

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Minutes of Board meeting held in the Park Plaza Hotel, Belfast International Airport, Antrim – 12 January 2006

Start: 5.15pm

Board Members Present

Richard Adams (Acting Chairman)
Geraldine Donaghy
Joan Harbison
James Jamison
Lilian Jennett
Ruth Laird
Allen McCartney
Connor Mulholland
Una O’Kane
Colin Reid
Austin Smith

Officers of the Board Present

Sandra Bell (Committee Administrator)
Stella Burnside (Chief Executive)
Theresa Nixon (Director of Social Services)
Phelim Quinn (Director of Nursing)
John Stewart (Director of Corporate Services)

Apologies

Patricia McCoy

PUBLIC SESSION

06.01 Welcome and Chairman’s remarks

The Acting Chairman welcomed members of the Board to the meeting. There were no members of the public present.

Richard Adams thanked the Board for their vote of confidence in electing him as deputy/acting Chairman.

06.02 Apologies

The Chairman communicated the apologies of Patricia McCoy.

06.03 **Minutes of the Board meeting, 10 November 2005**

The minutes of the Board, 10 November 2005 were approved without amendment and signed by the Acting Chairman.

06.04 **Matters arising from minutes**

Stakeholder involvement

The Chief Executive stated that although the consultation process with relevant stakeholders engaging with Board members was currently on hold until the Board had a strategic planning document they were happy with, the Authority was proceeding with some engagement with a view to recruiting lay assessors and consultation with other stakeholders

She reported that she was planning to meet with the four health and social care councils.

The Director of Corporate Services stated that he would send copies of the agreed Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions to Board members before the Board meeting on 9 March 2006.

ACTION:

Director of Corporate Services to send Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions to Board members.

Review of clinical and social care governance

The Medical Director reported progress with the review of clinical and social care governance. She reported that unfortunately funding had not been secured from the DHSSPS in order to commence the review.

It was **AGREED** that the issue of funding should be added to the agenda for the meeting with the Permanent Secretary.

Some Board members expressed concern about the credibility of the Authority if it is unable to complete the first piece of work it was charged with by the Minister. This was identified as a risk which should be fed into the strategic plan.

Colin Reid stated that he felt that the Authority needed to be formally launched and the Board **AGREED** that this would be good opportunity to meet with the Minister. It was accepted, however, that the strategic plan needed to be in place first.

It was **AGREED** that the Strategic Plan should be ready as soon as possible, and that this would be discussed later in this meeting.

Location

The Director of Corporate Services briefed the Board on progress with the new premises for the Authority office accommodation.

He reported that staff had been informed by members of the Senior Management Team that the new office accommodation would be in Belfast City Centre and that the draft lease had been reviewed by Authority Staff, Health Estates and the Land Valuation Agency. The lease is currently with the Authority's solicitors, who the Director of Corporate Services reported he would be meeting on 26 January 2006.

He also reported that a commissioning team had been established and that the Authority hoped to employ design consultants to help with the layout of the open-plan office.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the Partnership Forum, which included trade union representatives, had been consulted and that an Equality Impact Assessment would be conducted. He added that the Beeches Management Centre are going to carry out a staff satisfaction survey and that plan was still to move in and around 31 March 2006.

He also reported that the office accommodation in Londonderry was further away from fruition as it was still under construction but that he would continue to keep the Board fully informed.

The Board expressed their encouragement with the progress with the office accommodation and congratulated the Senior Management Team.

The Chairman asked about the cost of the office move. The Director of Corporate Services reminded the Board about the briefing at the last meeting. He said that he would bring details of the Londonderry office cost to the next meeting.

Reassessment of time and location of public board meetings

The Board **AGREED** that the start time of public board meetings should be changed to 1pm. The private session will come first in the agenda. Once the Authority has moved fully into its proposed office accommodation Board meetings will be in the Authority premises in Belfast and Londonderry.

06.05 Overview of key issues arising from announced and unannounced inspections of 48 children's residential care units, April 2005 – December 2005: presentation by the Director of Social Services

The Director of Social Services provided Board members with a handout detailing her presentation (copy attached).

The Chairman thanked the Director of Social Services for her very interesting presentation and invited questions and/or comments from the Board.

Colin Reid stated that he felt that it was important that a smaller number of recommendations were followed up to ensure a greater affect on improvement. The Director of Social Services agreed and stated that this is what the Authority inspectors try to do.

The Chief Executive reiterated the need for meaningful recommendations.

Austin Smith asked whether there was an opportunity for peer review. The Director of Social Services stated that this was something to be considered and that the use of lay assessors was also important. The Chief Executive reported that one of the children's inspectors had conducted research on children as peer assessors in the inspection process. She reported that she had applied for an R&D grant to continue this research and that the Authority would support her in this.

Una O'Kane asked if the Board would receive a list of the homes inspected and if each of these homes received individual feedback. The Director of Social Service confirmed both that the Board will receive a full report and that each of the homes receive individual feedback and support.

Joan Harbison suggested that Board members could be involved in the inspection process. She also asked about the residential unit's staff being registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

The Director of Social Services stated that he had met with the NISCC to discuss the process for registration and continual professional development.

The Chairman stated that any improvements in the children's residential units could be a key performance indicator for the Authority.

