

**SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST**

**Minutes of a meeting of the South Eastern HSC Trust  
Finance & Performance Committee held on  
Monday 28 September 2020 at 11.00am  
in the Boardroom, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital  
and via Virtual Meeting 1 Video conferencing**

<b>Present:</b>	Mr M Mawhinney Mr N Brady	Non-Executive Director (Chairman) Non-Executive Director
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Ms W Thompson Mrs J Dunlop Ms E Hannaway  Ms C Allam  Miss C Hughes	Director of Finance & Estates Interim AD Financial Management Head of Performance & Information (item 37/20 only) Interim Asst Director Elective Care & Radiology (item 37/20 only) Personal Assistant
<b>Apologies:</b>	Mrs R Coulter	Director Planning, Performance & Informatics

**31/20 Welcome**

Mr Mawhinney welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Mr Patton, Trust Chairman and Mr McGoran, Interim Chief Executive. He noted that due to the current pandemic situation, himself and Mr Brady were joining via video conferencing.

Mr Mawhinney took this opportunity, on behalf of Mr Brady and himself, to welcome Ms Thompson to her new post and to her first Finance & Performance Committee.

**32/20 Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

All present confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest with any items on the agenda. .

**33/20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 23 June 2020**

The minutes of the previous meeting, which had been circulated with papers for the meeting, were approved.

**34/20 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

Mr Mawhinney noted the following points:-

**Action**

**Action**

24/20 - Amendment to Below Delegated Limit Capital Business Case Thresholds: It was confirmed that appropriate amendments had been made to the Standing Financial Instructions at the Governance Assurance Committee.

28/20 – Finance Report for the 2 Months to 31 May 2020: The issue of achievement of savings plans would be further discussed at the meeting today under item 36/20. As noted at the meeting, the financial challenges were detailed at the Trust Board.

**35/20 Business Case : Replacement Fluoroscopy Room, Ulster Hospital**

A Briefing Paper and Business Case detailing the Replacement Fluoroscopy Room had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

During detailed discussion Mr Mawhinney noted that the Fluoroscopy Room is critical to the operation of the Trust, it had been recommended that it be replaced after 7 years and therefore should have been replaced in the previous financial year, and it is also experiencing considerable breakdowns which result in delays for patients.

In relation to funding, Ms Thompson noted that, if approved today, capital funding will be sought in the October Monitoring Round to fund this replacement. In response to a query regarding why this work was not prioritised in the previous year or earlier in this financial year, Ms Thompson indicated that the Directorate has many issues and this one was just below those currently prioritised. She noted that whilst funding may not be confirmed until December the relevant staff are confident that the new equipment could be purchased and installed by the end of this financial year.

Mr Mawhinney enquired if the 147 patients currently awaiting fluoroscopic imaging, as detailed in the business case, have been delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions or current equipment breakdowns. Mrs Dunlop confirmed that the majority of delays are due to equipment failure/down time.

Mr Brady noted the repetitive nature of the Business Case template and wondered if this could be amended but Ms Thompson advised that it is a NIGEA template from the Department of Finance and therefore the Trust cannot amend it.

In response to a query from Mr Brady regarding the treatment of the current equipment when replaced, Ms Thompson advised that the normal process is for it to be recycled/donated to a charity as appropriate.

Action

Mr Brady enquired if Section 8 of the Business Case should also include annual revenue funding and Ms Thompson undertook to have this point checked and amended if required.

WT

Mr Mawhinney sought, and received, Committee approval for the business case to replace the Fluoroscopy Room at the Ulster Hospital.

Ms Thompson enquired if, for administrative purposes during the current pandemic virtual meeting arrangements, would it be appropriate for her to sign the business case on behalf of Mr Mawhinney. It was agreed that this would be appropriate.

### **36/20 Finance Report – Month 5 to 31 August 2020**

The Finance Report for the period to 31 August 2020 had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Mr Mawhinney commented that at a future date he would discuss with Ms Thompson a potential update of the narrative to the Finance Reports to make it more simplified or streamlined going forward.

During detailed discussion of the Finance Report Ms Thompson noted that the non-recurrent funding provided to the Trust has increased exponentially. In previous years deficit funding was rolled forward into the new financial year but this has not happened for approximately the last three years. This position is the same across the Health sector.

Ms Thompson noted that the improvement in the Trust's financial position related to more clarity being received in the first five month of the financial year and initial conservative estimates of savings have now received more clarity. There is also confirmation that some plans are yielding more than initially thought and slippage identified in specific areas.

In response to a query regarding Pharmacy savings, Mrs Dunlop advised that these are identified by a Regional Group and the majority of savings related to bio-similar switching in 2018/19 which have mainly been achieved. The £945k savings target was removed from the Trust's position and almost half of it has been achieved but the full amount will be reached via other areas to achieve breakeven.

