

**Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Public Health Agency
held at 10.15am on Thursday, 21 May 2009 in the Public
Health Agency, Ormeau Avenue Unit, 18 Ormeau Avenue,
Belfast, BT2 8HS**

PRESENT:

Ms M McMahon	-	Chair
Mrs J Erskine	-	Non-Executive Director
Dr J Harbison	-	Non-Executive Director
Dr C Harper	-	Director of Public Health/ Medical Director
Ms M Hinds	-	Director of Nursing & Allied Health Professionals
Ms M Karp	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr T Mahaffy	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr E McClean	-	Director of Operations
Mr C Mullaghan	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr S Nicholl	-	Non-Executive Director
Mr R Orr	-	Non-Executive Director
Dr E Rooney	-	Chief Executive

IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms M Hully	-	Chief Executive, Patient and Client Council
Mrs C Mohan	-	Secretariat

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence was received from Ms F McAndrew, Director of Social Care and Children, HSC Board.

ACTION

16/09 **Chairs Business**

(i) **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Dr Jeremy Harbison, Non-Executive Director and Ms Maeve Hully, Chief Executive, Patient and Client Council to their first meeting with the Public Health Agency (PHA).

(ii) **Start Times for Board Meetings**

The Chair informed Members that the third Thursday mornings of the month present a problem for Dr Harbison due to other commitments. Following discussion Members agreed that Board meetings should be rescheduled to be held in the afternoon of the third Thursday commencing at 2.15pm, or 1.45pm if a confidential session is necessary.

Dr Harbison apologised for any inconvenience this may have caused and thanked the Board for their agreement to change the starting time of the meetings.

All
Ms Taylor

17/09 **Chief Executive's Business**

(i) **Update on Meetings**

Dr Rooney, Chief Executive, advised that officers had their latest meeting with the Health Committee. Three main issues had been raised: Obesity, Swine Flu and Suicide Prevention. He reported that the Committee members had commented positively on the response to swine flu to date.

Dr Rooney stated that a specific recommendation had come from the NI Assembly in relation to the PHA having a designated senior officer for Suicide Prevention and how this relates to the structures of the Public Health Agency (PHA). Members noted this matter will be given further consideration when structures are being examined.

Dr Rooney

Dr Rooney informed Members that he will be meeting informally with representatives from the Northern Ireland Audit Office on Friday 22 May.

Dr Rooney

18/09 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 23 April 2009**

After consideration Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 April 2009 as an accurate record and the minutes were duly signed by the Chair.

19/09 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Members noted that the Chair and Chief Executive will meet with the Chair and Chief Executive of the Patient Client Council in June and will report back to the Board at the August meeting.

Chair
CE

Mr McClean indicated that he had a meeting planned with Mr Sean Brown, Head of Development and Corporate Services, PCC prior to that meeting.

Mr McClean

(i) **Page 2, Minute 06/09 (ii) – Induction of Board Members**

Members noted that Mr McClean has had discussions with the Chief Internal Auditor regarding assurance standards and financial governance. It was further noted that the organisation of tailored induction is also being looked at and this will be an agenda item for the first meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Mr McClean

Mr McClean informed Members that work is being undertaken in relation to the Commissioning Development Programme and a meeting has been arranged for 22 June 2009. Members noted that the Beeches Management Centre is leading this work which will be progressed over a 24 month period.

During discussion Members referred to the need for forward planning in order to achieve optimum attendance at such sessions.

Mr McClean

(ii) **Page 3, Minute 07/09 (i) – Organisation of two PHA Board Committees**

Members noted that 29 June 2009 is the proposed date for the first meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee.

(iii) **Page 4, Minute 10/09 – Register of Interests**

The Chair referred to outstanding declaration of interest forms, the return of which is required as soon as possible for inclusion on the agenda for the June Board Meeting.

All

Members were reminded that they have a responsibility to advise the Chair of any changes to their interests and noted that the Register of Interests will be reviewed on an annual basis.

All

(iv) **Page 6, Minute 13/09 – Corporate Business Planning**

Dr Rooney apologised that he had been unable to progress the Corporate Business Plan as far as he would have wished due to the need to focus attention on the H1N1 (swine) Influenza situation.

CE

20/09 **Corporate Issues**

(i) **Governance and Audit Committee Membership**

The Chair referred to Membership of the Governance Committee as follows:

Mrs Erskine
Mr Mahaffey
Mr Nicholl
Mr Orr

It was noted that Members of the Committee would select a Chair.

During discussion it was agreed that the first meeting of the Committee will be held on the afternoon of 29 June 2009. Mr Mahaffey, Non Executive Director, stated that he had a difficulty with the date, but would endeavour to do all he could to reorganise his diary in order to attend.

During discussion Members agreed that a Special meeting of the Board would be held on the morning of Wednesday, 8 July 2009 in order that the final accounts for the (legacy) HPANI are with the Department by the due date of 17 July 2009.

During ensuing discussion Mr McClean undertook to issue briefing to Members and confirm dates with the auditor. It was further noted that the DHSSPS require a Joint Commissioning Plan to be submitted by the end of June 2009, and therefore a draft will be submitted and the plan will be brought to the Board for approval at a Special Board Meeting on 8 July 2009.

Ms Karp, Non Executive Director, asked to be recorded as an apology as she will be unable to attend the Special Board Meeting on 8 July 2009.

