

# EONI MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY 20 MARCH at 10.00AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR

## MINUTES

Members:

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

In attendance:

NIPSA Rep  
HR Officer (item 6 & 7)  
Finance Officer (item 8)  
Assistant PA

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<p><b><u>Matters arising – Action Points</u></b></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 9 – CEO will issue a minute to AEOs regarding the action to be taken when an Annex A, B or C letter is signed by a person not authorised to do so.</p> <p>Action 10 – The approved business plan will be published on 28 March if practicable to avoid clashing with the publication of other public sector business plans.</p>	<p><b>Board Members</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>
2.	<p><b><u>Progress against targets</u></b></p> <p>The Board reviewed the progress against targets report as outlined in the Business Plan for 2007/08 and noted the high level of achievement.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Review of future Business</u></b></p> <p>The schedule of future business was reviewed and updated. Board members should notify PA to CEO of any future business to be brought before the Board.</p>	<p><b>PA to CEO</b></p>

<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Management Information</u></b></p> <p>The management information was discussed and noted.</p> <p>Registration – The increase of 1623 in the electorate between December 07 and March 08 was noted. Although this appeared low the CEO pointed out that, but for the one-off removal of 2600+ electors who had failed to provide their correct NINO, registration would have been in line with progress towards the 2008/09 targets.</p> <p>The CEO opened a discussion on the statistics for total transactions per office. If you divided the number of transactions by the number of permanent staff in each office there was a variation between 110 and 344. Although accepting that it would be wrong to place too much reliance on the figures for a single month he felt that over a period of 2-3 months these figures gave a useful indication of effectiveness. This was disputed. It was pointed out that the figures did not take into account the number of evidence letters issued or of footfall (shown elsewhere). It was agreed that the figures for evidence letters issued should be included in future.</p> <p>Following further discussions about the pressure on area office staff the CEO told the Board that he would, in his response to a recent minute from the AEOs on the new evidence requirements, be offering to commission a ‘loading exercise’ of all area office posts. He would advise AEOs to give careful consideration to the offer: in his experience ‘loading reviews’ often resulted in a decrease rather than an increase in staffing levels.</p> <p>Marketing – activity noted.</p> <p>Media – The publicity from the Free Prize Draw was noted.</p> <p>Other Public Contacts – The Helpline answering machine should pick up a call at 9 seconds to ensure the target is set.</p> <p>Complaints – Two complaints resolved during the month were discussed. One was from a person who had received multiple mailing regarding registration. Independently the CEO has written to the Electoral Commission asking them to amend their home movers letter, which had been the cause of the complaint, to make clear that if the person was already registered at</p>	<p><b>AEOs</b></p> <p><b>Information Officer</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>Information Officer</b></p>

	<p>the correct address no action was required. The Board noted that the Commission has responded positively. The second complaint was from a mother who claimed that the Electoral Office was forcing children to 'skip school' so that they could bring evidence to the office and that it was unreasonable to expect young people to pay £1 if they wished evidence to be returned to them by recorded delivery. The CEO advised the Board that he had found the complaint unfounded but noted that the new evidence letter was now in use and that a review of the £1 contribution was ongoing.</p> <p>It was agreed that 'Complaints' would appear as an agenda item each month.</p> <p>Staff – no issues</p> <p>Other significant events – After a brief discussion about the reasons for the inconsistent repeating of 'Other Significant Events' it was agreed that it would be more helpful if the events related to the period ending one week before the Board and some guidance could be given on what was 'significant'. The CEO undertook to issue guidance.</p>	<p><b>PA to CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Business Plan Timetable/ Approval of Business Plan</u></b></p> <p>The final draft of the Business Plan was discussed.</p> <p>Target 3 - The Board discussed whether to set a target that is less than the present level and agreed that this would be unacceptable.</p> <p>Development Objective 2 – The Board agreed to the 95% which would involve each office visiting a minimum of 3 schools per week for the set period. The CEO made clear that he attached particular importance to achieving this Objective and that AEOs should use their resources to ensure that it is achieved or preferably exceeded.</p> <p>After a brief discussion it was agreed to include a further development Objective of referring at least 50 cases to the PSNI for investigation with a view to prosecution.</p> <p>The Board approved the Business Plan subject to minor amendments and agreed that it should be published, if practicable, by way of a press release on 28 March.</p>	<p><b>AEOs</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Personnel Report</u></b></p>	

	<p>The personnel report was discussed and noted.</p> <p><u>Training</u> – Training on data handling, customer charter and the complaints procedure took place in Ballymena on Wednesday 19 March and will take place in Belfast on Friday 21 March.</p> <p><u>Sick Absence</u> – The HR Officer reported that the sick absence is similar to this time last year. Issue of the staff member on long term sick was discussed. It was agreed that, in view of the workload, action had to be taken now to appoint a substitute EO2 at Newtownabbey. When the existing staff member returns the new appointee would be overborn and allocated other duties. Initially expressions of interest for level transfer at EO2 would be invited.</p> <p><u>Recruitment</u> – As noted above an EO2 post will be advertised for Newtownabbey. 65 application forms have been sent out for the post of Registration Officer in Banbridge. The CEO advised the Board that he had decided to appoint an additional Registration Officer to the Belfast Office which would as a result of the relocation assume responsibility for the supervision of the public when checking candidates' expenses returns and inspecting registers, as well as initial contact with all personal callers at HQ/Belfast. In reaching his decision the CEO had had regard to the high level of footfall in the Belfast Office and the work done there for other offices.</p>	<p><b>HR Officer</b></p> <p><b>HR Officer</b></p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Staff Survey Action Plan</b></p> <p>HR Officer noted that the results showed a significant improvement on last year in nearly every area. The draft Action Plan was discussed and agreed subject to minor amendments. The Board noted the continued unease about the bonus scheme and welcomed the proposal to invite all staff to suggest improvements. Possibilities already identified included –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abolition</li> <li>• emphasis on group/team rather than individual awards</li> <li>• splitting the very limited amount available equally amongst all staff</li> </ul> <p>The Board agreed that a short refresher course on stress management will take place at the away day in the autumn.</p>	<p><b>HR Officer</b></p>

8.	<p><b><u>Finance Report</u></b></p> <p>The Finance Officer outlined the summary position and reported that currently there is an underspend of £83,000. This is due to the DWP budget for £83,000 being put back to June and therefore it will not fall within this financial year. HOCs will ask RIR to move this amount to next year's budget</p> <p>The Finance Officer undertook to finalise the delegated budgets as soon as RIR gave a decision and to pursue with FSD the CEO's request for changes to the way in which outlays were charged to budget heads.</p>	<p><b>Finance Officer</b></p> <p><b>Finance Officer</b></p>
9.	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>Next meeting – Thursday 17 April 2008 at 10.00am</p>	

The meeting concluded at 12pm