (MU)

Dr Eddie Rooney (ER)

Mr Brendan Kehoe (BK)

Mr Alan McGrath (AMG)

Ms Wendy McIntosh (WMI)

Mr Mervyn Oswald (MO)

Ms Margaret Jeffares (MJ)

Mr Stephen Moutray (SM)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)

Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Operations (PF)

Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan, Director, Human Health and Nutrition, (CFN)

Dr Aileen McGloin, Director, Marketing and Communications (AMcG)

Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)

**APOLOGIES:**

Prof Dolores O'Riordan (DOR)

Dr Gary Kearney (GK)

## **1. Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present**

**Noted:** The members of the Advisory Board met without the Executive present.

## **2. Introduction and apologies**

**Noted:** The Chair welcomed all members of the Advisory Board to the meeting in the **safefood** Dublin office.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked all attendees for travelling to Dublin.

**Noted:** Apologies of DOR were noted.

## **3. Conflicts of interest**

**Noted:** The Chair asked members if there were any conflicts of interest relating to the agenda. No conflicts of interest were raised.

## **4. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 17 October, 2018**

**Noted:** The minutes were adopted with no amendments

**Proposed:** MJ

**Seconded:** AMG.

## **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

**Noted:** PF informed that due to DOR and SM sending their apologies to the October Board meeting they were informed separately of the Privacy Statement. PF confirmed all Board Members have now signed up to the Privacy Statement.

## **6. Feedback from the Audit and Risk Committee**

**Noted:** ER informed that the Audit and Risk committee met on Wednesday, 5 December 2018 to complete the self-effectiveness review. This is the second year the review has been completed, which proves very useful to the committee members as a checklist on compliance. A few items resulted from the review;

1. Formalise contact with the Executive Board
2. Horizon scanning upcoming challenges i.e. membership, both internal and external, of the committee and staggering this to ensure continuation of skills.

**Noted:** PG informed of the advantages of holding the meeting in the afternoon so the committee had more time to conduct the self-effectiveness review. The Audit and Risk Committee will be presenting

their Annual Report to the Board in January and then on a yearly basis going forward. PG informed the following issues were discussed;

1. The Business Plan and Risk Register
2. Management's plans to allocate/communicate risks to staff as part of the Performance Management Development System (PMDS)
3. Requested the date of the December 2019 Advisory Board meeting be changed to a Friday rather than Thursday so the Audit Committee can attend public sector training which they found very useful. This was agreed by the Board.

**Noted:** MO asked if there was written documentation from the Audit and Risk Committee, other than the Annual Report, that could be brought into the Board meeting. ER informed that there was a logistical issue involved as the Committee meets prior to the Board so there would be no time to put into written format. ER advised that the role of the risk register may be of interest to Board members and that he is open to hearing of any issues from Board members that they would like to be raised in the Audit and Risk Committee meetings.

**Noted:** PF suggested that minutes of committee meetings could be shared with board members.

## **7. Advisory Board Performance 2018 self-evaluation**

**Noted:** The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 imposes self-assessment requirements in relation to evaluating a Board's Performance.

**Noted:** PF informed that 2017 was the first year the Board evaluated their performance and a number of actions arose from the 2017 self-evaluation:

- Each directorate to present on their role and the work undertaken in the organisation. Marketing and Communications, Food Science and Human Health and Nutrition all presented in 2018. Corporate Operation will present in January 2019.
- Governance training – this will take place in Q1 2020 due to the timing of staggered membership of Board members and will be repeated when membership changes sufficiently.

**Noted:** The 2018 Board self-assessment evaluation questionnaire was circulated to members in September. The responses were collated and reviewed by The Chair, the Chief Executive and PF in October.

**Noted:** The Chair lead a discussion on the key issues arising from the responses received.

**Noted:** No scores were received in the dissatisfied or satisfied categories.

**Action:** The following discussions/actions arose from the Advisory Board Performance 2018 self-evaluation:

- AMcG to discuss Republic of Ireland publicity campaigns with DOR.
- If Members indicated a score of 3 (neither satisfied or dissatisfied) they will in future be asked to elaborate
- **safefood** to write to the North South Ministerial Council to request they provide coordinated training on the role of North/South bodies, in particular the body the member is joining, prior to their appointment.

- Issues raised in the closed session without executive present will be added as a standing item on the agenda.
- AMG informed he overlooked question 21, Action insert a response of 5.
- AMG suggested the collated evaluation is anonymised going forward. This was agreed.
- Members of the Board would like to have a pro-active role rather than reactive. Action: PF will involve Board Members in the Corporate Plan 2019.
- It was suggested that Tour de table appear as an agenda item earlier in the meeting so there is time for discussion.
- It was agreed all members are happy with the number of meetings (7) scheduled to take place in a year and if the need arose a separate meeting would be arranged.

## **8. Presentation on the work carried out by *safefood*'s Human Health and Nutrition Directorate.**

**Noted:** Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan gave an overview of nutrition issues from a public health perspective.