06.06 **Financial Report, paper B/05/05**

Board members **NOTED** the financial report and statements for 8

months to 30 November 2005. The Director of Corporate Services indicated that the Authority should break even at year end.

Ruth Laird enquired as to the Authority's difficulties with recruitment and asked who was providing the Authority with HR advice. The Chief Executive stated that the Central Services Agency provided advice. She agreed with Ruth Laird that the content could be more "enlivened" in order to attract the right caliber of applicant.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Corporate Services and stated that it was encouraging that the Authority was going to break even.

06.07 **Audit Committee report**

Allen McCartney, Chairman of the Audit Committee, gave a verbal briefing to the Board.

He reported that that the committee had a wide remit and that he was encouraged that everyone had attended CIPFA training for public sector board members.

Allen McCartney also reported that the committee had reviewed their terms of reference and that an amended version would be presented to the Board for approval as soon as possible.

The committee agreed external and internal audit arrangements, and agreed the structure of the financial report. A balance sheet will be presented to the Board at each public Board meeting.

He reported that a Governance and Risk Management sub-committee had been established with the following membership; Patricia McCoy (Chairman), Joan Harbison, Connor Mulholland and Colin Reid.

The committee had also looked at a fraud strategy and policy and had identified the need to clarify which reports should be reviewed and how.

The Acting Chairman stated that until a permanent chairman is appointed to the Authority he will step down from the Audit Committee. The Board **AGREED** that it was not necessary for the Audit Committee to appoint another member in the interim.

In response to a question from Ruth Laird, Allen McCartney confirmed that a risk register will be produced and will be brought to the Board for discussion.

Allen McCartney confirmed that the minutes of the Audit Committee will

be circulated to the Board once they have received the approval of the committee.

06.08 **Strategic Planning Committee report**

Austin Smith, Chairman of Strategic Planning Committee, gave a verbal briefing to the Board.

He reported that the committee had met on 8 December 2005 and again on 12 January 2006.

It was also reported that the committee has discussed and drafted the terms of reference. Following amendment these will be forwarded to the Board for approval.

Austin Smith reported that significant changes had been made to the strategic and business plans. These would now form one document beginning 1 April 2006, with an audit trail for 2005/06 demonstrating what the Authority achieved in this time. He reported that the critical success factors are taken from the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

He reported that the committee is pleased with format and structure of the plan and that they would like to circulate the plan for review prior to approval at the next Board meeting.

Board members discussed fully the necessity for the Strategic and Business plans to be completed and approved as soon as possible. It was **AGREED** that it may be impossible to encapsulate all the Board members' ideas and that compromise would be required. All Board members, however, felt that it was essential that it was a document that they could all subscribe to and have ownership of.

It was **AGREED** that the draft Strategic and Business plans should be circulated to Board members by 3 February 2006, and that it should be added to the workshop agenda on the 9 February 2006. Board members **AGREED** to meet at 10am on 9 February 2006 to allow for full discussion.

Una O'Kane asked if the Board could be provided with clear areas for comment with regard to the plan. Joan Harbison expressed her feeling that this was an unfair onus on Authority staff, but that perhaps the Strategic Planning Committee could provide some direction. The Chairman expressed his faith in the Strategic Planning Committee in producing a document that the Board could sign up to.

ACTION:

Add discussion on Strategic plan to the Board workshop agenda, 9 February 2006. Start time of workshop to be forwarded to 10am.

06.09 **Equality Scheme**

The Director of Corporate Services reported to the Board the Authority's progress with its Equality Scheme, as required by section 75, Northern Ireland Act 1998.

He reported that the scheme had been out for consultation since 21 December 2005 and which would finish on 23 February 2006 in order to report back to the Equality Commission for 17 March 2006.

06.10 **Any other business**

Complaints

The Chief Executive presented to the Board a briefing note detailing the number of complaints received by the Authority with regard to the independent sector 1 April 2005 – 6 January 2006.

Finish: 10.00pm

**Next meeting: 9 March 2006
Ramada Hotel, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast
10am**

Approved (Chairman)

Date

ACTION LIST

Action	Description	Assigned to	Date	Deadline
26	Circulate Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions	Director of Corporate Services	10/11/05	9/3/06
27	Issue inspection reports for information	Committee Administrator	10/11/05	ASAP
29	Email Chief Executive with areas of interest	All Board members	10/11/05	
32	Express concern to the DHSSPS with regard to public appointment process	Acting Chairman	12/01/06	
33	Inform the Public Appointments Commissioner of the Authority's concern about the DHSSPS public appointment process	Acting Chairman	12/01/06	
34	Agenda items for meeting with Permanent Secretary (see minutes)	Committee Administrator	12/01/06	22/03/06
35	Seek legal advice on Freedom of Information exemptions	Director of Corporate Services	12/01/06	ASAP
36	Procedures/protocols for establishing committees/sub-committees/working groups	Board members	12/01/06	9/02/06
37	Strategic plan – draft plan to be circulated in advance of board workshop	Strategic Planning Committee	12/01/06	3/02/06
38	Board meetings to be rescheduled to start at 1pm	Committee Administrator	12/01/06	ASAP
39	Minutes of Strategic Planning Committee to be circulated to Board members	Committee Administrator	12/01/06	ASAP