

EONI MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY 28 JANUARY 2010 at 10.00AM

CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

Members:

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)
Assistant Chief Electoral Officer (ACEO(R))
Assistant Chief Electoral Officer (ACEO(E))
Head of Corporate Services (HoCS)
Head of Information Services (HoIS)

In attendance:

PA to CEO
HR Officer (item 5, 6)
Finance Officer (item 7-9)
Information Officer (item 10)

Apologies: NIPSA Reps

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><u>Matters arising – Action Points</u></p> <p>The Board welcomed the new ACEO(E) to the Board.</p> <p>Minutes of the December Board were agreed out of Board on 22 December 2009.</p> <p>Action points were reviewed – matters arising, on going actions and new action points have been recorded on the Board Action Point report.</p> <p>Action 2 – the HoCS advised that an agreement had been made on the payroll facilities. She will meet with HoIS and the Finance Officer to take forward the necessary actions to implement the new system. The CEO asked that the HoCS issue a note to all staff to keep them informed of what is happening and to advise that they will be paid as normal.</p> <p>Action 5 – the CEO advised that a meeting will be held on 2 February between all the organisations interested in developing a staff exchange programme.</p> <p>Action 6 – the CEO advised that PRONI will be closing for a period of 9 months from September. Electoral registers since 1995 will be returned to EONI so that registration applications from</p>	<p>HoCS</p> <p>HR Officer</p>

	<p>overseas electors can be checked. The 80 boxes containing the old registers will be held at the relevant area office. It has also been decided that when PRONI reopens only the registers over 15year will be returned to them.</p> <p>Action 7 – the HoIS advised that all the elector images had been deleted but the links to EROS still had to be removed. Work will be completed within 2 weeks.</p> <p>Action 9 – the CEO advised that the proposal on staffing for the Helpline during the election period that had been sent to the Electoral Commission had been agreed informally but that written confirmation was awaited. He asked the HoIS to check with the Information Officer if the staffing in this proposal would be adequate if there was a combined election.</p> <p>Action 14 – the HoCS advised that all work had been completed in the Banbridge and Ballymena Area Offices.</p>	<p>HoIS</p> <p>HoIS</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><u>Progress against targets</u></p> <p>CEO gave a summary on the progress against targets report as outlined in the Business Plan for 2008/09. The targets were discussed and reviewed.</p> <p>Objective 11 – the ACEO(R) advised that most of the work has been carried out and this objective will be achieved by 31 March. There followed a discussion on the methods used to detect and remove void properties. 700 properties have been removed as a result of this exercise. It was agreed that the ACEO(R) would explore other options for checking properties that are on EROS but not on VLA or Pointer. She will also provide the CEO with the percentage of properties identified for potential removal that have not been removed because Building control says they exist.</p> <p>Objective 12 – the ACEO(R) reported that the leaflet drop had taken place in 9 wards in the Newtownabbey area. There has been a poor response to date.</p> <p>Objective 14 – the CEO advised that the Audit</p>	<p>ACEO(R)</p>

	<p><u>Media</u> – the media figures were reviewed and noted by the Board.</p> <p><u>Other Public Contact</u> – the figures were reviewed and noted by the Board.</p> <p><u>Office Visits</u> – the figures were reviewed and noted by the Board.</p> <p><u>Prompt Payment Figures</u> – the figures were reviewed and noted by the Board.</p> <p><u>Complaints, Compliments & Suggestions</u> – the complaints were reviewed by the Board. The CEO asked the outcome of the complaint received on 11 December and was advised a refund of postage had been issued. He asked that the document be amended to reflect this.</p> <p><u>Evaluation of Initiatives</u> – the Board reviewed the initiatives undertaken by the Ballymena Area Office. It was noted that benefits and good response had been noted on the information event for banks and financial institutions. There followed a discussion on whether encouragement should be given to other AEOs to carry out similar initiatives. The ACEOs will discuss this further with the AEOs.</p>	<p>ACEO(R) ACEO(E)</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Personnel Report</u></p> <p>The personnel report was discussed and noted.</p> <p><u>Sick Absence</u> – the HR Officer reported that the current sick absence rate was 3.1 days per person (1.8%) which is almost the same as last year.</p> <p><u>Training Plan</u> – the HR Officer advised that 79% of training identified through PDPs has been completed. Outstanding training has been booked.</p> <p><u>Recruitment</u> – the HR Officer took the Board through the current recruitment activity.</p> <p>Count Staff – after the last round of testing 800 candidates have passed the test. A further recruitment campaign is ongoing to increase the</p>	

	<p>pool of staff. The CEO advised that roughly 1,200 staff were needed to take account of those that were unavailable on election day.</p> <p>There was a discussion on what other groups could be targeted to increase the staffing level if there was a shortfall. It was agreed that if a shortfall becomes apparent a notice should be put on the home page of the EONI website. The HR Officer will meet with the Information Officer about designing a notice for the website and having it ready to go if needed. AEOs should also approach financial institutions and educational establishments</p> <p>The CEO updated the Board on current news of the possibility of a combined election. There followed a discussion on what procedures could be put in place to facilitate a combined election. The Board members provided the CEO with their views for consideration.</p> <p>Electoral Assistants – there is a current recruitment exercise for the Newtownabbey Area Office. The closing date is 5 February.</p> <p><u>Work Placement</u> – the HR Officer advised that she and the Belfast Area Electoral Officer had met with the Orchardville Society in relation to Project ABLE on 20 January 2010 about the possibility of providing one of their members with work placement. She highlighted to the Board what this would involve and that the Belfast Area Electoral Officer had agreed to pilot this for a period of 12 weeks. After discussion the Board agreed to this pilot. It was stated that the appropriate security checks would need to be completed for the individual before the placement started.</p> <p>The HR Officer advised a talk on aspergers will be given to the Belfast Office staff prior to the work placement. Evaluation will be carried out after the pilot and a decision made on whether it will be rolled out to other Area Offices.</p>	<p>HR Officer</p> <p>AEOs</p> <p>HR Officer</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Home Working Policy</u></p> <p>The Home Working Policy was discussed by the Board. The HoIS highlighted technical areas that</p>	

