

SOUTH EASTERN HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

Minutes of a meeting of the South Eastern HSC Trust

Finance & Performance Committee held on

Wednesday 18 October 2023 at 10.30am

in Meeting Room 2, Home 7, Ulster Hospital

Present:	Mr M Mawhinney	Non-Executive Director (Chairman)
	Mr N Brady	Non-Executive Director
	Mrs H Minford	Non-Executive Director
In Attendance:	Ms W Thompson	Director of Finance & Estates
	Mrs J Dunlop	Asst Dir Financial Management
	Miss M Crawford	Graduate Trainee – Financial Mgt
	Miss C Hughes	Personal Assistant
Apologies:	Mrs H Moore	Director of Planning, Performance & Informatics
	Mrs E Hannaway	Interim Asst Dir of Performance Improvement & Commissioning

32/23 Welcome

Mr Mawhinney welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Miss Crawford who was attending as an observer. He noted that apologies had been received from Mr J Patton, Trust Chair, and Ms R Coulter, Chief Executive.

Action

33/23 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

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

34/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting – 26 June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 June 2023, which had been circulated with papers for the meeting, were approved.

35/23 Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

There were no matter arising from the previous meeting.

36/23 Business Case : ICT New Services Equipment

The business case and briefing paper in respect of ICT New Services Equipment had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Mr Mawhinney advised that Mr Brady, Mrs Minford and himself had already reviewed the documents presented and approved them e-mail. It was noted that grouping the equipment requests together is better value for money and that the ICT staff will carry out appropriate procurement processes in a timely fashion.

Mr Mawhinney sought, and received, formal Committee approval for this business case.

37/23 Business Case : Mobile Devices Roll Out Resource –
And Encompass
38/23 Business Case : ICT Tintri T850 Datastores
Replacement

The business case and briefing paper in respect of Mobile Devices Roll Out Resource – Encompass, and the business case and briefing paper in respect of ICT Tintri T850 Datastores Replacement, had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Mr Mawhinney advised that Mr Brady, Mrs Minford and himself had already reviewed the documents presented and approved them e-mail.

Mr Mawhinney noted that these business cases were linked to the Encompass programme. In response to questions in relation to Encompass, Ms Thompson advised:-

- The Trust funding requested is a relatively small amount compared to the investment from Encompass which has improved systems and capacity.
- Regarding the variation in costs, the original estimates prepared by the Encompass Regional Team, were compiled some time ago and included the information available at that time. There have been increases to costs since then, for example, when works were being carried out in some areas there were unexpected asbestos issues to deal with.
- Meetings have taken place with Trusts in England who have implemented the system and their lessons learnt during their process are being introduced eg a downturn in activity (where possible) during the week before and weeks after go live. Trust staff are attempting to manage the transition as well as possible, for example chemotherapy sessions are being booked as early as possible; waiting list elective work is being utilised to advantage at this time; etc.

- As much information as possible is being communicated to patients to advise them of the implementation of Encompass which will eventually be beneficial both to the Service regionally and to patients via detailed information on the “my care app” in the future.

In conclusion, Ms Thompson confirmed that appropriate procurement processes will be carried out.

Mr Mawhinney sought, and received, formal Committee approval for these business cases.

39/23 Business Case : Development of an Urgent Care Centre, Ulster Hospital

The business case and briefing paper in respect of the Development of an Urgent Care Centre, Ulster Hospital, had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Mr Mawhinney commended the format of this Business Case which was well written and therefore easy to read and understand. In response to a query Ms Thompson confirmed that the original business case had been costed at £4m in May 2023 but since then costs have increased to £5.2m.

During discussion Ms Thompson advised that staff have moved from the former Minor Injuries Unit, Ards Hospital, to the former ED accommodation on the Ulster Hospital site. When the Urgent Care Centre work is completed they will move across to this accommodation. The medical staffing cover will be enhanced, via the use of recurrent No More Silos funding provided to support unscheduled care, and these staff will work across ED and the Urgent Care Centre. In response to a query regarding the title “Urgent Care Centre”, Ms Thompson advised that this was a regional naming convention.

