SCIE minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees

Held on Thursday 11 September 2003, 13.00 - 16.00 Goldings House, 2 Hay's Lane, London, SE1

1) Attendance

Board: Jane Campbell (chair), Shokat Babul, Ratna Dutt, Geraldine McDonald, Diana McNeish, Paul Martin, Terry Philpot, Gail Tucker, Susannah Walker

Staff: Bill Kilgallon (Chief Executive), Victoria McNeill (Head of Corporate Services & Company Secretary), Amanda Edwards (Head of Knowledge Services), Enid Levin (Staff Representative), Lisa Bostock (Staff Representative), Majella Ahwieh (minutes).

Apologies: Roy Taylor

2) Identification of any other business

Jane Campbell asked the Trustees to confirm their attendance at the annual social services conference on 15-17 October 2003. An attendance form was circulated.

Jane Campbell informed the attendees that the audit committee had requested that trustees sign a "no conflict of interest" form at each meeting and a form was circulated. She also told board members that, with SCIE's senior managers, she would be developing a list of forthcoming topics for board meetings. This would be circulated to board members as soon as it was ready.

Shokat Babul requested that expense claim forms be made available for trustees to complete at each meeting.

3) Minutes

Minutes of the board meeting held on 26 June 2003 were approved by the Trustees for signature by Jane Campbell.

Matters Arising:

SCIE Awayday:

The venue for the Awayday on 4 December was confirmed as Chelsea Village. A dinner for board members will be held on the evening of 3 December at the venue. The board were asked to let Victoria McNeill know if they do not require accommodation.

The Awayday would be facilitated by an external facilitator and would focus on looking at SCIE's values and developing an organisational plan for SCIE's future.

4) Chief Executive's Activity Report

The chief executive made the following points:

Government Changes

The re-organisation of the DH is continuing but SCIE is still awaiting confirmation of where social care services will be placed. The chair and chief executive had a meeting with DH to discuss this further. Several options have been suggested to help with the placement of social care services including:

a senior full time post with a place on the DH board

a second tier post reporting to the Chief Medial Officer

a "czar" - a part time post to run a particular agenda or project

a non executive member of the board.

SCIE would prefer option 1 and the chief executives of the social care organisations will write next week to confirm their support for the placement of a senior social care representative on the DH board.

The publication of the green paper "Every Child Matters" signals changes in the way children's services are run and delivered. SCIE have a staff group looking at the implications of this paper and will, in the future, study the paper with the other social care organisations which may result in a joint response. The chief executive will share the implications of this paper with the board once the study is complete.

The chair and chief executive will be meeting with the Minister for Children in the near future to discuss the proposals suggested in this paper.

The chair and chief executive will also be meeting with the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Community this month.

SCIE Conference

The chief executive had included in his report some press articles on this conference. The chief executive confirmed the need for service user involvement in the seminars and workshops at the next SCIE conference.

E-Learning

The DH have invested additional funds in SCIE to develop e-learning. The Chief Executive invited Amanda Edwards to explain the project to the Trustees. Amanda Edwards circulated a paper (attached). The DH have sent SCIE a draft letter confirming the amount of funding, £0.32 million, and the finalised letter was due to be sent to SCIE in the near future. The offer of funds followed a discussion on e-learning to support the new social work degree but it is hoped that this extra funding will take e-learning forward to the whole social care sector.

Cardiff Board Meeting

A pre-board dinner with approximately 20 guests will be held on the evening of 22 October. Trustees were invited to send any specific recommendations for guests to be invited to dinner to Victoria but emphasised the need to keep the dinner to a manageable size.

SCIE Products

A timetable for publication of SCIE products was circulated to the board. Terry Philpot suggested distinguishing the products which would be suitable for media coverage. Victoria McNeill confirmed that a more detailed timetable had been produced for staff which included a separate media plan and a copy of this timetable would be sent to Terry Philpot.

Chair's Activity Report (paper):

The chair has had discussions with possible presenters at SCIE's human rights seminar. A date for this seminar will be finalised in the near future and Victoria McNeill will circulate the date to all Trustees. Gail Tucker suggested that we might replicate this seminar outside SCIE, for other organisations outside London, if successful.

The chair had been on the panel to shortlist and interview for the post of Chief Inspector, Commission for Social Care Inspection. David Behan has been appointed to the post.

The chair requested that a list of key board papers, for the next 12 months, be circulated to board members at the awayday so trustees can add to and/or amend.

5) Finance report

Pearl Sebastian, Finance Director, joined the meeting. The chair invited Gail Tucker, as chair of the audit committee, to present the accounts for 2003/04 to the Trustees for approval.

Gail Tucker reported that the revised financial report included further clarification on reserve funds, which had been requested by the Trustees at the previous meeting.

The board approved the audited accounts for 2003/04 for signature by the Secretary and the Chair.

Action: The audit committee will meet on 21 November to discuss the financial manual and risk management procedures.

6) SCIE's policy on sponsorship and commercial arrangements

The chair invited Victoria McNeill to present this paper. The draft guidelines contained in the paper circulate to Trustees were produced following the board meeting on 26 June 2003 when Trustees asked for guiding principles to be prepared, to guide SCIE in its decision about who to do business with.

The board were invited to give comments and ask questions.

Gail Tucker suggested that a procedure be included in the guidelines to deal with a situation where the policies, practices or financial situation of an organisation change after SCIE is already doing business with that organisation. It was agreed that an additional procedure should be included to allow SCIE to get out of its commitments where such change goes against its guidelines.

Susannah Walker asked for clear definition of partnership, sponsorship, commissioning and collaboration. It was agreed that the definitions in the "terms of engagement" paper could be used.

Ratna Dutt suggested making the issue of equality more explicit under guideline number 3, which covers SCIE's values. It was agreed that guideline number 3 should be expanded and an extra guideline should be included which covers transparency.

Action: Draft guidelines to be amended by Victoria McNeill and a final paper to be presented at a future board meeting.

7) Development of eLSC

Diane Gwynne-Smith and Angela Upton joined the meeting to present a paper detailing the eLSC development plan and describing the four main phases of development.

Diane Gwynne Smith took the Trustees through the paper and informed the board that the appointment of a Web Development Manager and Assistant would assist with the developmental process.

Terry Philpot asked how new publications are traced. Angela Upton informed the board that there was a number of ways including advertisements of new publications, scanning social care journals and SCIE has also registered with publishers to receive their publications lists.

Shokat Babul suggested that SCIE registered with a news clipping service to keep eLSC up to date. Diane Gywnne-Smith confirmed that this service is included for future development, with a facility for members to register for email alerts for products of specific interest.

Terry Philpot asked where the eLSC is advertised. Diane Gywnne-Smith confirmed that one of the main themes for development is the promotion of eLSC as there is no marketing strategy in place at the moment.

Jane Campbell recommended that eLSC be flagged on SCIE's homepage as a free product as this may help to generate interest.

Geraldine MacDonald suggested asking GSCC to include an eLSC leaflet in each of their registration packs. Diane Gwynne-Smith informed the board members that the current promotional leaflet was in the process of being redesigned. Susannah Walker agreed that the current leaflet is too restrictive and the new design should be more inclusive.

Jane Campbell also asked for the accessibility of the SCIE website and eLSC to be reviewed to ensure that SCIE is complying with the recommended guidelines. Diane Gywnne-Smith confirmed that this is one of the priorities for the new Web Development Manager.

Action: Diane Gwynne Smith to give the board an update on the development of eLSC after the first phase is complete.

8) Date of next meeting

Cardiff, 23 October 2003