

SUPERVISORY BOARD AGENDA
THURSDAY 29 MAY 2003, 11am to 12.35pm
 ROOM 001, QUEEN ANNE'S CHAMBERS

Juliet Wheldon
 Robert Aitken
 Len Berkowitz
 Mark Blythe
 David Brummell
 Valerie Cain
 Vivienne Collett
 Simon Harker

Tony Hindley
 Martin Hemming
 Hilary Jackson
 Rosemary Jeffreys*
 Jonathan Jones
 John Kempself*
 Philip Kent
 Isabel Letwin*

Barrie McKay*
 David Pearson
 Gary Murphy (Secretary)
 Alison Schofield
 Mike Thomas
 Doug Walters
 *apologies

Ref	Item	Papers/Comments	Time
1.	<p><u>Business Performance</u> MoB/PRACAMS - Oral update from David Pearson Finance/Targets - Oral update from Tony Hindley Client Care - Activity Report attached; Advisory survey results New Business/Tender Form – Draft attached Agency Work Programme - Update attached Quarterly Training and Development Report – to follow</p>		11am
2.	<p>Staff Survey/Communication – Open Forum on 2 June and Action Plan; draft note on accommodation</p>	SB 03 (12) attached (Carole Coyne, HR, attending); draft note on accommodation.	11.20am
3.	<p>Sick Absence Management</p>	SB 03 (13) attached	11.50am
4.	<p>Managing Clients' Legal Risks</p>	SB 03 (14) attached	12noon
5.	<p>Legal Information Sharing</p>	SB 03 (15) attached	12.10pm
6.	<p>Other Business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GLS Exit Interviews – Juliet • Key Messages for Staff from the Meeting – Valerie <p>May include discussion, as necessary, on the following items on which correspondence has been sent to the Board: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres of Excellence – e-mail from Gary Murphy on 22 May • GLS recruitment – e-mail from David Pearson on 20 May 		12.30pm

Business Strategy Unit

NOTE OF SUPERVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday 29 May 2003

Present:

Juliet Wheldon	Jonathan Jones	Gary Murphy (Secretary)
Robert Aitken	Simon Harker	Alison Schofield
Len Berkowitz	Martin Hemming	Mike Thomas
Mark Blythe	Tony Hindley	Doug Walters
Vivienne Collett	Philip Kent	
Carol Coyne (items 1 to 3)	David Pearson	

Apologies:

David Brummell	Rosemary Jeffreys	Barrie McKay
Valerie Cain	John Kempself	
Hilary Jackson	Isabel Letwin	

1. Business Performance

- (a) **PRACAMS/MoB** – David updated the board on the key activity: -
- a communication strategy had been drafted – this would emphasise the importance of management commitment and the need to deliver consistent messages;
 - improvements were being made to the PRACAMS parts of the Intranet;
 - reports had been received from all the working groups and these were being reviewed by the MoB Team;
 - new job profiles for Team Leaders, following the discussions with them, were being discussed with HR;
 - work was continuing on the detailed set-up of PRACAMS and a number of demonstrations of the model system had taken place at Solicitec's offices in Leeds;
 - work continues on planning the roll-out and training for PRACAMS.

A major item on the "to do" list was the compatibility issues with eRIK (electronic records management system), a decision on the supplier of which would be made in June.

The key risk areas for MoB/PRACAMS which continued to be worked on but remained under control were:

- further documentation of the benefits of the system;
- review of the budget; and
- competing pressures and ensuring that everything remains on track.

On the last point, Mark thought that the Board should review the Agency's programme of business development projects generally. There was a great deal going on and he thought that the Board needed to discuss priorities. It was agreed that this should be done on the basis of a review of the Corporate Plan, which was last discussed in this way at the Board's Annual Strategy meeting in November when it was formulated.

Action: Gary to add to the agenda for the next Supervisory Board.