	<p>would need to be incorporated into the policy like work completed at home must be emailed into EONI and that USB pens should not be used. She also outlined that there was a limited number of encrypted laptops and that those using personal laptops would need to have compatible software. After discussion it was agreed that the need for compatible software should be added to the policy along with a link to the official website from which it could be downloaded.</p> <p>It was pointed out that the home working policy should only be used on occasional periods of exceptional circumstance. After discussion the Board asked that examples of the exceptional circumstances be included to assist line managers. It was also agreed that if the home working policy was introduced a report should be provided on a quarterly basis to the Board for monitoring purposes.</p> <p>The Board was content with the policy subject to the amendments highlighted. Once the amendments have been completed the policy should be sent to NIPSA for comments.</p> <p>The CEO reported to the Board on the incident in the Belfast Area Electoral Office on Monday 25 January and that this had raised questions about the panic buttons. After discussion further security issues were identified. The ACEO(E) is currently looking into these and will produce a proposal for approval by the Board.</p> <p>It was noted that this incident had also highlighted that phones were not being answered in HQ. The HoIS will look into the facilities available on the phone system to allow calls to bounce to another extension if not answered or when the extension is busy.</p> <p>It was agreed that de-escalation skills training should be provided for all staff. This could be included as part of the staff training events for the election.</p>	<p>HR Officer</p> <p>HR Officer</p> <p>HR Officer</p> <p>ACEO(E)</p> <p>HoIS</p> <p>ACEO(E) HR Officer</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Finance Report</u></p> <p>The HoCS took the Board through the Budget Centre Report for December 2009. The lack of</p>	

	<p>timely information made it impossible to reach a view. A meeting will be arranged to discuss this. AEOs/Business Unit Heads are to identify option for bringing forward necessary expenditure planned for 2010/11.</p> <p>There was further discussion on the plans for the Sage accounting system. This matter need to be given priority.</p> <p>EPE09 Overview – the HoCS advised that the final two payments are ready to be made out of this account and that once these had cleared the CEO would be asked to agree to closure of the account.</p>	<p>Finance Officer</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p><u>Financial Procedures Manual</u></p> <p>The HoCS provided the Board with a first draft of the Financial Procedures Manual. She advised that work still needs to be done on this manual and asked the Board to pass any comments on the manual to her.</p> <p>The HoCS advised the desktop procedures will be drafted by the appropriate member of staff and will be added to their appraisal as an objective. This will be done once the new accounting system is in place.</p>	<p>Board Members</p> <p>HoCS</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p><u>Fire Risk Assessment Update</u></p> <p>The HoCS took the Board through the Fire Risk Assessment Recommendations outstanding at 25 January 2010.</p> <p>The only area of concern is at the Omagh Area Office. EONI have carried out all the work they can and are waiting on a response from the landlord. The CEO advised that she should approach the Crown Solicitors Office to seek legal advice on whether, if he does not respond within a reasonable time, we can start the work and deduct the amount from our rental payments.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted there could be expenditure needed on security measures.</p>	<p>HoCS</p>

<p>10.</p>	<p><u>Customer Feedback Report</u></p> <p>The Information Officer highlighted that the report shows that EONI is achieving 98% of customer satisfaction. In this quarter 11 complaints were received, 6 formal and 5 informal and 129 compliments. She advised that the only target not being reached was for replies on voicemail messages.</p> <p>It was noted that an increased number of requests were being made for applying to register online and that not being able to provide this service would affect the customer service feedback. The ACEO(R) suggested that a note should be added to the website to advise the public that EONI would like to provide this service but because of the constraints of electoral law it is not possible. This was agreed.</p>	<p>Information Officer</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p><u>Charter Mark Update</u></p> <p>The ACEO(R) advised the Board that Charter Mark is being phased out and being replaced by Customer Service Excellence (CSE). The Charter Mark team have been working on the new criteria to achieve CSE and have produced an action plan. They have also applied for an assessor visit which will take place on 1 and 2 March. The assessor will look at the organisation against the CSE criterion and provide a gap analysis.</p> <p>The ACEO(R) advised that CSE needs to be rolled out throughout the organisation and get more people involved as there is a lot of work needed to achieve CSE. The CEO said this could be launched at the EONI corporate training event. The ACEO(R) will check the availability, of the speaker outline in the action plan, for March and ascertain if they would be willing to give a presentation to the organisation.</p>	<p>ACEO(R)</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>Political Involvement of Staff – the CEO asked for the Board's views on this issue. After discussion it was agreed that a criteria should be in place. The CEO will draft the criteria and forward it to the HR Officer.</p>	<p>CEO</p>

	<p>Publication Scheme – the CEO advised that one area has been identified where there is a gap in publishing information. This gap is in the publishing of senior management salaries. The Board where asked if they had any objections to these being published. After discussion it was agreed that the HR Officer would write to Board members to advise them of what information need to be published and to ask if they had any objection to their name being included.</p>	<p>HR Officer</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p><u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>Next meeting – Thursday 25 February at 10.00am</p>	

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm

Approved out of Board on 8 February 2010

