

# BOARD MINUTES

**Meeting:** Board meeting  
**Date:** Wednesday 16 July 2008  
**Time:** 10.00 – 14.00  
**Location:** Board Room, Griffin House, Lever Street, Manchester

**Attendees:** Dr Bob Chilton OBE, Chair  
Professor Judy Simons, Deputy Chair  
Lizzie Abderrahim  
Councillor Shirley Flint  
Paul Gott  
Elizabeth Hall  
Mike Kendall  
Councillor Mehboob Khan

**Apologies:** Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE

**In attendance:** Glenys Stacey, Chief Executive  
Richard Scott, Head of Communications  
Navin Gokool, Head of Governance and Client Services  
Paul Hoey, Director of Strategy and Guidance  
Hazel Salisbury, Director of Casework

**Minutes:** Claire Chadwick

The Chair welcomed Lizzie Abderrahim and Mike Kendall, the two newly appointed Board members to the meeting. Congratulations were also extended to Professor Judy Simons in her new role as Deputy Chair.

Item No.	Subject	Action
08/62	Apologies	
	Sir Ron Watson, CBE	
08/63	Minutes of 21 May 2008 Meeting (open session)	

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

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**08/64 Matters Arising**

The Chair asked for a running list of "matters arising" to come to subsequent Board meetings itemising issues the Board needed to return to. GS

8/54 - The Director of Strategy and Guidance informed the meeting that feedback relating to the quarterly returns would be presented in the Chief Executive's report.

08/57 – The Director of Strategy and Guidance informed the Board of the details of the service complaint which had been upheld during 2007/2008.

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**08/65 Declaration of Board member interests**

The Chair asked each Board member to declare all their interests. It was further requested by the Chair that all future agenda should be structured showing the declarations and forthcoming engagements as separate items. Declarations should appear first. Forthcoming engagements would then be covered under Board members' feedback. GS

- Dr Bob Chilton, OBE
  - Board of Information Commissioner

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**08/66 Chair's report (oral)**

The Chair brought the Boards' attention to the appointments process and current Board (Liberal Democrat) vacancy. He informed the meeting that he is talking to the Department for Communities and Local Government and asking for this to be progressed expeditiously.

A meeting with the Local Government Association had taken place and the Chair stated that they had been very keen to hear how the local regime was working.

2009 diary dates were discussed and it was agreed to move future meetings to Tuesdays. GS

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**08/67 Board members feedback**

- Elizabeth Hall – visit to Tandridge District Council Standards Committee. Participated (without prejudice) in their training event.

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**08/68 Chief Executive's report**

The Board's attention was brought to paragraph 3.5 of the Chief Executive's report noting the Department's agreement for the Standards Board for England to consider the necessary strategic KPIs

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for the next planning cycle. The Board agreed the proposal to revisit the KPIs for the current year. GS/NG

The Board noted the good relationship with the sponsor department and were informed that they had welcomed the suggestion of more joint working. The Board agreed that joint working proposals should be explored further. PH

The Director of Strategy and Guidance referred the Board's attention to paragraph 6 of the report relating to performance. It was reported that the first quarter of local case handling ended at close of play on 30 June 2008 and at the end of the two week completion window that the position was healthy. The Board noted that 88% of Monitoring Officers had returned data.

The Board noted the content of the report.

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### 08/69 Code of Conduct for Members

The Chief Executive introduced the paper in the Head of Legal's absence. It was reported that the essence of the paper was to ensure Standards Board for England governance arrangements stand up to best practice. It was noted the Board member Code of Conduct was being looked at in line with current cabinet office guidance for Boards of Non-Departmental Public Bodies. The Chief Executive recommended the Board should adopt the recommendation made in the paper.

Paul Gott noted that under 4.1 he would have to declare a personal interest.

The Chair asked that the document from the Cabinet Office from which this report is drawn be brought to the Board for re-assurance. It was agreed that this item would be added to the new matters arising list. GS

Mike Kendall noted that Annex 2 referred to declarations being made at formal meetings. He asked should the same principles arise at informal meetings too? The Chair noted the Standards Board for England should be seen as exemplary – when in doubt, Board members were encouraged to declare any interests.