**Action**

Mr Brady enquired if all expenditure incurred in response to Covid-19 pandemic will be fully funded by the Department of Health (DoH). Also, if there are savings achieved due to a downturn in activity due to Covid-19, then the Trust will be permitted to retain this funding. Mrs Dunlop advised that all Covid-19 costs are reported separately and, as noted by Mr Brady, the DoH will fully fund all costs and Trusts will keep all savings achieved through downturn of services. Ms Thompson noted that the main element of savings relates to Goods & Services/consumables not utilised. Another significant element is a reduction in travel costs eg for children being transported to school/visitations and these had been cancelled during lockdown. There were fewer staffing cost reductions as during the initial downturn of services many staff were redeployed. Ms Thompson commented that the gross cost nature of the Covid-19 funding is generous and, whilst this is assisting the financial position in this financial year, it is not a long term solution.

Mr Mawhinney asked about the plans for savings which cannot be achieved by low impact measures and Ms Thompson advised that decisions will not be taken until after the result of the October Monitoring bids are received. It is hoped that additional funding will be secured in this process and by the middle/end of November 2020 further clarity will be received.

During review of Table 3, Total Flexible Staffing Costs, on page 9 of the Report, Mr Mawhinney asked if these Agency and Locum costs are likely to continue at this level. Mrs Dunlop reported that South Eastern Trust has the lowest Agency/Locum costs of any Trust in the region and every effort is made to utilise Bank staff before incurring the premium charges associated with Agency/Locum. She added that the Trust is taking part in a regional International Nurse Recruitment process and it is expected that significant numbers of staff will be recruited during the next nine months. These staff will not only fill vacancies but also add to the Bank staff available.

Mr Mawhinney noted that page 12 of the Report detailed the Capital Expenditure and is currently predicting full spend of capital funding by the end of March 2021. Ms Thompson confirmed that she is unaware of any potential issues with capital expenditure plans.

In response to a query Ms Thompson confirmed that EU Exit preparations are ongoing. Working Groups at DoH and Trust level have now recommenced and are reviewing the potential impact to the supply chain.

**37/20 Performance Management – Rebuilding**

The slide presentation on “Rebuilding” had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Ms Hannaway advised that Covid-19 has had a dramatic impact on the Trust which resulted in some services being stood down and new ways of working introduced. It is now time to risk assess areas and plan to rebuild services to work in a different way. In line with the DoH rebuilding programme, the Trust has established an internal Rebuilding Management Group which oversees and directs the Trust’s overall rebuild plans. Phase 1 plans took place in June and July 2020 and phase 2 is now in operation until September. Further plans will be developed for the forthcoming months.

Ms Allam presented details of the services delivered, the method in which they are provided ie face to face or virtual, and the activity predicted and delivered. These activity figures were estimated based on performance during the third week of April and in the majority, the Trust has been over performing against these predictions. She added that the anticipation of activity was very difficult given that some of the Outpatients facilities have been taken over for other services eg GP Covid-19 Centre and to accommodate social distancing for other services and it is not yet clear when they will return to routine services.

During review of the figures presented, Ms Allam noted that there was a lower number of cancer patients due to a lack of GP referrals during the initial period of the pandemic. In response to a query regarding the “white” coloured information sections, Ms Allam advised that the number of planned attendances for these services had been “0” eg for Autism. Upon review these sections should be “light green” as they are on-target and the information will be updated accordingly.

Ms Allam highlighted the information on “Rebuild Position at September vs Predicted” and noted that HSCB colleagues had queried if the predicted figures were overly cautious but she felt that they were realistic given the number of clinics, the Christmas holiday period, potentially for staff to be off due to Covid-19, etc. Ms Hannaway stressed that the rebuild assessments are based on no winter pressures and no Covid-19 second surge.

In response to a query about the benefits of “virtual” clinics, Ms Allam advised that there are some Clinics where “virtual” meetings are not very successful eg Dermatology patients

are not very good at taking pictures of their lesions and are therefore also needed to come for face-to-face meetings. She commented that the number of Specialities where virtual clinics works exceeding well is not as high as she would have expected. The rebuild process is learning from the lessons of current Clinics for both virtual and face-to-face.

**Action**

Ms Hannaway noted that the information in relation to Children's Social Care has not yet been fully agreed as HSCB want them included but the arrangements for face to face contact for children on the protection register and Looked After Children are not confirmed.

Discussion took place regarding the Performance Management presentation theme at the next Committee meeting. The options of Children Services and Cancer Services were discussed and it was agreed that Cancer Services pathways should be presented at the next meeting with Children's Services at the following meeting.

EH/CA

Mr Mawhinney thanked Ms Hannaway and Ms Allam for their very informative presentation and they left the meeting.

**38/20 Any Other Business**

Lisburn PCCC

Mr Mawhinney asked if a very brief update could be provided on the Lisburn PCCC at the next meeting.

RC/ND

**39/20 Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on **Monday 23 November 2020 at 11.00am.**