



Minutes of the public Board meeting of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, Malone House, Belfast, 11 May 2006

Start: 11.00am

Finish: 4.45pm

Authority members present

Richard Adams (Acting Chairman)

Geraldine Donaghy

Joan Harbison

James Jamison

Ruth Laird

Lillian Jennett

Allen McCartney

Patricia McCoy

Connor Mulholland

Colin Reid

Austin Smith

Apologies

Una O’Kane

Officers of the Board present

Sandra Bell (Committee Administrator)

Stella Burnside (Chief Executive)

Theresa Nixon (Director of Social Services)

John Stewart (Director of Corporate Services)

Apologies

Caroline Humphrey (Medical Director)

Phelim Quinn (Director of Nursing)

PUBLIC SESSION

06.21 Welcome and Acting Chairman’s reports

The Acting Chairman welcomed Kathy O’Neill, Information Manager who was attending the Authority

meeting as part of her induction programme.

The Acting Chairman reported that Dr Ian Carson had been appointed as Chairman and would be taking up post on 1 June 2006.

The Chief Executive thanked the Acting Chairman for all his help and support and Board members thanked Richard Adams for all his hard work and commitment in the role of Acting Chairman.

The Acting Chairman also reported that he had attended the NI Confederation seminar on Governance in transition meeting for HPSS Chairs and Chief Executives and had represented the Authority on a visit to Forest Lodge, a respite care home for children at Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast.

He also reported that he had prepared for a press conference with regard to the breast cancer screening report, but this had not occurred.

06.22 Apologies for absence

The Acting Chairman communicated apologies from Una O’Kane, Caroline Humphrey and Phelim Quinn.

06.23 Minutes of the meeting of the Authority Board held on Thursday 9 March 2006, Ramada Hotel, Belfast (06/min/02)

The minutes of the meeting of the Authority Board held on 9 March 2006 were APPROVED subject to the following amendments:

06.21 – should read “Health and Social Services Councils”

06.24 Matters arising from the minutes

06.27 – the Chief Executive reported that if the Authority decided that if substantial research should be commissioned a business case would have to be submitted to the DHSSPS to obtain appropriate funding. She did state that there may be some resources made available through slippage on the budget but it would may not be enough to allow for

ACTION

Paper outlining

commissioned research.

It was AGREED that once the Authority had agreed the criteria for the prioritisation of work they would then be able to identify whether a piece of research should be conducted.

A Board member highlighted that the commissioning of research should only form part of a research strategy as there are a range of ways in which the Authority can establish a research programme. It was also suggested by another Board member that the Authority should explore working in partnership with other organisations.

It was AGREED that Board members would give some consideration as to the areas of research the Authority should consider and that this will be discussed at the Board meeting in September. It was also AGREED that the Board would have also had an opportunity to consider the annual business plan before the meeting in September.

06.27 – The Chief Executive reported that she had spoken to the Director of Nursing Services, EHSSB as the commissioner for services who had been satisfied that the standards of cleanliness in Royal Victoria Hospital was sufficient. She stated, however, that the Authority would have to consider in the longer term about how it would monitor the standards of cleanliness and the standards for control of infections.

06.25 Integrated governance report

The Director of Corporate Services presented an activity report.

He reported that the Board will be provided with a bi-monthly report which will include information on finance, activity and progress in relation to business plan objectives.

He assured the Authority that whilst there was inconsistency between the way activity was recorded and reported between the local offices the information that is presented in the report before them is consistent

how work will be prioritised by the Authority – Chief Executive

Develop research strategy – Board/SMT

and comparable. The Director of Corporate Services stated that the report is a work in progress but once the business plan is agreed will make for a much more comprehensive integrated governance report.

A Board member expressed dissatisfaction that the information resources for the Social Services Inspectorate had not been transferred to the Authority.

The Acting Chairman stated that he felt that it was important the Authority started to monitor progress against the business plan which was submitted to the DHSSPS in December 2005 in order to secure this year's budget.

