



Minutes of the 134th meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Board

Held on Thursday, 21 March, 2019 at 10:30

safefood, Dublin office

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)

Prof Dolores O'Riordan (DOR)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD)

Ms Patricia Fitzgerald, Director, Corporate Operations (PF)

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

Dr Gary Kearney, Director, Food Science (GK)

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

Ms Alison Dries (secretary) (AD)

Mags Campbell (Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee - for item 7 only)

APOLOGIES:

1. Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

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

2. Matters arising from the Meeting of Advisory Board members – without Executive present

Noted: There were not matters arising.

3. Introduction and apologies

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

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

Noted: There were no Apologies noted.

4. 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.

5. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday, 24 January, 2019

Noted: The minutes were adopted with no amendments

Proposed: MO

Seconded: WMcl.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

Noted: Regarding a discussion at the January meeting relating to eco packaging and possible food safety issues, GK informed that a presentation has been arranged from Professor Kerry, University College Cork, for the June Board meeting.

7. Feedback from the Audit Committee meeting

Noted: The audit committee met prior to the Board meeting. The Chair invited Mags Campbell, Chair of the Audit Committee, into the meeting. Mags is finishing in the post as Chair of the Audit committee. The Chair thanked Mags on behalf of the Board and staff for her service to **safefood**.

Noted: Mags thanked all in **safefood** for their support. She stated that **safefood** operated high standards of compliance and governance and wished all well.

Action: **safefood** to write to Mags Campbell to formally thank her for her years of dedicated service.

Noted: PG and ER informed of the following items from the Audit and Risk Committee meeting

- The Committee reviewed the operation of the Protected Disclosure Policy for 2018. No disclosures were reported.
- The Committee reviewed the operation of the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy for 2018. No disclosures were reported
- The Audit Committee's Annual Report will be completed in April and circulated in advance of the May meeting.
- The first report of **safefood**'s Data Protection Officer was presented by Nicola Power, Human Resource and Compliance Executive.
- There is no change to the risk register. The Committee agreed that Angela Cahill, Corporate Operations Manager, will issue the risk register to the Executive Board for regular review.
- The Senior Auditor from the C&AG presented the results of the recent Audit of **safefood**. The report was incredibly positive with staff co-operating extremely well to ensure high standards of accounting and compliance and to facilitate a smooth audit process. ER commented that this was one of the most positive verbal reports from the C&AG which he had come across anywhere. The following key points were noted;
 - The C&AG acknowledged 2018 was a particularly difficult year for all North/South bodies due to the issuing of new accounting guidance.
 - A completely clear audit was recorded.
 - The C&AG acknowledged the difficulty in measuring the impact on behaviour change arising from the work of the organisation and acknowledge **safefood**'s progressive approach to this. They stressed the need to keep documenting KPI's before a campaign and ensuring best value for money as always.
 - The C&AG acknowledge the absence of the NSMC has had an impact on business planning and that Brexit is generating much uncertainty.

8. Chief Executive's report

Corporate

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

Noted: Work has commenced on developing the next Corporate Plan for **safefood** spanning 3 years 2020-2022.

Noted: safefood has closely monitored developments in relation to the UK's exit from the EU and has been seeking to clarify the implications for **safefood**. Clarifications regarding staff travel arrangements and GDPR were issued, however a large degree of uncertainty remains.

Noted: Members of **safefood's** senior management team met with both Sponsor Departments in Belfast on 25 February. One of the items for discussion was a new Financial Memorandum (FM) template for N/S Bodies. The existing FM is dated 2004. The new FM involves huge micro-managements which would need extra resources to implement. The Departments of Finance in both jurisdictions who are developing the new FM have not taken **safefood's** feedback and comments into consideration.

Campaigns

Noted: AMcG informed on future campaign plans. 'START – a healthy weight for children' is in development for 2019 with 2 phases planned, for May and October. It is likely the campaign topics will focus on 'the reduction of treat foods' and 'how to support change' based on **safefood** funded research projects which are coming to fruition in 2019.

