

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES
AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

DEPARTMENTAL BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 15 January, in Room C3.18, Castle Buildings at 11:00.

Present:	Andrew McCormick	Liz Mitchell
	Sean Donaghy	Norman Morrow
	Miriam McCarthy	Sean Holland
	John Cole	Clare Baxter
	Martin Bradley	Danny McCaughan
	Maura Briscoe	Donncha O'Carolan

In attendance: Linda Devlin, Neil Magowan and Anne Adair.

1.0 Apologies and Opening Remarks

1.1 Andrew McCormick welcomed all to the meeting and wished the Board a happy new year. Apologies were received from Helen Roulston. Liz Mitchell was in attendance on behalf of Michael McBride and Maura Briscoe attended on behalf of Linda Brown.

2.0 Minutes of Board Meeting – 20 November 2009 (DB/89/2009)

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2009 were agreed and approved for publication on the Department's website.

3.0 Chairman's Report

- 3.1 Sean Donaghy advised that he, Andrew McCormick, John Cole and Dean Sullivan had attended the Health Committee on 14 January to answer questions on the NI Audit Office's 'General Report on the Health and Social Care Sector in NI'. There will be further Committee sessions about governance and procurement arising from the report.
- 3.2 A McCormick noted the recent announcement that Arlene Foster would exercise the functions of First Minister over the next few weeks and asked Neil Magowan to circulate guidance to all Board members about how to address correspondence to OFMDFM.
- 3.3 He advised that the Minister and representatives from the Department, Board and Trusts would attend the Health Committee on 28 January to give evidence about revised expenditure plans.
- 3.4 Sean Holland advised that DHSSPS had been requested, by the Executive, to be the lead Department to investigate issues arising from the Ryan Report. A paper is currently being prepared for the Executive's consideration.
- 3.5 Regarding finance, S Donaghy advised that there are still considerable challenges in breaking even in 2009/10. A range of options are currently being considered and a full report will be brought to the February Board meeting.
- 3.6 He advised that the Executive's draft Budget agreement had proposed a cut to the Department's 2010/11 budget of £92m revenue and £21m capital, giving an opening deficit of up to £260m.
- 3.7 Options for reducing the deficit will be put to the Minister in due course. A range of criteria to inform these options are currently being developed in conjunction with other stakeholders.

3.8 Establishment of an 'Invest to Save' fund has been proposed by the Executive and may be implemented in 2010/11. If so, the Department may be able to bid for funds.

3.9 A McCormick noted that Ministerial targets on elective care remain unchanged and that Trusts are required to meet these targets. S Donaghy confirmed that work is ongoing to reduce impediments to achieving targets.

3.10 Members of the Board noted the position with regards to finance and the ongoing work to identify options for the Minister.

4.0 Media Analysis – Ms Clare Baxter (DB/02/2010)

4.1 Clare Baxter advised that the main subjects for the Press Office since the last Board meeting had been swine flu, the conclusion of the McElhill/McGovern inquest and the death of Millie Martin. More recently, focus has been on A&E pressures over Christmas and the Budget.

5.0 Capital Update – Mr John Cole (DB/03/2010)

6.0 Project Funding Applications 2010/11 – Options Paper – Mr Sean Holland (DB/04/2010)

6.1 Sean Holland advised that the Department usually calls for project funding applications at this time of year. Funding is awarded for a maximum of three years.

6.2 Due to the success of last year's call for project funding, less than £7k remains in the Department's voluntary and community budget for 2009/10.

6.3 As awarding funds would commit the Department to funding for three years and, in light of ongoing financial difficulties, SH proposed that no call be made for funding applications this year and that existing funds be surrendered. He confirmed that there would be no reduction in services by not calling for project applications.

6.4 Members of the Board agreed that project funding applications should not be called for during the 2010/11 financial year.

7.0 Assurance around HSC Preparedness for Swine Flu – Dr Elizabeth Mitchell and Mr Dean Sullivan (Presentation)

7.1 Andrew McCormick welcomed Dean Sullivan to the meeting.

7.2 Liz Mitchell advised that the purpose of the establishment of the Programme Board for 'Regional Preparedness for a Swine Flu Pandemic' had been to provide assurance to the Departmental Board that the appropriate financial controls had been exercised and that the response to the swine flu outbreak had been proportionate.

7.3 She reminded the Board that the initial outbreak of swine flu had been in Mexico in April 2009. Since then, all decisions made have been based on best worldwide scientific evidence while recognising that pandemics are unpredictable in their behaviour. Preparations were based on UK planning assumptions which were revised three times over the course of the UK outbreak.

7.4 GP and Out of Hours consultation rates, issue of anti-virals and hospital admissions peaked in NI in October and a total of 17 swine flu related deaths had been reported.

7.5 L Mitchell reported that this was the first pandemic when we have had vaccine available in time to influence the outcome. The NI vaccination

programme had been very successful with about 250,000 people vaccinated since 21st October.

7.6 D Sullivan advised that the following 13 workstreams had been set up within the Programme Board and had met fortnightly:

- 1a - Information provision
- 1b - Development and implementation of regional policy re counter measures
- 2 – Communications
- 3&4 – Surge planning for secondary care, community care, mental health, learning disability and FPS services
- 5 – Surge planning for independent sector services
- 6 – Business continuity in the Department and its ALBs
- 7 – Prison service preparedness
- 8 – Procurement, distribution and storage of supplies
- 9 – Vaccination
- 10 – National flu line
- 11&12 – Emergency response structures and processes, inter-agency issues
- 13 – Finance

7.7 L Mitchell advised that evidence suggests that a third wave is unlikely, however, swine flu may displace other flu types and become the predominant strain in the next winters' flu seasons. Discussions around the next stage of the vaccination programme are ongoing.

7.8 D Sullivan advised that preparedness arrangements are now complete and that the final meeting of the Programme Board will take place on 22 January 2010. Thereafter, an evaluation process will commence to identify lessons learned. The outcome of this process will be brought back to the Departmental Board via Written Procedure paper.

7.9 Members of the Board:

- noted the context for the local swine flu preparations;
- noted the detail of the preparations that were made; and
- confirmed that the Board was content that preparations were both comprehensive, and reasonable and proportionate on the basis of the evidence and advice available.

7.10 Members of the Board acknowledged the excellent work and efforts of many people in the health and social care sector and also paid tribute to the leadership and work of Michael McBride, Liz Mitchell and Dean Sullivan and their team in dealing with such a challenging and complex piece of work.

7.11 A McCormick thanked D Sullivan for attending.

8.0 Business for Next Meeting

8.1 A McCormick advised that the date of the next meeting may have to be changed. A revised date will be advised following internal discussions.

8.2 S Donaghy advised that a paper on 2009/10 and 2010/11 finances would be brought to the next Board meeting. Further items to be advised to the Secretariat and agreed by the Chair.

FOI Statement

The following redaction has been applied to the record above:

Reference	Redaction/Exemption Applied
5 – Capital Update	S35 – Policy in development