The current food and health challenges are as follows;

- Adult obesity epidemic
- Childhood obesity rates are rising
- The incidence of Type 2 diabetes, Cancers, cardiovascular disease, arthritis and dementia are rising
- The less well-off eat less well, develop chronic diseases and live a shorter (-7 years) life.
- Denial and stigma associated with obesity.

Research has shown there are multiple influences on behaviour at play - it is not simply individual choice. Some of these influences are;

- Biology drives food behaviour e.g. appetite hormone
- Variable susceptibility to obesity and diet-related disease
- Food stimuli are everywhere
- Children are most vulnerable
- Food habits and environment are now undoing achievements in health and medicine.

**Noted:** Dr Marian O'Reilly presented on the work *safefood* are doing to address the current food and health challenges set out by Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan.

Inform practice by;

- Building the evidence base e.g. food poverty basket
- Target issues e.g. folate status in women and weaning practices
- Support multi-disciplinary and collaborative projects e.g. All-island Obesity action Forum and All-island Food Poverty Network.
- Develop nutrition standards for schools and healthcare settings.

Informing policy by;

Commissioning research e.g. the economic cost of obesity, food portion size, takeaway food series, shift work and energy drinks.

Policy input – members of **safefood** bring their knowledge to the following groups; Northern Ireland Obesity Prevention Steering Group (OPSG), Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group (ROPIG) Northern Ireland, NI Food in schools forum, Healthy Eating guidelines group ROI, Food Reformulation group ROI, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland Obesity Group, Health Research Board Centre for Diet and Health, Health Service Executive's Healthy Weight for Children.

**Noted:** The Chair thanked Dr Clíodhna Foley-Nolan and Dr Marian Faughnan for their presentations.

**Noted:** A discussion followed regarding the issues listed in the presentation.

## 9. Chief Executive's report

### Corporate

**Noted:** The second meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee this year took place on 9<sup>th</sup> November.

**Noted:** In the absence of an NI Assembly and the NSMC, **safefood's** 2017 and 2018 Business Plans and the **safefood's** 2017-2019 Corporate Plan await formal approval.

**Noted:** The first draft of the 2019 Business Plan was sent to the sponsor departments on 31<sup>st</sup> October.

**Noted:** The CEO, GK, PF and PG attended a session of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement on 25<sup>th</sup> October where **safefood's** presentation dealing with the implications of Brexit was well received. The CEO attended a meeting of the Department of Health's Food Unit's Brexit group on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

### Campaigns

**Noted:** The handwashing campaign ran in Cinema, Outdoor Posters, Radio and Social/Digital from 5<sup>th</sup> November to 2<sup>nd</sup> December. A handwashing kit of posters, bathroom leaflets and leaflets for home will be made available to over 3,500 pre-schools and crèches from January onwards.

**Noted:** The 2019 Christmas campaign will commence on Radio advertising from 11<sup>th</sup> December. The radio ads will publicise **safefood's** turkey cooking calculator and online resources including food safety tips and advice and the 'Chef Bot' messaging service on Facebook. The campaign will also be supported by publicity in media. **safefood** has a series of 10 Christmas videos covering food safety advice and recipes, which will also be played in GP waiting rooms.

**Noted:** The Christmas food safety campaign is currently in development. The focus will be radio and digital advertising, updating consumer advice on the **safefood** website and enhancing the 'Chef Bot'

messaging service. Christmas Eve and Christmas day 2017 recorded the most traffic to the **safefood** website ever.

**Noted:** The campaign – “Transform your Trolley” - will feature instore healthy eating advice in supermarkets and reinforce **safefood** as the trusted, independent source of advice on healthy eating in January as part of **safefood**'s sponsorship of RTE's Operation Transformation.

#### Events

**Noted:** The All-island obesity action forum workshop, took place on 13<sup>th</sup> November and focused on how reformulation of our obesogenic environments can create positive behaviour to promote a health weight.

#### Publications

**Noted:** **safefood** launched research on 'What parents think about weaning – an island of Ireland study'. The research gives a valuable insight into the weaning process for parents and highlights to care professionals the support and advice required.

**Noted:** Over 450 people signed up to **safefood**'s first consumer facing e-newsletter in the past month. The e-newsletter provided families with advice on healthy eating and food safety.

#### Other items

**Noted:** Updates were given on Minimum nutritional standards for healthcare facilities in Northern Ireland, Minimum nutrition standards for healthcare facilities in the Republic of Ireland (ROI), Community food initiative programme (CFI) and Knowledge Network.

### **8. Financial Report**

**Noted:** PF referred to the summary Financial Results until the end of October 2018. At this stage, **safefood** expects to finish out the year on or just below budget for 2018. The business plan was achieved and there is currently no update on the overdue rent review.

### **9. Tour de table**

**Noted:** The Chair wished Board members and **safefood** staff a Merry Christmas and thanked them for their continued support in 2018.

**Noted:** The Chief Executive thanked Board Members for their input and support and also thanked **safefood** staff, especially those who undertake travel on behalf of the company.

### **10. AOB**

**Date of next meeting: Thursday, 24 January, 2019, safefood, Dublin office.**