

MINUTES OF THE SWIA MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING
2.00 pm, THURSDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2006
HOLIDAY INN, EDINBURGH

PRESENT: Alexis Jay, Chief Inspector
Alistair Gaw, Depute Chief Inspector
Gill Ottley, Depute Chief Inspector
David Cumming, Depute Chief Inspector
Andrew Wilkinson, Corporate Manager
Hamish Hamill, Non Executive Director
Sandra Nutley, Non Executive Director
Anne Travers (Minutes)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 31st August 2006

1.1 The minutes were agreed subject to a couple of typing amendments pointed out by Sandra Nutley.

2. Matters arising from Minutes

2.1 Andrew Wilkinson updated the Board on progress with the communications strategy. 3 marketing consultancies from the SE's call-off contract had been interviewed and The Union Advertising Agency selected as the preferred choice. The requirement had been discussed in more detail with Union who subsequently had produced a draft proposal document with estimated costs. A meeting had been arranged with Union on Monday 4th December to discuss the proposal. Union had been asked to critically review the communications strategy and a final draft of the document would be circulated before the next Board meeting.

2.2 The Board asked for an update on the shared Media Officer post. Andrew Wilkinson advised that progress continued to be stalled by issues over the allowances that would apply to the post. In the interim, bespoke support 1 day per week was being arranged through one of the SE's call-off contractors.

2.3 The Board noted various housekeeping and navigation issues with the website. Andrew Wilkinson acknowledged these and explained that overseeing website content was intended to be one of the media officer's responsibilities. He agreed to arrange for any out of date items to be removed from the website. The navigation issue was disappointing since, Civic, SWIA's web managers, had only recently made changes to improve this. He commented that further amendment would result from Union's work on dissemination of inspection derived knowledge. He also stated that the next newsletter was in draft format and would be ready for issue shortly.

Action Point 1 (November 06) – Andrew Wilkinson to look into improving the housekeeping of the SWIA website.

2.4 Hamish Hamill asked if any contact had been made with the SE in connection with funding towards research into the impact of inspections. Alexis Jay

advised that she had met with Colin MacLean and Val Cox who were interested in taking it forward, perhaps through Analytical Services.

3. Internal Moderation Process

3.1 Alexis Jay advised the Board that this item was on the agenda in order that the Non Executive Directors could provide feedback on their involvement with the moderation process. Hamish Hamill emphasised the importance of maintaining the quality of reports and also of ensuring that the inspection timetable was not so demanding that it could impact adversely on quality. He suggested that it was worth considering allowing more time for the inspection programme. Hamish stressed also the importance of style and consistency. He considered the moderation process had been serving its purpose. Sandra Nutley agreed with these comments and also emphasised the need for time to ensure consistent quality in reports. Alexis Jay confirmed that feedback from Lead Inspectors had been positive and agreed that pressure to deliver should not be allowed to affect quality.

3.2 The Board was advised that a quality assurance group was collating a list of 'Top Tips' to aid consistency in the writing and presentation of reports. The Agency was acutely aware of the need for effective quality control and the associated reputational risk.

Action Point 2 (November 06) – quality assurance group to promulgate production/implementation of report writing and presentation consistency measures.

4. Inspection Programme

4.1 The Board discussed the inspection programme. It was agreed that the performance inspection programme had been challenging even without the additional reviews and inspections SWIA had undertaken. This situation had been exacerbated by staff having to be involved for longer than expected on reports where publication had been delayed for reasons beyond SWIA's control. The Board recognised also that the potential impact of 'Purdah' during spring/early-summer 2007 would add further delay but also valuable time to review progress.

4.2 It was agreed that the senior management team should review the programme to ensure an appropriate balance between delivery and quality. Sandra Nutley suggested also that the information on the website would need to be updated.

Action Point 3 (November 06) – SMT to review and update inspection programme.

5. Multi-agency resourcing

- 5.1 The Board debated various issues around delivery of the multi-agency inspections. A number of difficulties had been encountered around the lack of a specific statutory framework for these inspections, notably around securing appropriate participation from other agencies and funding. It was agreed that SWIA could not continue to fund the full cost of these inspections. It was suggested that a funding submission should be made to Colin MacLean to allow him to consider whether the Education Department should fund these inspections or seek contribution from the other departments involved.

Action Point 4 (November 06) – SMT to submit funding request to Colin MacLean.

6. Crerar Review responses

- 6.1 Alexis advised that David Cumming and Andrew Wilkinson were working on SWIA's response to the second submission to the Crerar Review Team due for submission by 8 December. The Board discussed SWIA's position on the review. It was agreed that the draft response should be copied to both Hamish Hamill and Sandra Nutley before submission.

Action Point 5 (November 06) – Andrew Wilkinson to email draft Crerar Review response to Hamish Hamill and Sandra Nutley prior to submission.

7. Finance Report

- 7.1 Andrew Wilkinson presented the period 7 finance report to the Board and provided additional comment to the Accountant's commentary. The Board was advised that a formal budget allocation of £4.151m was likely to be confirmed during the next Spending Review. The Agency was on target to spend this allocation. Potential additional spend was identified for the delivery of training needs analysis and the marketing work on the communications strategy.
- 7.2 Sandra Nutley requested additional explanation on the balance sheet after the meeting.

Action Point 6 (November 06) – Andrew Wilkinson to provide additional explanation on the balance sheet after the meeting.

8. Staffing Report

- 8.1 Andrew Wilkinson presented the staffing report to the Board advising that the recruitment programme for 4 inspectors had produced 3 successful candidates. A further 3 days of interviews for sessional inspectors would be held in the second week of December. A secondee would be returning to SWIA in April 2007.

8.2 The Board confirmed that the finance and staffing information was fit for purpose.

9. AOB

9.1 Alistair Gaw updated the Board on the planning of the top level communications day to be held on 21 March 2007. The event would be by invitation only and would include the Non Executive Directors. Planning was in the early stages but a draft agenda would be emailed to the Non Executive Directors as early as possible.

Action Point 7 (November 06) – Alistair Gaw to arrange for the draft agenda for the ‘communications day’ to be emailed to the Non Executive Directors.

10. Date of next meeting – 1st March 2007, SWIA Offices, Abbey Business Centre Glasgow.