

THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND
Board Meeting

Board Room
1st Floor, Cottons Centre
Cottons Lane, London SE1 2QG
20 October 2004
10.00am – 12.45pm

Meeting Minutes

- Present: Sir Anthony Holland, Chair
Patricia Hughes, CBE, Deputy Chair
Cllr Louise Bloom
John Bowers QC
Cllr Celia Cameron, CBE
Cllr Peter Chalke, CBE (from item 04/189 onwards)
Professor Alan Doig
Margaret Pratt
Paul Sabapathy, CBE (from item 04/190 onwards)
Roger Taylor
- In attendance: David Prince, Chief Executive
Tim Bogan, Communications Manager
Allister Duncan, Head of Corporate Services
Kathy Farrand, Head of Referrals Unit
Paul Hoey, Head of Policy and Guidance
Lisa Klein, Senior Ethical Standards Officer
Natalie Birtle, Ethical Standards Officer (Item 04/197 only)
Dr Gary Hickey, Research Adviser (item 04/194 only)
- Observers: Fariha Ayyub, Legal Adviser
James Haydock, Investigator
Ahtia Mirza, Investigator
Kay North, Investigator
Oluchi Onwere, Legal Adviser
Anne Rehill, Senior Policy Advisor
John Williams, Referrals Case Manager
Clare Stephenson, Senior Communications Adviser (item 04/196 only)

ACTION

04/183 Apologies
None

04/184 Minutes of Board Meeting held on 8 September 2004 (Open Session)
The Deputy Chair advised that draft minute 04/159 was incorrect and that she was representing the Standards Board at events in Winchester and Reigate. Following this correction, the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September were approved and signed by the Chair.

04/185 Matters Arising
None.

04/186 Declaration of Board Member interests and forthcoming engagements

Chair:

- Bedfordshire Association on 20 October and Devon on 25 October.
- Also going to speak, with Chief Executive, to Surrey Heath on 21 December.

Louise Bloom:

- Notified Chief Executive of council memberships of her mother and partner.

Alan Doig:

- Declared an interest in respect of item 04/208 but will not be involved in any bid for the Standards Board.
- Also confirmed that he will serve full term until the end of March.

Margaret Pratt:

- Together with Anne Rehill, making a presentation to Warwickshire and West Midlands County Association on 27 October.
- Chairing one of the 2 day events for the Better Governance Forum (CIPFA) on 29 October.

Roger Taylor:

- Working with the Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Local Authorities as part of the framework agreement with the Prime Minister's office over Capacity Building.
- May be contracted to Peterborough City Council over their education provision. Will advise Chief Executive if/when confirmed.
- Together with Paul Hoey, making a presentation in Yorkshire to each of the Ridings.

04/187 Team Briefing

The Board noted the report.

04/188 Code Review Consultation Paper

The Board made various suggestions about the content and agreed with recommendations (a) and (b) regarding the suggested approach to the consultation, its timing and structure but not with recommendation (c) regarding sign off. They further agreed that the final draft will be brought back to the 8 December Board Meeting.

HP&G

04/189 Service Complaints

The Chair suggested that this paper should be withdrawn, on the basis that it is premature, with which the Board agreed.

04/190 ODPM Consultation: Political Restrictions

The Board made various suggestion about what should be included in this response and agreed that we should respond to the consultation paper along the lines suggested at Appendix 2 to the paper with the final reply being agreed and signed off by the Chair.

HP&G

04/191 ODPM Consultation: Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees

John Bowers withdrew from the meeting during discussion of issues relating to Hull.

The Board made various suggestion about what should be included in this response and agreed that we should respond to the consultation paper along the lines suggested at Appendix 2 to the paper with the final reply being agreed and signed off by the Chair. They further agreed to share the further comments at Appendix 3 with ODPM but not as part of the formal response and that we remain silent on the need for national overview and consistency.

HP&G

- 04/192 Board Meetings and Panels**
 The Board adopted the schedule of dates attached at Appendix 3 which is a two monthly cycle of Board meetings. They also accepted the proposed Terms of Reference for the Investigations Panel and confirmed the Terms of Reference of the other Panels and the Audit Committee. The Board also agreed to consider the allocation and roles of the Board Champions as detailed in Appendix 2 and the Chief Executive will canvass members' preferences. The Chief Executive will also contact Cllr Bloom regarding her preferences for panel membership. Panels will meet on a two monthly cycle beginning with the intervening month between Board meetings so that there is the ability for all Board members to meet monthly when the need arises. **CE**
- 04/193 Chief Executive's Report**
 The Board received the Chief Executive's Report. They were also pleased to note that Claire Lefort, Legal Adviser, had been commended for her conduct of a case at a recent Adjudication Panel hearing, and that the President of the Adjudication Panel had commented favourably on the current operation of the process. They congratulated both Claire Lefort and Natalie Birtle on their success in The Law Society Diploma in Local Government examinations.
- 04/194 Joint Working**
 The Board welcomed the report and noted Dr Gary Hickey's verbal update of the latest discussions with the Audit Commission on the Key Line of Enquiry, the focus of which they wishes to see retained in the new format.
- 04/195 Referrals Unit Report**
 The Board noted the report. The Board asked for an update on the pre investigations pilot at the December Board meeting. **HRU**
- 04/196 Communications Update**
 The Board asked for thanks and congratulations to be passed to all those involved in the organisation and running of the 2004 Annual Conference which they felt to be a great success.
- Roadshows:** Board members were concerned about the suggested timing of March, April and May 2005 in view of the possible election date. The Communications Manager was asked to re-visit this and report back to the December Board. They also asked the Head of Corporate Services to look at funding if the programme were brought forward. **Comms.Mgr**
HCS
- SOLACE Monitoring Officers' Conference:** The Board noted the points made by the Communications Manager and agreed that we should proceed with this proposal on the basis that it is "in association" with SOLACE. **Comms.Mgr**
- 04/197 SESO Report**
 The Board noted the report and the verbal update from Natalie Birtle, ESO for the Holding Bay Team.
- 04/198 Finance Report**
 The Board noted the report, including minutes of the Audit Committee held on 22 September 2004. The Head of Corporate Services distributed copies of the new Expenses Policy and advised that the Finance Department will be taking a more rigorous approach to expenses now that there is an agreed policy and that there will be a requirement to give an explanation if hotel costs are higher than those allowed under the Expenses Policy.

04/199 Human Resources Report
The Board noted the report.

04/200 Information Technology Report
The Board noted the report.

04/201 Management of Procurement
The Board noted the report and their attention was drawn to paragraph 2.1 of the procedures regarding restrictions on entering contracts applicable to Board members and members of staff.

04/202 Closed Items
– The Board then went into closed session to consider confidential matters.

04/210

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8 December 2004 at 10.00am

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Chair