The Authority welcomed the report and stated that they found it very useful. However, the following suggestions were offered for improvement –

- There should be more trend analysis;
- More qualitative information;
- More commentary to put the information in context; and
- Inclusion of attendance and sickness absence rates for Authority staff.

In response to a question from an Authority member the Director of Social Services stated that the low number of improvement notices in relation to the number of complaints is due to the Authority's commitment to local resolution and working in partnership with the providers for improvement, issuing improvement notices only when improvement effort is not producing positive results.

06.26 Audit committee – briefing from Chairman of Audit Committee

The Chairman of the Audit Committee firstly apologised to the Authority that the Committee had not been able to meet until the 8 May 2006 as there had been a problem with external audit. He stated that a meeting timetable had now been set for 2006/2007.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee circulated the draft minutes of the last meeting highlighting the following points.

ACTION

ACTION

As the Northern Ireland Assembly is currently suspended the Authority will be unable to lay its annual accounts before them in September. Another Audit Committee member informed the Authority that legislation had been drawn up to allow agencies to lay their accounts before Parliament in Westminster but that the Authority had not been included.

He reported that the Auditor requires the 2005/2006 accounts by the 30 May 2006 and that it is the Authority's expectation to meet this deadline.

He also reported that the with the RPA proposals for Central Service Agency alternatives for the Authority's financial and human resources requirements would have to be sought.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee explained to the Board that the Authority is expected to report on not just its activity but on its findings on health and social care services in Northern Ireland. He asked the Board whether this information should be presented in one annual report or two separate documents.

It was AGREED that this should be a substantive item for discussion at the Authority workshop in June and that advice would be sought in advance.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee also brought to the Authority's attention that it does not yet have a management statement and financial memorandum. It was AGREED that the Chief Executive would write to the DHSSPS stating that the Authority is still working to the draft management statement and financial memorandum and the need for the final documents to be agreed between the Chief Executive and DHSSPS.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee presented a paper to the Board and asked the members to agree a proposed process for the appointment of committee chairman and members. Following considerable discussion the process was APPROVED, subject to an explicit statement that skills and diversity balance would be considered when appointing.

Letter to
DHSSPS
expressing the
Authority's
concern at the
lack of a
management
statement and
financial
memorandum
- Chief
Executive

ACTION

Amend process
for the
appointment of
committees to

It was also AGREED that committee structure and appointment procedure would be considered at the June workshop.

The Authority AGREED that the Governance and Risk Management Sub-committee should have a membership of five in order to ensure quorum at its meetings.

The Authority also APPROVED the Risk Management Strategy and it was reported that work had commenced on the risk register and that it would be brought to the Authority at least quarterly and may come to form part of the integrated governance report.

make it explicit that skills and diversity balance will be taken into consideration – Committee Administrator

Amend risk strategy to include necessity to bring an update on the corporate risk register to a board meeting every quarter – Director of Corporate Services/Chair Governance and Risk Management Sub-committee

06.27 Corporate plan presented by the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee presented a draft corporate plan to the Board for approval. He stated that it had been a difficult process but there was much learning to be taken from it. He also stated that there was a need for consistency in language across the breadth of the Authority's publications.

A member of the Strategic Planning Committee stated that it had been difficult to draft the plan in the absence of an operational business plan. She also said that the strategic objectives would have been better set in a collaborative way and would have benefited from wider discussion in a workshop session involving members of the Senior Management Team.

ACTION

The Chief Executive stated that the support of a coherent and cohesive Board is required to enable Authority staff to conduct their work. Authority members also expressed their frustration at not being able to be more fully involved.

Whilst there was some disagreement about how the corporate plan was produced the Authority AGREED that a consultation process was required.

It was AGREED that the stakeholder meetings which had been originally scheduled for September 2005 could be rescheduled.

The Authority also requested that they are provided with a paper outlining the different options available to raise the public profile of the Authority.

Paper detailing consultation process on corporate plan – Director of Corporate Services

Paper outlining proposed programme for raising the public profile of the Authority – Chief Executive

06.28 Proposed budget 2006/2007 prepared by the Director of Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services presented the finance report and proposed budget 2006/2007. He reported that unfortunately the Authority had not been issued with an allocation letter as yet by the DHSSPS.

