

# Board minutes

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Meeting:  
Board meeting

Time:  
11.00 – 15.30

Date:  
17/11/09

Location:  
Griffin House

Attendees:  
Dr Bob Chilton, Chair  
Professor Judy Simons, Deputy Chair  
Councillor Shirley Flint  
Paul Gott  
Elizabeth Hall  
Councillor Mehboob Khan  
Councillor Stephen Knight  
Councillor Sir Ron Watson

Apologies:  
Lizzie Abderrahim

In attendance:  
Glenys Stacey  
Richard Broom (Items 09/110 and 09/120)  
Dave Gray  
Gary Hickey (Items 09/111 and 09/114)  
Paul Hoey  
Vivienne Horton  
Tim Leslie  
Freda Sharkey  
Steve Barrow  
Richard Scott

Minutes:  
Caroline Matthews

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Item No.	Subject	Action
09/97	<b>Apologies</b>  Lizzie Abderrahim.	
09/98	<b>Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2009 (open session)</b>  The minutes were <u>agreed</u> as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
09/99	<b>Matters arising</b>  Elizabeth Hall requested an update on progress on the planned event with Chris Kelly and the Committee on Standards in Public Life. Glenys Stacey confirmed that she had been in contact with Chris Kelly by email. Paul	PH

Hoey reported that he will be revisiting this in January 2010.

The Board actions report was noted.

**09/100    Declarations of Board member interests**

The Chair asked each Board member to declare any new interests.

Paul Gott declared that he had been appointed as an ambassador for the diversity in public appointments ambassadors' network, and will be having his induction later this month.

The Chair requested that, in light of his position on the Board of the Information Commissioner, Judy Simons chair item 09/105.

**09/101    Chair's report (oral)**

The Chair reported that the afternoon presentation by BMG would now be replaced by a presentation on the review of the ethical standards framework.

The Chair confirmed that Board reappointments for Mehboob Khan, Shirley Flint and Ron Watson had been accepted and completed, and that the Board vacancy is now with head-hunters. He confirmed that decisions regarding composition and Chairmanship of the Audit Committee will be made once the vacancy is filled.

BC/PH

The Chair informed the Board that he has been considering whether a blog would be an appropriate medium for delivering information, and is now looking at having a more structured presence on the website. This is a work in progress to be taken forward.

BC/RS

Mehboob Khan stated that he would welcome it if Standards for England offered a means for people to engage and converse electronically. Glenys Stacey reported that we now have a password protected monitoring officer's forum, which has 200 members.

The Chair reported that he would be speaking at a joint standards committee meeting for Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham standards committees on 3 December.

The Chair informed the Board that he had recently written to the Conservative party leader and received a response which encouraged a continued conversation with senior party figures. The Chair confirmed that he will work to ensure that engagement continues.

BC/PH

**09/102 Board members' feedback (oral)**

Board members reported on recent events they had attended as well as contact and engagement with national politicians and senior stakeholders.

Paul Hoey informed the Board that he has a narrative of serious cases, which he can circulate to the Board for reference. Judy Simons confirmed that she would welcome this, and also a handy one-pager of key statistics for reference when at events.

RS/PH

It was agreed that the cases narrative and a one-pager would be circulated to the Board.

The Board now considered Item 09/105.

**09/103 Chief Executive's report**

The Chief Executive introduced her report to the Board and presented the corporate scorecard. She confirmed that work was continuing on revising the management information report and corporate scorecard as the directorates develop, and that work would progress on the knowledge management programme following the framework review.

The Chief Executive reported that Project Excellence is progressing well and that a presentation on this will be made at the January 2010 Board meeting.

TL

The report was received.

**09/104 Management Information Report**

Freda Sharkey presented the report.

The Board considered the report. Tim Leslie confirmed that the peak in referrals in May 2009 related to one authority with a number of related cases.

Elizabeth Hall requested that consideration be given to the issues raised in enquiries and the support offered to individual members.

