



**Minutes of Board Meeting No. 41 held on Monday 10 November 2014
at 09:15 hrs, 257 Lough Road, Lurgan.**

Present:

Tom McGrath, Chief Commissioner
Walter Rader, Deputy Chief Commissioner
Norman Bennett, Commissioner
Rosemary Connolly, Commissioner (Legal)
Geraldine Donaghy, Commissioner
Brenda Maitland, Commissioner
Philip McDonagh, Commissioner

In Attendance:

Frances McCandless, Chief Executive
Aubrey McCrory, Head of Corporate Services
Myles McKeown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries
Kathryn Jennett, Administrative Officer, CCNI

Apologies

Punam McGookin, Head of Charity Services

1. Minutes of Meeting 22 September 2014

Following discussion the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2014, were proposed by Walter Rader and seconded by Geraldine Donaghy, and agreed as a true and correct record. Commissioners decided going forward to include names of charities subject to statutory enquiry if details are already in the public domain.

AP 1: Board minutes to be published on CCNI website

2. Conflicts of Interest

The Chair reminded Commissioners of the Freedom of Information protocol and the need to declare any conflicts of interest prior to the meeting. The Deputy Commissioner declared a potential conflict of interest in relation to East Belfast Mission.

3. Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings

The Chief Commissioner confirmed his annual appraisal had been completed by Departmental officials.

4. Chief Executive's report

The Chief Executive introduced the report and pointed out the Department had recently given approval to the Commission's 2014/15 Business Plan budget and, as part of the September monitoring round, an in year bid. Further to this the Commission had been notified of a forthcoming return for the January monitoring round and short turn around, and at this time the Commission would not be making any further bid or easement.

The Legally Qualified Commissioner briefed the Board on feedback and conclusions from the Charity Law Association. The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland was seen as advancing on a broad front, knows what public benefit is, and overall has developed a reputation for progressing a range of core business and has communicated commitment and certainty to its work.

The Chief Executive indicated recent communications suggested the Cabinet Office expected to finish work on giving effect to the new charity SORP by the end of 2015. As the Department for Social Development had chosen to wait for this development before developing accounting regulations for Northern Ireland there would be a major knock on effect for the registration of organisations under Section 167 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

Commissioners noted a meeting had taken place with David McIlveen MLA following correspondence and the board was updated on discussions that transpired.

The board welcomed the report and asked to cross reference specifics with subsequent agenda items.

6. Issues from HR&R

a) Minutes of Meeting 16 April 2014

Following review of the minutes of 16 April 2014 these were proposed by Philip McDonagh and seconded by Brenda Maitland, and adopted as a true and correct record. It was agreed that going forward the committee would agree minutes by correspondence to avoid any delay.

It was noted the HR&R committee chair had met with the A&R committee chair to consider how HR related audit recommendations were monitored, and frustration at the delays in progressing the Trade Union recognition agreement was noted.

AP2: HR&R committee minutes to be published to CCNI website

b) First Steps towards a HR Strategy

The Chair of the HR&R Committee introduced the strategy paper to the Board, who welcomed the approach. In particular the relationship to development of the 2016-19 corporate plan was underlined and the view was expressed that the Board wanted to make the links between these two

processes as strong and meaningful as possible. Following discussion of the six steps set out on page 3 of the plan, the strategic approach including corporate commitment to become an Investor in People, was adopted after proposal by Norman Bennett and seconding by Brenda Maitland.

AP3: Progress steps towards a HR strategy

c) Appraisal Scores

The Chair of the HR&R Committee introduced the appraisal scores to the Board. It was noted a relatively small number of full year staff appraisal results were reported as many staff joiners had completed probationary periods near year end. It was agreed future reports would include details of probationary monitoring and completion so a fuller picture of performance measurement was available and Commissioners could be assured all relevant processes were being followed.

d) Staff Survey

The Chair of the HR&R Committee introduced the report and action plan to the Board. He pointed out whilst the Commission can draw some comparisons with the previous year and other organisations, there was overall a positive set of results and a number of learning and development points that could be taken forward. Amongst the findings board members noted that for some staff the Commission was a high pressure and demanding environment, and that the Board should focus on setting a clear vision and increasing visibility with staff. It was agreed to add an action item for the Board to take ownership of the action plan and to increase engagement with staff and promote their commitment to a clear vision at the Board away day.

AP4: Board ownership and specific items to be included in staff survey action plan.

7. Corporate and Business plans 2015 -16 first discussion

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the draft plans which were developed with input from a staff planning session. Key risks and budget assumptions were highlighted and the board noted that the draft plans were based on extending the current secondments by a further 12 months.

In addition the Board was briefed on changes to a series of key performance indicators including targets for the volume and processing of registration applications as volumes and throughput assumptions were now seen as optimistic. After discussion on resource availability and implications the board agreed to the revised registration targets (and to a revised target of 1,300 as a working assumption for the current year), based on the casework team's planning, and to set a sickness absence target that was more akin to its sponsor department's. Following discussion of the current values it was agreed to ask staff to identify a potential internal value. It was also agreed to

seek to reduce the amount of text in the business plan given the duplication and overlap in key sections.

AP5: Staff session to be held to develop potential internal values.