It was pointed out that there was some discrepancy in Table 4. The Director of Corporate Services stated that he would review this table.

With regard to the new office accommodation he reported that there would be a phased occupation and that the first members of staff will move on 5 June 2006.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that the DHSSPS had been provided with a draft copy of the Corporate plan to secure the budget and it as AGREED that this should be circulated to Board members for information.

The Authority APPROVED the proposed budget for 2006/2007.

Check accuracy of table 4 of the Financial report- Director of Corporate Services
ACTION

Send a copy of the draft business plan sent to DHSSPS for budget setting purposes to board members for information

06.29 Communication strategy prepared by the Director of Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services presented a draft communication strategy to the Board.

The communication strategy was APPROVED subject to the following amendment:

Where the strategy makes reference to staff it should also include Board members;

The Communication Strategy should be cross-referenced to the Corporate Plan; and

Make it explicit that the Communication Strategy includes are communication with the general public.

Board members said that the development of branding and house style are important and that more development was required on a media strategy.

A Board member also suggested that the communication group may have benefited from Board member representation.

06.30 Complaints policy and procedures prepared by the Director of Social Services

The Acting Chairman said that the Complaints policy and procedures would be brought to the Board at a later date.

06.31 Any other business

The Acting Chairman informed the Authority that the dates of the workshop in June and the next public meeting in September may have to be changed.

It was AGREED that the Committee Administrator would contact Board members with the proposed new dates and to visit the new office accommodation.

Board members to **ACTION** visit new office accommodation in Belfast – Committee Administrator

06.32 Date of next meeting

31 August 2006

Confirm
meeting dates
– Committee
Administrator

Approved (Chairman

Date
Action list

Action	Description	Assigned to	Date	Status
05.43	Issue inspection reports for information	Committee Administrator	10/11/05	Incomplete
06.02	Seek legal advice on Freedom of Information	Director of Corporate	12/01/06	Incomplete

Action	Description	Assigned to	Date	Status
	exemptions	Services		
06.26	Amendments to complaints procedure	Director of Social Services	09/03/06	Incomplete
06.29	Amend minutes 09/03/06	Committee Administrator	11/05/06	
06.30	Seek clarification from DHSSPS on the meaning of 'assessment of health and social care services in Northern Ireland' (letter from Don Hill, DHSSPS, 28/02/06)	Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.30	Paper detailing approach for overall assessment of health and social care services	Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.31	Distribute colour copy of presentation on design concept for new office accommodation in Belfast	Committee Administrator	11/05/06	
06.36	Paper on the selection of work programmes and prioritisation method	Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.36	Develop a research strategy	Board members/ Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.37	Check accuracy of paragraph 3 of financial report (11 months to 28 February 2006) and table 4 of the report	Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	
06.38	Letter to Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS expressing concern at the lack of a management statement and financial memorandum	Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.38	Amend process for the appointment of committees to make it explicit that skills and diversity balance will be taken into consideration	Chairman of Audit Committee and Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	

Action	Description	Assigned to	Date	Status
06.39	Plan and timetable for consultation process on draft corporate plan	Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	
06.39	Paper on programme to raise the profile of the Authority	Chief Executive	11/05/06	
06.40	Check accuracy of table 4 of the financial report	Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	
06.40	Send a copy of the draft business plan sent to DHSSPS for budget setting purposes to board members for information	Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	
06.43	Board members to visit new office accommodation in Belfast	Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	
06.43	Confirm meeting dates for June 2006 workshop and September 2006 Board meeting	Committee Administrator	11/05/06	Complete – 16/05/06
06.30 06.38 06.38 06.39	Draft agenda for workshop in June 2006 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assessment of health and social care services in Northern Ireland ○ annual report 2005/06 ○ committee structure ○ raising public profile 	Committee Administrator	11/05/06	
06.38	Amend risk strategy to include necessity to bring an up-date on the corporate risk register to a board meeting every quarter	Chairman of the Risk and Governance Sub-Committee and Director of Corporate Services	11/05/06	