Mr McClean

Ms Taylor

Ms Taylor

(ii) **Remuneration Committee Membership**

The Chair referred to Membership of the Remuneration Committee as follows:

Mrs McMahan
Dr Harbison
Mr Mullaghan
Ms M Karp

Members noted that the Chair is automatically Chair of this Committee under PHA Standing Orders.

(iii) **Provision of Services by Business Support Organisation (BSO)**
(Paper No: PHA01/05/09)

Members received and noted the contents of Paper No: PHA01/05/09 regarding the Provision of Services by the BSO.

(iii) **Financial Update**

Mr McClean informed Members that in keeping with other newly established organisations, a financial budget is awaited.

During discussion, Members agreed that it would be of value to have a paper outlining the responsibilities of the PHA Board for consideration at a future Board meeting.

Mr McClean

21/09 **H1N1 Swine Influenza Update**
(Paper No: PHA02/05/09)

Members received for information Paper No: PHA02/05/09 being an update on the situation in relation to H1N1 (swine) Influenza.

In presenting the paper Dr Harper, Director of Public Health/Medical Director, provided an overview of the background around the surveillance and planning involved and detailed the steps taken by PHA from the first notification of suspected cases of the flu virus, from the World Health Organisation (WHO). Dr Harper also described the joint working between the PHA, HSCB and BSO during this time. Dr Harper advised that good liaisons had also been established with Trusts and Primary Care and this had been particularly helpful in spreading information.

Dr Harper stated that the one confirmed case in Northern Ireland was reported on 14 May 2009, in a male recently returned from Mexico and outlined the steps taken by the outbreak team to deal with the situation.

It was noted that the PHA Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) based at 12/22 Linenhall Street, is the hub for those dealing with the situation and is manned from 8am to 8pm, 7 days of the week.

It was also noted that a Helpline had been established at very short notice which operated from 8am to 8pm seven days per week. This was staffed by PHA staff as well as volunteers from other bodies including DHSSPS, The Beeches Management Centre, universities and retired HSC staff.

Dr Harper in response to questions raised explained the procedure for dealing with suspected cases and referred to treatment and the availability of antiviral drugs.

During discussion Members noted the need to protect vulnerable people and acknowledged the need for the involvement of the community and voluntary sector, along with the wider community in order to safeguard such people.

Dr Harbison, on behalf of Non-Executive Directors formally commended and expressed appreciation to everyone who had contributed to dealing with the situation, which was understood to be “over and above” the call of duty at times.

The Chief Executive undertook to convey this message to those involved.

Dr Rooney

22/09 **Addressing Health and Wellbeing Inequalities:
Joint Working with District Councils
(Paper No: PHA03/05/09)**

Members received for approval Paper No: PHA03/05/09 – Addressing Health and Wellbeing Inequalities: Joint Working with District Councils.

In presenting the paper, Mr McClean outlined the work ongoing with local government to reduce health inequalities and generally improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

Members noted that following an invitation from Mr McGimpsey in December 2008, most Councils have indicated an interest in forming joint working arrangements with the PHA.

Mr McClean stated that it is anticipated that councils will form clusters to undertake the joint working, which will be led by a Management Board and will include a representative from each cluster.

Members noted that the PHA and local government will be in a position to identify priority themes in their area and have the ability to address the practicalities involved in achieving good outcomes.

Dr Harper believed that joint working will help shape the understanding of those seeking funding. Referring to item 4, page 5 of the paper, Dr Harper suggested that it may be more appropriate to refer to a “performance” rather than a “needs” profile, in order to establish if an improvement had been seen.

During discussion Members acknowledged the good work currently being undertaken with communities and acknowledged that while the proposed approach will be much more rigorous, measurement of achievements could be difficult as improvements could take years to emerge.

Dr Rooney stated that every opportunity will be taken to build on good work already being done and believed that early steps in relation to design will help to achieve a holistic approach to dealing with the health and wellbeing of the population.

The Chairman believed that attitudes and behaviours will need to change as people work collectively to address health inequalities and achieve the best outcomes.

Dr Harper referring to item 4 page 4 in the paper suggested that reference could be made to bringing a broad range of outcomes into a common agreement.

In concluding discussion Members acknowledged the opportunities available to improve health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland.

Following consideration Members formally approved the contents of Paper No: PHA03/05/09 subject to the inclusion of minor amendments as suggested by Dr Harper.

Mr McClean

23/09 **Any Other Business**

(i) **DHSSPS Media Alert**

Mr Orr suggested and all Non-Executive Directors agreed that it would be of value to be included on the mailing list for the DHSSPS media alerts.

Mr McClean

(ii) **Production of PHA Board Minutes**

It was agreed that an action column should be included in production of the Board minutes.

Mrs Mohan

(iii) **Topical Issues**

Mr Mullaghan referred to topical health issues (eg dental health, use of the Polypill etc.), which often attract media attention and asked if would be possible to receive and discuss the evidence available, in order to be in a position to make an educated judgement on such matters.

Dr Rooney agreed the value of addressing such issues and referred in particular to those relating to inequality, which would be included in the business planning process for the organisation.

Dr Rooney

(iv) **Premises for PHA**

Dr Rooney in response to a question raised by Mrs Karp, Non-Executive Director advised that work on the procurement of premises for the PHA is being progressed.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Fourth Meeting of the Public Health Agency will be held at 2.15pm on Thursday, 18 June 2009 in Public Health Agency, Ormeau Avenue Unit, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HS.

Signed: _____ (Chair) Date: _____

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