- (b) **Finance/Targets** – full management information is not produced for the first month of the year, so Tony simply confirmed that chargeable hours were on target and that a slippage on the prompt payment target was being dealt with. A full pack would be produced as normal for May.
- (c) **Client Care** – Philip explained that he was handing over responsibility for ongoing management of the Client Care programme to Hilary Jackson, the Agency's new Director of Corporate Strategy. Having developed an ambitious programme and undertaken considerable preliminary work on it, he considered that implementation would be more easily managed through Hilary's more central role within the Agency. Litigation would, of course, continue to be active on the Client Care Group. Vivienne Collett confirmed that she had agreed to take a leading role.

The Board agreed that the Advisory Division survey results were very encouraging and were grateful to everyone involved. The overall satisfaction level was extremely high at 99.5%. Most of the negative feedback related to resources and this was being looked at Division by Division: for dedicated advisory teams, the clients themselves were in control of resources and this was being raised with them as appropriate. A full discussion of the implications of the results for the Client Care programme would take place at a future meeting.

- (d) **New Business/Tender Form** – Juliet explained that she was very keen to develop a more methodical approach to taking on new tranches of work and clients. She had asked the BSU to draft a form which had been circulated to the Board and was being piloted with a couple of team leaders. Alongside this, she had asked Simon and Rosemary, who had both taken on additional work and clients in recent times, to analyse their client base along similar lines. The BSU were also working with Finance on the development of some high level graphical management reports showing workflow by client and work type. In addition, David and Vivienne had been working with Gary to develop a form to identify key information about Litigation's client base principally for the review of the client survey methodology but which would be useful for other purposes. It was agreed that this all seemed appropriate. The results could feed into the set-up of PRACAMS making at least some of the information much more accessible in the future.
- (e) **Work Programme** – the only significant exception was the subscription services on LION. Robert explained that the procurement exercise to replace the services which were currently supplied free of charge had been difficult. The cost of replacing the full range of subscription services now on LION would have been prohibitive and he was trying to negotiate a deal for a more limited range of services. Juliet would then have to write to all GLS Legal Teams asking if they would contribute.

2. Staff Survey

The Board thanked Carol Coyne for the paper she had done on the format of the action plan. Carol had since undertaken further work identifying specific actions. She had personally attended a few team meetings and was very willing to attend more. Some other teams had sent her written feedback for which she was equally grateful. For Litigation, Carol would let David know what teams had not responded so he could encourage them to contribute. Initial discussion had also taken place with the Trade Unions.

Action: Supervisory Board to invite Carol to attend team meetings or let her have written comments as soon as possible; Carol to let David know position for Litigation Division.

The open forum on 2 June would be devoted to identifying specific actions to address the points raised in the survey and Alison explained the format, as follows: -

- Price Waterhouse Coopers, the consultants who undertook the survey, would start with a short presentation of the key issues;
- the forum would break into three groups to discuss what specific action might be taken;
- the groups report back to the forum on three key actions emerging.

The forum would be the main news item on the Intranet on 2 June to remind staff that it was taking place. The outcome would be to put together a draft action plan during June.

Action: Board members to attend open forum if they can and encourage their staff to do likewise.

3. Communication

Alison reported briefly on the outcome of the first Communication Focus Group chaired by Valerie who would prepare a fuller note about it on her return. It had been very useful. Key perceptions emerging were: -

- there was lots of talk but little action;
- the Supervisory Board were not very visible and the role of the Boards was not understood;
- staff did not feel involved in issues like pay.

There was also some positive feedback about the Intranet and communication at team level. This feedback would be turned into action.

Action: Valerie to provide a written report to the Supervisory Board

The Board considered a draft note on accommodation for the Intranet produced by John Kempell/Geoff Page. It was agreed that, given that a report was due in June from the consultants considering the options and alternatives to QAC, that a much shorter note might be placed on the Intranet in the interim. This should simply focus on what we were doing and the current status (ie getting a professional appraisal of the options for QAC or an alternative building, which would go to the Executive Board in early July). We should be cautious about raising expectations.