Noted: Development of the 'handwashing-Rufus the messy monster' campaign is in progress for further phases of activity during the year. The focus will be on extending the suite of materials further.

Noted: A post campaign evaluation has started on **safefood's** sponsorship of Operation Transformation and the 'Transform your Trolley' campaign. Initial findings have shown a huge increase in traffic to the **safefood.eu** website.

Noted: Updates of publicity, events, education and publications work were mentioned with no items in particular to note.

Community Food Initiatives

Noted: The recruitment of the New leaders to the Community Food Initiatives (CFI) is complete and members of the Board were informed of the successful leaders in the CEO report.

Noted: The Chair asked about the reappointment of some previous leaders. CFN confirmed they presented a different development plan to the previous phase and they succeeded through an independent marking scheme.

Noted: MU asked whether feedback was given to unsuccessful applicants in order to encourage them to apply again?

Action: CFN acknowledged this and agreed that consideration will be given to offering feedback/training to unsuccessful applicants in future programmes.

Minimum nutritional standards for catering in health care facilities on the IOI.

Noted: The lead nutritionist continues to carry out work with the trusts in NI and is participating in the induction for the FSA NI standards lead who is working within 2 council areas. The work was presented at the Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group meeting in Belfast. The Innovation Lab (Department of Finance NI) continue to inform the implementation of the Standards. Based on all the work reviewed, standards are due for publication by the end of June 2019.

Noted: The Nutrition standards in the ROI are complete and due to be launched in April 2019. **safefood** will continue to provide support on this project through the HSE Healthier Food Environment Advisory Group, in particular on the Implementation Group.

Noted: CFN informed that a HSE representative was travelling to NI to see how the Standards are working there. The Board acknowledge the importance of parallel working which wouldn't have come about without **safefood**'s involvement.

Obesity strategy implementation plans

Noted: CFN gave an update on the Obesity Prevention Oversight Implementation Group (OPOIG) in the ROI. There are two sub-groups set up which cover Healthy Eating and Reformulation. The Healthy Eating group will meet when the Healthy Eating guidelines for 1-5 year olds have been received by the Department of Health from the Food Safety Authority. The Reformulation group is progressing a report which will set out recommendations for a food reformulation roadmap in the ROI.

Noted: The Obesity Prevention Steering Group in NI are working towards the final outcomes for the 2012-2022 strategy.

9. Financial Report

Noted: PF referred to the summary Financial Results until the end of February 2019. The year end close down for 2018 is taking place. Nothing in particular to report on the 2 months of 2019.

10. Presentation on *safefood*'s market research 'safetrak'.

Noted: Aisling Corcoran of Ipsos MRBI presented the findings of *safefood*'s 2018 market research titled 'safetrak'. The research is conducted on a yearly basis, this presentation focussed on the following;

- The *safefood* brand
- Food safety concerns
- Healthy eating concerns
- Handwashing habits
- Sources of information on healthy eating and nutrition.

Noted: PG asked why *safefood* had decreased as a source of information since safetrak 2017? Aisling informed that this fall was most notable in NI. It could possibly be because there is a national broadcaster with an advertising ban on these media channels. *Safefood* are looking into this decline.

Noted: ER informed that the decline has to be taken in context as *safefood* have a higher recognition than the Public Health Agency who have a higher budget and more staff.

Noted: AMcG suggested any fall in recognition could be because *safefood* is operating in a competitive and fragmented environment in NI. Consumers can seek information from social channels and influencers who are not always qualified in the field.

Noted: The Chair thanked Aisling for the informative presentation.

10. AOB

Noted: The Chair requested all remaining Declarations of Interest are returned.

Noted: Some members of the Board were travelling to Dublin 12 for the launch of the Community Food Initiative after the meeting.

Noted: Please let AD know your availability for the next meeting and whether you prefer an earlier start time of 9am or 9.30am.

Date of next meeting: Thursday, 9 May, 2019, Canal Court, Newry.