

Authority Paper

Committee:	Authority Meeting
Meeting Date:	7 May 2008
Agenda Item:	2
Paper Number:	HFEA (01/04/08) 439
Paper Title:	Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 1 and 2 April 2008
Author:	Committee Secretary
For Information or Decision?	Decision
Resource Implications:	None
Recommendation to the Committee:	The Authority is asked to confirm the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting

HUMAN FERTILISATION & EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY MINUTES OF THE NON-CONFIDENTIAL AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 1 APRIL 2008

There were 18 members attending, 10 lay members and 8 professional members.

PRESENT

Lisa Jardine	Ruth Fasht
Sam Abdalla	Neva Haites
David Archard	Lord Harries
Chris Barratt	Jennie Hunt
Clare Brown	Emily Jackson
Anna Carragher	Maybeth Jamieson
Sally Cheshire	Roger Neuberg
Rebekah Dundas	Susan Price
Chris Barratt	

APOLOGIES

Bill Ledger
Sharmila Nebhrajani

IN ATTENDANCE

Alan Doran	Trish Davies	Richard Martin
Tim Whitaker	Maggie King	Charles Lister
Sally Townsend	Helen Coath	John-Paul Maytum
David Gomez	Mark Bowden	Catherine Drennan
Richard Cullen	Rachel Hopkins	

Item	Apologies, Welcome & Declarations of Interest	Action
1.		
1.0	Apologies were received from: Bill Ledger Sharmilla Nebhrajani	
1.1	Lisa Jardine, the Chair welcomed the Authority to the first part of a meeting over two days: This first session was set up to be more informal and strategic in nature and the meeting overall had a number of important discussions including Principles Based Regulation, Multiple Births and Opening the Register.	
1.2	Lisa Jardine explained that Bob Gann, Director of Information Strategy at the Department of Health, would be joining the members as a guest speaker at the Information item on April 2nd.	
1.3	At the outset of the meeting, Lisa Jardine outlined her early thoughts on her role as Chair and in particular her media facing role.	
Item	Programme 2010 - update	
2.		
2.0	Alan Doran, Chief Executive gave a detailed presentation to the Authority on the activity undertaken as part of the change programme. The main aspects of this presentation were:	
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of progress since the Authority agreement to a change programme at the January meeting. This covered a number of staff engagement activities and increased internal communications; 	
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overview of the programme going forward, in particular this highlighted the five work streams that would be managed as part of Programme 2010; 	
2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key deliverables to date, presenting a straw man on the future committee structure, as discussed at the members' away day on 24th January; an explanation of the future operating model; and thirdly some early development of staff wellbeing issues; 	
2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How members would be engaged in the Programme over the coming months; and 	
2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally, the high-level next steps. 	
2.6	Members raised a number of points in a discussion that followed the presentation that was welcomed as informative and helpful by members. Members made the following points:	

- 2.7
 - **Committees** - support to improve the decision making process but important in reviewing committees it is not just about reducing them but ensuring that the powers each committee has are appropriate. Members were keen to be involved in the development of the straw man presented by Alan Doran and agreed to discuss further, to make a decision at the May Authority meeting. An interesting observation was made that 'pinging' was not automatically to be considered unhelpful but the process would define the value added.
- 2.8
 - **Future Operating Model** - members were keen that development of the corporate structure supported, or was supported by, the above decision on committees. An assessment by some members was that the existing structure was complex for a small organisation and that some of the criticisms of SMT were symptomatic of fractured structure, although silo working was not acceptable in such a small organisation.
- 2.9
 - **Stakeholders** - members were keen that external stakeholders were considered in the development of this work; although the change programme is aimed internally it will impact the external relationships.
- 2.10
 - **Re-shaping SMT** - members received clarification that Alan Doran was commenting purely on director posts when explaining there would be a reduction, although there was a challenge as to the number of Department Heads. In response Alan Doran explained that this was not a reshaping for the sake of it, would not impact all staff but did lead to a challenge as to the make up of the SMT.
- 2.11

Lisa Jardine thanked Alan Doran for the presentation and commented that she was fully supportive of the current thinking, that the analysis was robust and that her expectation was that the Chief Executive would take this forward into the 'actioning' phase.
- 3.0