Action: Gary to provide this feedback to John/Geoff

4. Sickness Absence

The Board were grateful for the paper from HR about sick absence, which Alison talked them through. The Agency had in 2002/03 missed the target set for all Departments by Cabinet Office for reducing sickness absence. The issue was one that needed to be managed locally as an understanding of the absences was key. However, HR were proposing a number of measures to support local managers as well as continuing to take a general overview. The measures proposed were: -

- the provision of more regular information to Divisions on their sickness absence rates;
- the Personnel Group will maintain a closer overview;
- HR were tightening the trigger points for action;
- the guidance for managers on managing sick absence would be re-issued;
- training would be provided to two managers in each Division/Team so that there is a best practice knowledge across the Agency; and
- action needed to be considered on limited efficiency grounds in serious cases of frequent and recurrent sickness absence.

The Board agreed this approach. In addition, it was agreed that the Agency should take a more proactive approach to prevention – publicising the availability of eye tests, considering health screening.

Action: Alison to discuss with the Trade Unions and organise the implementation of the proposals and the Supervisory Board proactively to ensure they are embedded within their Divisions.

5. Managing Clients' Legal Risks

The Board thanked Jonathan for his paper, which had been drafted with the help of others on the Risk Management Group and elsewhere. The paper took forward a point made at a previous Supervisory Board about the management of clients' legal risks. It provided draft guidance for caseholders and advisers on taking a risk based approach to their legal advice. Much of the guidance was inherent in providing legal advice, but it was agreed that a risk based approach was not always consistently taken. The guidance would further embed risk management into the Agency's operations, on which considerable progress had already been made.

Jonathan had received written comments from some members of the Board and the following two points were made at the meeting; -

- the guidance should say that people should be open if a problem arises or a mistake is made;
- the depth of the approach needs to be relevant to the particular case or issue being addressed.

Jonathan would reflect these points and any other comments should be sent to him within the following week. The final version would be issued in June.

Action: Any further comments to Jonathan and he will issue in June.

6. Legal Information Sharing

The Board thanked Simon for his paper considering how he should take forward his remit as Legal Information Sharing Director. He had split legal information into five categories and the Board agreed that he should proceed as follows: -

External Legal Materials – it was agreed that arrangements for these were adequately covered by existing arrangements (ie the Library Committee and LION Board);

Legal Facts – this related to procedural type guidance, like panel counsel rates – again it was agreed that these were adequately covered by existing arrangements;

Previous Advice – this was a key area which the Agency had not cracked. Len explained that the private sector employ considerable numbers of support lawyers for this purpose and everyone is actively engaged in sending them significant and unusual pieces of advice, a bulletin was produced once a week for each Division and all items were placed on a searchable database. It was unlikely that the Agency could devote such significant resources, but it was agreed that Simon should scope out the options and benefits utilising PRACAMS and eRIK as appropriate.

Precedents - some work was already being done on gathering together standard letters, etc for PRACAMS. It was agreed, however, that there needed to be a quality review process.

Legal Know-How – this referred to personal experiences and should continue to be a focus of team meetings.

Action: Simon to report back on progress at the July meeting

7. Other Business

Juliet asked all Board members to ensure that they inform the GLS Secretariat about those leaving the GLS **before** they leave so that the Secretariat can invite them to have an exit interview. Doug Walters explained that these usually took place on the phone and took no more than 5 minutes. People very rarely refused to talk to the Secretariat. The problem was that the Secretariat did not know that they were going until it was too late. This was a missed opportunity for some good feedback.

Alison had sent to the Board details of Lindsay Addison's funeral and a collection being organised by BV – the Board were asked to pass on the details to members of their Division who knew her. The Board were very sad about her death and expressed their condolences to her family and friends.

The key messages from the meeting for the Intranet were: -

- staff survey action/open forum;
- guidance on managing clients' legal risks; and
- sickness absence.

Action: Alison and Gary to draft in Valerie's absence.

Gary Murphy
Business Strategy Unit
29 May 2003