

**MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING HELD ON**  
**FRIDAY, 6 JUNE 2003, AT 9.00 AM**

Present: J Warke, M Campbell, L McAllister, D Houston (Observing) and F Cassidy (Minutes)

**Action:**

T Rue joined the meeting for item 1 only.

1. **IT Update Report (inc MVM and POL Issues)** – update report on IT issues noted. The MB agreed to extend MVM support contract at 2 days per week for a further 3 months. MH to train GS on access training during July (3 days). The need for uninterrupted training was agreed and necessary steps should be taken to provide for this.

JW expressed the MB's appreciation of the work carried out by Marcun and GS on the statistics for the Annual Report.

2. **Admin Staffing Matters**

- **Stress Awareness Training** - OFMDFM training Branch would be prepared to provide stress awareness training for Admin staff. The MB requested sight of a detailed programme before deciding further on the merits of such training.
- **Project Team Review Report** – discussed at length. Subject to some minor amendments/adjustments the MB agreed the report and asked that their thanks be recorded to the Team. Implementation – to be completed by March 2004 with an implementation plan to be presented to the MB at its September 2003 meeting.
- **CAO Post** – the MB reviewed CAO responsibilities and decided that CAO involvement in Commission meetings/decision letter writing should continue.

LMcA

There is a need to consider some delegation/redistribution of work at CAO/EOI levels and following this consideration of the case for a SO post where necessary. LMCA/DH to action.

LMCA/  
DH

- **Revision of Office Manual** – the MB recognised that this task would be very time consuming and it was decided that the best approach was to set up a Project Team led by a Principal Commissioner (DF) and comprising of Admin EOI (DH), EOII (GS) and an AO (PMcC). A revised manual in draft form to be presented to the MB by end of March 2004.

3. **New Accounts Package** – Price Waterhouse Cooper has recommended use of “BACS” as a method for payment. Estimated cost of modem approx £2,000. The MB agreed this recommendation as the most efficient method of payment. DH to arrange.

DH

4. **Judicial Review Cases**

**Foster, Green JR** – no judgements issued.

**Moore JR** – scheduled hearing did not take place, applicant no longer legally represented; court is seeking to list this for hearing.

**DOE JR (Moses)** – scheduled hearing slot withdrawn by applicant. This is being investigated by O’Reilly Stewart as Commission wished to have this matter resolved rather than await the Foster judgement.

**Hollywood Conservation Society JR** – seeking a date for hearing in June, possibility before Mr J Higgins.

5. **OFMDFM Issues**

- **Budget/Resources** – JW’s paper on the need for additional Commissioner resources discussed and agreed with minor amendments. To be forwarded to I Maye, Planning Service, for his comments/agreement and subsequently to be passed to OFMDFM for consideration.
- **Accommodation** – on-going. MB recognised the need to keep matters moving ahead pending the outcome of the June monitoring round on resources.

JW

6. **Major Casework – Programme Update** – The MB noted the lack of progress and agreed that the need for updated, accurate information should be raised with PS at the next quarterly meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> July 2003.

7. **Area Plan Procedures** – nearing completion. There had been discussions between MC & P Quinn (Planning Service) on detailed arrangements for the Inquiry into the Ards & Down Plan. Next step was to investigate printing of booklet and organisation of training.

8. **Annual Report** – draft copy circulated and awaiting comments. Launch of Annual Report arranged for 24<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

9. **Review of Process for Deciding Formal Hearing Procedures** – inconsistencies had been highlighted in deciding whether to use Formal or Informal Hearing procedures. JW to look at criteria and issues revised procedures, in the meantime existing procedures to continue.

JW

10. **Memorandum of Understanding** – Further amendments agreed by PS and PAC. Given the lack of updated information from PS, the MB agreed to withhold signing the document until this matter was raised with PS at the next quarterly meeting.

11. **Any Other Business – Destruction of “Key Word” Files.** The MB agreed that following a check by EOII (to ensure that all details are on the system) 5 year old issue files should be destroyed. Any problems should be raised with CC/DCC.
12. **Date of Next Meeting** – arranged for Thursday, 10 July, at 9.00 am.

**Note: date may need to revised given that CAO postholders will be training in Castle Buildings.**

cc JW  
MC  
DF  
TR  
CAO  
DH  
GS  
YG  
MC

## COMMENTS ON PTR REPORT

3.3 Contradiction? I issue hear shouldn't be an option – telephone calls – standard practice first.

8.0 EOI – Premises Officer and H&S – people should be training to stand in, ie, cover in event of absence. It is not necessary for person in post to do the actual work, should have final responsibility only – scope for actual duties to be delegated to EOII, AO or AA level. Report does not deal with scope for delegation, need to include this point.

'Finance' also discussed at this point – delegation from CAO to EOI with CAO responsibility for signing off, Linda said that all (or some) responsibility needs to be kept at DP level as it called in judgement with it was unfair to expect EOI level to do.

MC mentioned that responsibility for setting out responsibility in event of absence at all grades needs to be addressed, I don't know if she meant in the report or just generally within the office, please clarify with her.

9.1 Include liaison with sponsor Department and DOE on programming issues and 'complaints' responsibilities.

9.2 CAO to draw up initial draft and then meet with CC who could up/down priorities.

More discussion here took place re general delegation within all grades, ie, responsibility remaining at higher level but 'ground work' being delegated. Discussion about Civil Service grading, ie, unfair to expect grades to do work at higher level when not being paid. JW and MC felt it was 'personal development'. Discussion about SO post – I'm not sure if this has an effect on the actual report, I have a lot of notes which seem to be just discussion. (Sorry it's Sunday morning and Patrick is rambling on in my ear, I think I am brain dead, well that is if my brain was ever alive in the first place!)

- 9.3 Difficulty – knock on effect on argument for SO post – CAO can delegate but this is dependent on decision letter writing. One recommendation depends on decision on others, something has to go. Where are other duties allocated? CAO should be more strategic role than hands on. Scottish office set up discussed. CAO post should be looking at target setting, identifying and improving shortfalls. MC/JW felt that monitoring was already being done on individual’s targets – was there a danger of duplication? Final decision – run with suggestion.
- 9.6 Concern expressed re CAO not being involved in Commission meeting. CAO needs a good grasp/understanding of technical/legal issues. Crucial for new post holder. This was tried before (Marlene) and didn’t work. CAO doing minutes – although not much involved it was necessary to attend to keep up to date on Commission business. Commission’s decision making role critical – CAO should have an understanding and be able to pass it on to staff and public, including technical issues.
- No to parallel meetings – same day could prove difficult.
  - Commissioners’ Brief – not necessary for CAO to attend and could be involved in strategic issues only.
  - Complaints – LMcA mentioned difficulty when this involved technical issues.
  - If decision letter role removed from CAO post could it be downgraded?
  - Commission meetings – EOI sitting in on an occasional basis to get a feel for the meeting. EOII should come in to sit with CAO or EOI to see mechanics on a few occasions.