AP6: Draft plans to be revised and resubmitted for Board consideration and approval in December.

8. Research Strategy

The Chief Executive introduced the paper which had been produced by a task & finish group. She highlighted the differing levels of information that would be pulled together and used in part while implementing the strategy. Following discussion it was agreed to amend the wording in relation to complaints to reflect these produced an indication of quality of service.

In terms of resourcing the Chief Executive confirmed the strategy was dependent on additional resourcing included in the 2015/16 business plan and associated budget. In addition it was planned to work in conjunction with Queen's University of Belfast. It was noted the aim of the strategy was to find ways to publish and disseminate information the Commission held by virtue of the charity register, and also knowledge generated so this could be shared across the sector and the information reused.

The strategy was adopted following proposal by Walter Rader and seconding by Rosemary Connolly.

9. Update to legal manual – Judicial Review

The Legally Qualified Commissioner underlined the need for the updates and highlighted the worthwhile and necessary developments, particularly with regard to judicial review. It was noted any public organisation could be held accountable through this mechanism and the updates were agreed following proposal by Rosemary Connolly and seconding by Philip McDonagh.

10. Quarterly update against Business Plan

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the update and the Board noted the highlights which included an assessment that two key targets ie registration and sickness absence were unlikely to be met for relevant reasons. The Board asked that going forward sickness absence be reported in terms of short and long term figures.

11. Review of Board Agenda

The agenda was confirmed.

12. Budget Report

The Head of Corporate Services introduced the report to the Board. The Board noted the projected spend would be revised in light of the recent confirmation of an in year bid, and additions to the explanatory notes going forward were identified.

13. Casework Update

The Chief Executive highlighted the report and noted the progress with the approach and timescale for registration of the four main churches. It was noted a number of applications were ready for refusal and three are currently with legal for review.

14. Investigation & Compliance Update

The Head of Compliance and Enquiries highlighted the update and outlined cases closed and information on organisations currently under statutory inquiries. An update was provided with regard to the Disabled Police Officers' Association NI (DPOANI).

15. MSFM Compliance report

The Chief Executive introduced the report to the Board and noted sponsor branch are in the process of reviewing the MSFM both in terms of developing their knowledge and ensuring it reflected the latest DFP template. The Chief Executive offered the view that everything that should be undertaken appeared to be being addressed. The Board noted the purpose of having this agenda item every six months was to remind the Board what it is responsible for.

16. Report on action plan from Board review

Noted.

17. Press Clippings

The Board noted the coverage.

18. Review of Meeting

Noted.

19. Issues for next meeting 15 December 2014

A series of items were identified.

20. AOB

The meeting concluded at 12:10

Register of Outstanding Action Points					
Board Meeting and Action Point Number	Date Raised	Agenda Item	Action	Owners	Status
34 (10)	11/11/2013	Press Clippings	MOU with RQIA to be developed	HCE	Underway
37 (4)	10/03/2014	Options for developing HR Policies	Staff to progress procurement of expert HR support	HCorpS	Complete
38 (3)	19/05/2014	Review of HR policies	Officers to take forward procurement of external expertise	HCorpS	Complete
39 (6)	23/06/14	Budget Report	Head of Corporate Services to break down Programme Costs	HCorpS	Complete
40 (2)	22/9/14	Chair's Business, Correspondence and Meetings	Officers to progress HR Connect support for strategic review of policies	HCorpS	Underway
40 (3)	22/9/14	Chief Executive's Report	Following discussion of a recent tribunal appeal and actions of the charities solicitor it was agreed that the legally qualified commissioner would engage with colleagues in the legal profession to counter the view that it was a way to challenge the Commission's decision as a matter of course rather perhaps than need	Rosemary Connolly	Underway
40 (6)	22/9/14	Amendment to Legal Manual	Legal officers to Draft a template letter for use when instructing counsel.	Legal Advisors	Underway
40 (9)	22/9/14	Budget Review	Legal Officers to seek to recover costs where appropriate	HCorpS	Complete

40 (10)	22/9/14	Casework Update	Commission to seek definite timetable for registration from the Presbyterian and the Methodist churches.	CEx	Underway
40 (13)	22/9/14	AOB	Chair to finalise Commissioner appraisals and submit to DSD	Chief Commissioner	Underway
41 (1)	10/11/2014	Minutes of Meeting 22 September 2014	Board minutes to be published on CCNI website	Kathryn	Complete
42 (2)	10/11/2014	Issues from HR&R; Minutes of Meeting 16 April 2014	HR&R committee minutes to be published to CCNI website	Kathryn	Complete
42 (3)	10/11/2014	Issues from HR&R; First Steps towards a HR Strategy	Progress steps towards a HR strategy	HCorpS	Underway
42 (4)	10/11/2014	Issues from HR&R; Staff Survey	Board ownership and specific items to be included in staff survey action plan	HCorpS	Underway
42 (5)	10/11/2014	Corporate and Business plans 2015 -16 first discussion	Staff session to be held to develop potential internal values	HCorpS	Complete
42 (6)	10/11/2014	Corporate and Business plans 2015 -16 first discussion	Draft plans to be revised and resubmitted for Board consideration and approval in December.	HCorpS	Complete