TL

The report was noted.

**09/105 Criteria for determining if papers are open or closed**

The Chairmanship of the meeting was passed to Judy Simons.

Freda Sharkey presented her paper and the Board considered the recommendations made.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the Board agenda should be published online before the meeting indicating which items are proposed to be open and closed.

The Board considered the recommendation that all open papers at Board meetings continue to be made available routinely on request and wherever possible are published online, and that publication online will be done after the Board meeting and at the same time as the minutes are published online.

The Board discussed the benefits and possible risks of publishing papers in advance of meetings. Paul Hoey confirmed that content and style of Board papers was being discussed by the senior management team at their meeting next week.

The Board agreed to the recommendation, with the amendment that publication should be prior to the Board meeting.

FS/RS

The Chair recommended that the aim should be to have this procedure in place for the January 2010 meeting, and certainly in place for the March 2010 meeting. This was agreed.

RS

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the author of a paper use the exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act to endorse a paper as closed and be responsible for justifying any exemptions before endorsing any paper as a closed paper.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the Board will specifically resolve at the beginning of each meeting which items are agreed as open and closed items.

The Board requested that the content of the management information report be given particular consideration prior to the next meeting, with exempt information either segregated into a closed paper or included as a closed appendix.

FS

The Board requested that a prompt to this effect be added to all future agendas.

CM

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the procedural rules be amended to reflect the other recommendations in the paper.

FS

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the FOIA scheme of publication guide be amended to reflect the other recommendations in the paper.

FS

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the position on public access to Board meetings remain the same i.e. Board meetings are not open to the public because of practical and health and safety considerations.

The report was received.

Chairmanship of the meeting was returned to Bob Chilton, and the Board returned to item 09/103 on the agenda.

#### **09/106 Revised risk framework**

Dave Gray presented this paper and confirmed that the revised risk framework now considers risks at directorate level.

The Board considered the role of the Audit Committee and the levels of assurance expected of it regarding the appropriateness of risk identification and mitigation.

The Board agreed to the recommendation to endorse the revised risk framework as a proportionate and appropriate risk management

process for Standards for England, with the caveat that the description of risk score level 5 be amended. DG

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the Audit Committee's role in the process be amended and that we should amend the Risk Management Policy to give them additional responsibility to review the risks themselves as well as the risk process.

Ron Watson requested that, given the changing role of audit committees recently, consideration be given to changing the committee name to 'Audit and Risk Committee'. PH

The Board agreed to review Risk 13, failure to deliver professional, successful case handling in Standards for England at the January 2010 Board meeting. SB

The report was received.

#### **09/107 Prospectus and regulatory statement**

Steve Barrow presented his paper on the publication of a prospectus and regulatory statement to the Board.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that the final version of the prospectus for Standards for England is circulated electronically between the Chair and the Board for final sign off. SB

The Board agreed to the recommendation that a regulatory statement setting out Standards for England's regulatory philosophy and approach be circulated electronically in draft to the Board prior to approval at the Board meeting in January 2010, SB

The report was received.

#### **09/108 Single equality scheme**

Freda Sharkey presented the paper which requires consideration in light of new legislation.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that Standards for England continues to produce a single equality scheme in the areas of race, gender and disability to

come into effect by March 2010 with ongoing annual reviews.

Paul Gott queried whether dealing with all strands together would create monitoring issues.

Freda Sharkey confirmed that data gathering issues would be looked at, and that risks were being considered.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that officers should give consideration as to whether the proposed four new equality strands of gender identification, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation can be included in the new scheme without causing any delay; and FS

The Board agreed to the recommendation that officers should identify appropriate training for relevant staff in all equality strands to meet the legal requirements in key areas including impact assessment. FS

The Chair welcomed the work in this area and requested that any further issues be brought back to the Board as necessary.

