



**Minutes of the public Board meeting held in Ramada Hotel,
117 Milltown Rd, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast, 9 March 2006**

Start: 2pm

Board members present

Richard Adams (Acting Chairman)
Joan Harbison
James Jamison
Ruth Laird
Lillian Jennett
Allen McCartney
Patricia McCoy
Una O'Kane
Colin Reid
Austin Smith

Officers of the Board present

Sandra Bell (Committee Administrator)
Stella Burnside (Chief Executive)
Caroline Humphrey (Medical Director)
Phelim Quinn (Director of Nursing)
John Stewart (Director of Corporate Services)

Apologies

Geraldine Donaghy
Connor Mulholland

PUBLIC SESSION

06.10 Welcome and Acting Chairman's remarks

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

06.11 Apologies for absence

The Acting Chairman communicated apologies from Geraldine Donaghy

and Connor Mulholland.

06.12 Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 12 January 2006, Park Plaza Hotel, Antrim (06/min/01)

There were no amendments to the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on Thursday 12 January 2006, Park Plaza Hotel, Antrim (06/min/01).

06.13 Matters arising from minutes

Meeting with Health and Social Care Councils

The Chief Executive reported that she had met with the Health and Social Care Councils and that the Authority and HSSCs will hold a joint seminar on advocacy issues.

Anonymised minutes

Board members AGREED that minutes should be anonymised.

Location

The Director of Corporate Services reported that the sublease for 9th Floor, Riverside Tower had been signed 3 March 2006 and that a 3 month rent free period had begun. He also Briefed board members on developments in relation to a second office in Londonderry.

“Launch” of the Authority

Board members AGREED that a ‘launch’ of the Authority was required and that this should either be connected to the Corporate Plan, official opening of the new office accommodation or review report.

Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions

It was AGREED that the Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions should be forwarded to the Board as soon as possible.

06.14 Financial report – paper A/02/06 prepared by the Director of Corporate Services

The Director of Corporate Services presented the financial report to the Board. He also reported that the Authority had recently appointed an Information Manager.

The Director of Corporate Services reported to the Board about the importance of the Department’s decision with regard to a full cost recovery or fee free approach to fees as this will effect the Authority’s income in the future. The report was NOTED by the Board.

06.15 Audit committee – minutes of the Audit Committee meeting 30 November 2005 (05/acmin/01)

The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting 30 November 2005 (05/acmin/01) were NOTED by the Board.

06.16 Strategic planning committee – verbal briefing by the Chairman of the committee

Ruth Laird and Austin Smith gave a verbal briefing to the Board.

Board members NOTED the progress with the Corporate Plan. It was also AGREED that a copy of a letter from Don Hill, Deputy Secretary Resources and Performance Group, should be circulated to all Board Members.

The Chief Executive confirmed to the Board that an Annual Report was required from the Authority and that this would be produced for September 2006.

ACTION:

Committee Administrator to circulate letter from Don Hill to Board.

06.17 Equality Scheme – paper B/02/06 prepared by the Director of Corporate Services

The Board AGREED that the draft Equality Scheme could be submitted to the Equality Commission on 14 March 2006 subject to the following amendments:

- Section 2.3 should be moved to before the section on the Chief Executive;
- As the Board were appointed by the Minister and not the DHSSPS the Equality Scheme should be amended to reflect this; and
- Personalise the scheme so it is unique to the Authority.

The Director of Corporate Services reported that an Equality Impact Assessment was required with regard to the Authority's decision to amalgamate the five regional offices to two offices in Belfast and Londonderry.

06.18 Complaints procedure – prepared by the Director of Social Services

The Director of Corporate Services gave a powerpoint presentation detailing the Authority's complaints procedure.

The Board AGREED that the procedure appeared to be correct but that it

would only be until the process had been followed that any faults would be identified.

A Board member asked about the role and remit of the Human Rights Commission. The Chief Executive reported that she had met with an officer of the Human Rights Commission and that it was her understanding that the Commission would be setting parameters and developing legislation as a result of complaints but not investigating them. She stated that the Authority would be working in partnership with the Authority.

The Director of Social Services reiterated that the Authority would encourage local resolution of complaints. Clarification was sought as to what would happen if the complainant did not want to complain directly. The Chief Executive stated that it was important that there is consent to investigate a complaint but if this is present this will be followed up.

The Board AGREED that they would like to see a bi-monthly report detailing the number of complaints received and/or investigated by the Authority.

It was also AGREED that the level of proof required to investigate a complaint needed to be clarified. Allen McCartney agreed to work with the Director of Corporate Services with regard to this.

The Board also AGREED that there should be a consistency of language within the procedure and that it must be accessible and well publicised.

The Board asked that the procedure was amended to clarify that the Authority will investigate a complaint from a complainant's solicitor/barrister only if they are acting as an advocate and not as their official legal representative and it was clarified that whistleblowing would be treated as an incident and not a complaint.

Thanks were expressed to Daphne Doran and the Care Standards Transition Team for their work on the Complaint's procedure.

ACTION:

Allen McCartney and Director of Social Services to work on level of proof required to investigate a complaint.

Director of Social Services to make required amendments.

06.19 Any other business

It was noted by the Board that there had been some negative press coverage with regard standard of cleanliness in hospitals across Northern

Ireland and other quality issues. It was asked whether there was anything the Authority could do with regard to this.

The Chief Executive stated that the Authority would monitor the situation and would contact the Trusts asking how they are dealing with ensuring cleanliness in their hospitals.

The Board discussed whether the Authority should commission a piece of research. The Chief Executive stated that she would try to identify funding for this.

06.20 Date of next meeting

11 May 2006 – Manor House, Belfast

Approved (Chairman)

Date