Discussion took place around whether when a Board member makes a complaint (either as a member of the public or as a councillor) or is the subject of a complaint, should he/she continue as an active member of the Board. It was noted that although the Code reflected the agreed Board position, a sentence was needed to allow the Board to take other action in exceptional circumstances. This to be added to matters arising in September. SG

The Chair asked the senior management team to look into this issue

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and clarify if matters had been fully resolved/captured in a previous decision. This to be added to matters arising for the September meeting. SG

The Chief Executive confirmed the Board's suggested approach would be looked into. GS

The Chair confirmed the Board's approval of the report subject to these points and some small typing errors. It was agreed the amended part of the report would come back to the Board for approval under matters arising.

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## 08/70 Stakeholder engagement

The Board considered and discussed the rationale for a planned approach to dealing with stakeholder relationships. It was agreed a planned and rigorous approach was needed.

Mike Kendall stressed the need to instil in the minds of elected members that the Standards Board for England is available to provide support, he further noted that local authority councillors' views feed into national issues. He stressed visits make a difference to local government leaders and chief executives and this approach should be considered. He further suggested that Board members should be utilised for these visits.

Elizabeth Hall agreed and noted that this suggestion is resource intensive and therefore confirmed her willingness to be involved. She further noted the need to ensure that the Standards Board for England is represented on the attendance lists of all major events where possible.

It was noted that visibility was important but there was a need to ensure clarity on our key messages.

The Board requested the production of a presentation pack for Board members to ensure the correct messages were being given out. RS

It was noted that the roadshows were an extremely good way to enable people who were unlikely to attend or have the necessary resources to attend conferences /assembly engaging with the Standards Board for England.

The Chair concluded noting the need to empower people and members to be able to act as external ambassadors', stressing that the Standards Board for England's shared narrative must be absolutely right. RS  
Following the devolution of role to local Standards Committees a "how was it for you" presentation might be timely? This could help in the bigger strategic debate.

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The report was agreed.

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**08/71 Internal communications – revised arrangements**

The Board discussed the report and offered observations.

The Director of Communications reported on the improvements to the staff intranet facility. It was agreed that Board members would be given an induction once the IT department were able to confirm connections. RS

The Chair noted that the Board was happy to receive this report, stressing that the Director of Communications should note face to face team briefing appeared to be the linchpin. RS

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**08/72 New Planning Process to create 2009/2012 corporate plan**

The Board noted and agreed the report.

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**08/73 Assessing the impact of the standards framework**

The Chair challenged the team to synthesise the interesting information into a balanced scorecards approach. PH

It was noted that annual reports are key.

Judy Simons suggested the team could look at the higher education model as an example. PH

Elizabeth Hall requested the need for the data to be more tabular. PH

The Board agreed the need to synthesise information without over simplifying messages. PH

The question relating to the public perception of members should be looked at. PH

The Board agreed the paper was very interesting and warranted a much more in-depth discussion. PH

The Chair requested that the paper be updated to reflect Board comments prior to discussion at the away day scheduled for 16 September 2008.

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**08/74 Annual Accounts and NAO management letter 2007/2008**

The Board noted that the National Audit Office had confirmed the accounts would be laid in parliament on 21 July 2008.

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The Chair requested that congratulations be passed to staff on getting to this stage.

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**08/75 Guidance to Ethical Standards Officers**

The Board noted the content of the report and agreed the approach in the paper.

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**08/76 Client Services report**

The Board's attention was brought to the red light against the KPI around cases and noted the need to look at revisiting the relevance of this particular indicator in future. NG

It was noted that reputational issues remain very powerful and that the Board needed to guard the reputation of the Standards Board for England ensuring the risk is managed. It was agreed this should be kept under review. GS

The Chief Executive confirmed the need to ensure KPIs match the Standards Board for England's role as a strategic regulator and that the Department were in full agreement.

The Board noted targets were very focussed.

The Board received and noted the report.

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08/77

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The Board then went into closed session.

08/80

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The next meetings will be held on Tuesday 16 September 2008 (Board) and Wednesday 17 September 2008 (away day)



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Chair