The Chair requested that any Board members with knowledge of other organisations procedures relay this information to Freda Sharkey.

The report was received.

## **09/109 International standards conference**

Steve Barrow presented his paper to the Board.

The Board considered the conference and although there was a strong level of support, costs were a concern.

The Chair noted that he would want to see that Communities and Local Government back our involvement. Glenys Stacey confirmed that she has already spoken with Paul Rowsell, and will be submitting a detailed proposal at a later date.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that, in principle, Standards for England should sponsor the second international World Cities Conference on Fighting

Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that they continue to be involved in the development of the conference (including seeking other sponsors).

The Board agreed to the recommendation that they take a decision on the exact nature of our sponsorship (for example whether we are the main sponsor) subject to more detailed costs to be supplied in January 2010. SB

The Chair noted that alongside detailed costs, he would expect to see a detailed proposal at the Board meeting in January 2010.

The Board discussed other bodies which may wish to be involved, and concluded that the Greater London Authority, Committee on Standards in Public Life, Improvement and Development Agency and Corporation of London should all be considered. SB

The report was received.

**The Board now considered Item 09/110 in closed session.**

**09/111 Committee on Standards in Public Life report**

Gary Hickey joined the meeting and analysis of the Committee on Standards in Public Life report was circulated.

The Chair welcomed Gary Hickey and asked that his team consider how Standards for England's evidence to the enquiry was reflected in the report. He acknowledged that the profile of standards had been raised.

Paul Hoey confirmed that he is working on an article on this topic, which he will share with the Chair. PH

The Board noted the report.

Gary Hickey left the meeting.

**09/112 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) development**

Dave Gray presented this paper on proposed KPIs to the

Board.

The Board reviewed the proposed KPIs for the year ahead.

The Board agreed to the recommendation that they are an appropriate set of public measures on which Standards for England will be judged for 2010-11.

The report was received.

**09/113 Risk review – Identifying systematic risks**

Steve Barrow presented his paper and reported that members of the senior management team would be meeting with other relevant staff to discuss the risk approach in December 2009.

The Board noted the approach being taken to identify and evaluate systematic risks.

The report was received.

**09/114 Review of the ethical standards framework – update**

This paper was considered in the afternoon alongside a presentation on the Review of the Ethical Standards Framework by Steve Barrow.

The Board discussed the issues they hope to see addressed in light of the review, including trivial and vexatious complainants, public role counting as a personal interest, confidentiality of the complainant, rules regarding independent chairs, guidance given to independent members, training to sit on a standards committee and the suitability of sanctions.

The Board requested that the report should include information on the aspects of the framework which work well, and that issues are graded in terms of risk. SB

The Chair thanked Steve Barrow for this timely work, and requested that Board members feed any further comments to him direct.

It was agreed that the initial draft of the Framework Review Conclusions report, compiled by Gary Hickey, would be brought to the January 2010 Board meeting. SB

The report was received.

**09/115 Annual Assembly evaluation**

Richard Scott presented this paper on delegate feedback.

The Chair confirmed he was happy the event offered value for money and Shirley Flint relayed that she felt the event was well received.

It was agreed that the Sunday evening of the assembly timetable needed careful consideration for 2010. RS

The Board considered the financial performance figures and requested that contingency monies be held or reported separately. Glenys Stacey confirmed that this is now managed centrally.

The Chair invited Board members to volunteer for the advisory steering committee. Elizabeth Hall volunteered to join Shirley Flint in this role.

The Board requested that they be involved in guiding the steering committee on the development of the programme and plenary sessions and this was noted.

Judy Simons requested that the outline programme for 2010 be brought to the Board for consideration, and this was agreed. RS

The Chair requested that for 2011 onwards, consideration be given to whether the event could be held at a different time of year. RS

The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work at the assembly.

The Board noted the outcome of the 2009 assembly.

The report was received.

**The Board went into closed session.**

The next meeting will be held on 26 January 2010.

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Chair