Discussion took place regarding the “shell space” during which Ms Thompson advised that the accommodation is a large warehouse style annex on a lower level than the Emergency Department. It was agreed that a visit to the proposed area will be arranged for the Committee as it was felt to be beneficial to visualise the space.

WT

Mr Mawhinney sought, and received, Committee approval for this business case.

40/23 Finance Report – Month 5 (August 2023)

The Finance Report – Month 5 (August 2023) had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

Mr Mawhinney noted that this Report was discussed at the Trust Board meeting on 27 September 2023.

Mr Mawhinney enquired about the recent media reports on the PSNI annual leave court case and if this would affect the South Eastern Trust's position. Ms Thompson confirmed that this ruling will impact all public service employees who have regular on-call or allowance payments which have not been included in their annual leave payments and are therefore now due a back payment. This back pay issue had been discussed over the past few years at Audit Committee regarding the treatment of it in the Annual Accounts ie an accrual (where the estimated amount is retained in the Accounts) or a provision (where the issue is noted in the Accounts but no funds are retained to address the payment). Until last year it had been treated as an accrual but in 2022/23 the Auditors insisted it be changed to a provision. Ms Dunlop confirmed that the estimated amount of £12m has been retracted from the Trust when it was decided that the Accounts should reflect this issue as a provision. During discussion Ms Thompson noted that going forward this will be a regional issue and therefore should be addressed by the Department of Health (DoH)/Strategic Planning & Performance Group (SPPG).

Mr Mawhinney enquired about the PPE costs and Ms Dunlop advised that the forecast is £2.5m. Pre-covid costs would have been approximately £600k per annum but these have continued to remain high due to the need for additional equipment to deal with outbreaks on wards. Funding of £1.76m has been received to date and the balance has been included in the deficit position.

41/23 Savings Review

The Savings Update had been circulated with papers for the meeting.

During review of the Savings Update report Ms Thompson advised that this is the current position and discussions will take place with relevant Directors in respect of amber and red RAG rated items. If there are proposals which are unlikely to achieve the expected savings, then alternatives will be sought. Discussion took place regarding the new Agency Framework and Ms Thompson advised that whilst Off Contract Agency usage has ceased for Nursing and HCA staff, the savings from the new Framework are slow to be evidenced due to the time lag in financial information and the increased number of shifts being booked/filled by the framework. An Agency Reduction Oversight Group has

been established to monitor the performance of the Agency Framework and savings achieved.

Action

Brief discussion took place regarding the Medical & Dental contract during which Ms Thompson confirmed that the current contract will expire at the end of March 2024 and a new Medical Agency Framework will need to be in place by that date. This is a very complex Framework to agree as some Consultants/Middle Grade Doctors have made a career decision to remain as Locums and there is a range of specialist rates for these staff across the region. There is the potential for a regional rate to be higher than that currently paid by South Eastern Trust.

In response to a query regarding the hold on minor capital works and the potential impact upon the Trust estate, Ms Thompson advised that all works required for Health & Safety or to address risks will be carried out however requests for minor works, such as the erection of a shelf, are paused.

Ms Thompson advised that further correspondence has been received from Mr May, Permanent Secretary, on 5 October 2023 requesting details on how the Trust would address the issue of saving 50% of the current forecast deficit (approximately £11m). It has been agreed that a response will be prepared to confirm that the only areas which could achieve further savings, in the few remaining months of the financial year, would be high level and have significant impact. All low and medium impact measures have been identified and actioned. Mr Mawhinney noted that the Committee supported the Trust in in this response. This issue may be further discussed at the next Trust Board.

During discussion, Mr Mawhinney queried how the Trust has broken even in previous years despite having a deficit position for the majority of the year. Ms Thompson advised that this has been achieved via the receipt of additional non-recurrent funding rather than realisation of savings.

42/23 Performance Presentation : Cancer Services Performance – Breast

A briefing paper on Cancer Services – Breast, had been circulated with papers for the meeting. Mr Mawhinney noted that Mrs Moore and Ms Hannaway were unable to attend the meeting today due to other pressures. This issue will be fully discussed at the next meeting.

43/23 Any Other Business

No issues were raised.

44/23 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place on Monday 27 November 2023 at 11.00am in the Boardroom, Trust Headquarters, Ulster Hospital.

Action