

THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND
Board Meeting

Board Room
1st Floor, Cottons Centre
Cottons Lane, London SE1 2QG
8 October 2003
10.00am – 12.20pm

Meeting Minutes

- Present: Sir Anthony Holland, Chair
Patricia Hughes, CBE, Deputy Chair
John Bowers QC
Cllr Celia Cameron, CBE
Professor Alan Doig
Margaret Pratt
Paul Sabapathy, OBE
Roger Taylor
- Apologies: Cllr Peter Chalke, CBE
- In attendance: John Edwards OBE, Interim Chief Executive
Tim Bailey, Head of Referrals (part-time)
Tim Bogan, Communications Manager
Chris Boothman, Head of Legal Services
Allister Duncan, Head of Corporate Services
Paul Hoey, Head of Policy and Guidance
Lindy Petts, Head of Human Resources (part-time)
Clare Stephenson, Communications Analyst (part-time)
Bryan Wiggins, IT Manager (part-time)
Michelle Witton, Senior Policy Advisor (part-time)

ACTION

- 03/157 Apologies**
Peter Chalke
- 03/158 Minutes of Board Meeting held on 27 August 2003 (Open Session)**
The minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2003 (open session) were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 03/159 Matters Arising**
Item 03/152 – Discussion of Ethics and Standards – the Head of Policy and Guidance reported that this has not been brought back to the October meeting because of various budgetary issues.
- 03/160 Declaration of Board Member interests**
Professor Alan Doig declared an interest in respect of paper 03/182.
- 03/161 Team Briefing**
The Board noted the report.
- 03/162 Forecast 2003/04 and Agreed Action**
The Board formally endorsed the actions recorded and noted the report and its appendices. The Board also asked for thanks to be recorded to the Head of Corporate Services and his colleagues for this piece of work and also to Roger

Taylor for his contribution. It was noted that there is a typographical error on page 3 of the first appendix and that the first line should read "...and an additional revenue grant in 2003/04 of £500k and in"

- 03/163 Report on the proposed budget setting process for 04/05 Financial Year**
The Board agreed to the proposed budget setting process. It was further resolved that if the SBE is to deliver its statutory responsibilities the Board will seek to spend at the level indicated and therefore asked the Chair to make any necessary representations to the ODPM including the need to make an early decision.

The budget will be discussed further at the November Board Meeting.

HCS

- 03/164 Recruitment Authorisation Process**
In the context of budgetary uncertainty, the Board adopted the process outlined in the paper and approved the following procedure:

1. A recruitment authorisation panel to be appointed consisting of one Board member, the Head of Corporate Services (as signatories) and the Head of Human Resources (as support to the recruitment process)
2. Celia Cameron to be appointed as the panel Board member
3. The Board receive a regular report of panel decisions at Board Meetings as part of the HR report.

It was further agreed that Board members will be sent copies of the minutes of the Recruitment Authorisation Panel meetings.

HHR

- 03/165 Annual Assembly**
The Board agreed the provision of approximately £73,000 subsidy for the 2004 Assembly on the basis of a two-day delegate fee of £380 including VAT.

The Board further agreed that the Communications Manager may approach non commercial organisations such as the ODPM, Audit Commission, LGA and IdeA for sponsorship. Sponsorship from a commercial organisation would not be appropriate.

Comms.Mgr

- 03/166 Amendment to Tendering Arrangements**
The Board approved the revised tendering arrangements as set out in section 5 of this paper. The last sentence paragraph 5d was amended to read "...the contract were considered to be 'best value' would need to be formally recorded and received by the Audit Committee."

HCS

- 03/167 Entertainment Expenses Policy**
The Board approved the policy attached to the paper as a temporary measure until a comprehensive expenses policy can be drawn up and approved.

HCS

- 03/168 Review of the Risk Register**
The Board reviewed the Risk Register attached to the paper and confirmed that they were satisfied that all major risks had been identified and that appropriate action is planned. They further agreed that the management develop a risk management strategy through a group headed by the Chief Executive and to include the Head of Corporate Services and the IT Manager. In giving this approval, the Board asked that the policy is wrapped around the legislative framework, particularly the requirements of the Information Commissioner, and takes account of the Corporate Plan.

HCS

03/169 Delegation of Referrals

The Board adopted the scheme of delegation as set out in Appendix A of this paper. In summary this provides for:-

1. All cases to be signed off by the Head of Referrals (or the Head of Legal in his absence);
2. When decisions are challenged by complainants, a review by the Chief Executive;
3. The setting up of a Board Referrals Group to monitor and guide the work of the Referrals Group.

The Board further agreed that the Board Referrals Group will meet monthly and report back to the full Board on a quarterly basis. This Group will comprise John Bowers, Celia Cameron, Peter Chalke, Patricia Hughes and Roger Taylor with a minimum of 3 members required to attend.

HRU

It was noted that it is not anticipated that the Secretary of State will issue the order until the middle of November and it will then require formal agreement by the Board.

HLS/HP&G

03/170 Referrals Assessment Criteria

The Board adopted the revised referrals assessment criteria set out in Annex 2 to this paper.

03/171 Mediation

The Board agreed its recommendations from the Away Day regarding further work on Mediation and asked for a report back to them in January 2004. The Board also asked for a report on Influencing to the January meeting.

HP&G

03/172 Consultation Paper on Indemnities

The Board agreed that the Chair should respond on behalf of the Standards Board to the Consultation Paper in a detailed basis as set out in Appendix 3 to this paper

HP&G

03/173 Board Meetings and Away Days 2004

The Board agreed:

1. That Board Meetings will continue to be held on a six-weekly basis (holiday periods allowing) from 10.00am – 1.00pm on a Wednesday with the exception of the meeting on 8 January which is a Thursday as per the schedule attached to the paper.
2. That an Away Day is held on 11 May 2004. It is anticipated that a further Away Day will be scheduled during the year following the appointment of the new Chief Executive.

It was also agreed that the papers for the 8 January 2004 meeting will be circulated before the Christmas holiday and that an additional Away Day, earlier than 11 May, may be required to deal with the Corporate Plan.

03/174 Chief Executive's Report

The Board noted the report and that appropriate arrangements will be established for the approval of the Corporate Plan.

HCS

03/175 Referrals Unit Report

The Board noted the report and supplementary report.

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| 03/176 | SESO Report The Board noted the report. They requested that reports from the Parliamentary Ombudsman be circulated to Board members. | SESO |
| 03/177 | Finance Report The Board noted the report. | |
| 03/178 | Human Resources Report The Board noted the report. | |
| 03/179 | IT Report The Board noted the report. With regard to the CMS, the IT Manager was asked to return to the Board, if necessary, with a bid for investment to improve system stability. The IT Manager was also asked to circulate Board/colleagues with instructions on dealing with SPAM. | ITM |
| 03/180 | Strategic Plan – Quarterly Update The Board noted that this paper is deferred to the November Board Meeting. | HP&G |
| 03/181 | Complaints about the service provided by the Standards Board The Board noted the report. It was suggested that the procedure should be placed within the framework of the British Standard on complaints. | HLS |
| 03/182 | Research Commissioning Update The report was noted. The Board asked the Head of Policy and Guidance to investigate whether the reports could be available earlier. | HP&G |
| 03/183 | Satisfaction with the Investigative Process The Board noted the report. | |
| 03/184 | FAQs The Board noted the responses developed and that they will be placed on the website and in future Bulletins following the Board Meeting. | |
| 03/185 | Closed Items | |
| – | The Board then went into closed session to consider confidential matters. | |
| 03/188 | | |

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 19 November 2003 at 10.00am

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Chair