Principles Based Regulation & Code of Practice
[HFEA (02/04/08) 432]
- 3.0

Lisa Jardine introduced Helen Coath and Rachel Hopkins who took the Authority through a presentation on taking the HFEA towards a principles based approach to regulation. The Chair began the session by explaining that this appeared a direction the HFEA should follow given the nature of current legislation and the analysis of the case studies.
- 3.1

The presentation made the case in favour of adopting a principles based approach, as part of the HFEA's response to the HFE Bill. The main arguments through the presentation were:

- 3.2 • **Current approach** – reliant on *standards and guidance* and *mandatory requirements*, the two together mean that the current approach to regulation is based on detailed rules, not all which are legal requirements;
- 3.3 • **Advantages of principles based approach** – one of the main advantages to a change in approach is the move towards the Better Regulation agenda; a move to an outcomes based approach enables lighter regulation, this does not however mean weaker regulation. Furthermore, with the need to update the Code of Practice for practical and legislative reasons means this is a good time to consider a move;
- 3.4 • **Principles based regulation** – this would entail a set of broad principles as opposed to detailed rules; however, these principles would be supported by guidance on: i) legal requirements; ii) professional guidance; and iii) good practice.
- 3.5 • **Other regulators** – the majority of other regulators use a system based on principles as opposed to rules, this is true across a range of industries. Regulators use a principles based approach to improve regulation and create some flexibility in the sector to drive improvement. This is not without problems and regulators have to adapt to changing times and the challenges they face, such as the GMC post Shipman;
- 3.6 • **Practical changes** – the Code of Practice would be re-designed to separate mandatory standards from guidance. Inspections would be based on this new approach and the existing work on risk and self assessment would be further developed. For the sector, and in particular clinics, the emphasis would be quality improvement being driven from within and the mandatory regulatory requirements being achieved through compliance with the principles; and finally
- 3.7 • **The challenge** – this is not insignificant but the opportunity presented by the HFE Bill and the requirement to update the Code of Practice creates an excellent environment to re-design the regulatory framework; to use Programme 2010 to reorientate the HFEA to a change in regulation; and future consultation to reorientate the sector away from prescriptive rules as a form of regulation.
- 3.8 Members were supportive of the ideas presented but raised a number of concerns they would want to be tackled during the next phase of development work.

The main points raised, and challenges are outlined below:

- 3.9 • **Expectation of licensed clinics** - there was an acceptance that what was required of clinics currently was confusing; it was not clear in terms of the differentiation between a legal requirement and expectation placed on centres by the HFEA. It was clear that a principles based approach would remove some confusion.

- 3.10 • **Inconsistencies** - there was agreement that there needed to be a development of the Code of Practice given its current inconsistencies; there was a range of support as to whether moving to principles was the way to effect this change.
- 3.11 • **Principles** - members were unanimous in their feeling that any principles should be clear and not so high-level as to be vague. Furthermore, members were keen that the principles are developed alongside the redevelopment of the Code of Practice so that they are not disjointed. However, an improvement in what Licence Committees can measure against and the clarity it may give to legislative requirements will enhance regulatory activity.
- 3.12 • **Patients** - members asked that patients be considered in the work to reorientate the sector as they welcomed the safety net of the HFEA as a regulator. There would be a concern in this stakeholder group that the HFEA moved too far towards a perceived light touch regulation.
- 3.13 • **Clinics** - professionals appear to like the existing Code of Practice as a single source of relevant information; however, this did not mean that it could not be improved. Furthermore, the issue was raised that the grey areas between legal and HFEA requirement actually enhanced the provision of services as centres tended to abide by both - separating out these two may affect service delivery.
- 3.14 • **HFE Bill** – the issue was raised as to whether the HFE Bill, currently passing through Parliament would present an opportunity for patient safety to be included within the HFEA remit; without this, defining principles may prove troublesome. Furthermore, an opportunity to set minimum requirements could also be added to the Bill to support HFEA regulatory action.
- 3.15 Overall, as Lisa Jardine outlined at the outset, the general direction of travel appeared to be towards a principles approach; however, members raised a number of areas of concern for further development and the Executive committed to take all aspects on board in the further development of the principles for Authority consideration.

4.0 **Purpose & Principles** **[HFEA (02/04/08) 433]**

- 4.0 Lisa Jardine began this session by introducing Maggie King, Director of Strategic Change, and challenging the members to develop their thinking further on the Purpose and Principles that Maggie King would outline.
- 4.1 Maggie King began by outlining the activity that had been undertaken to develop the Purpose and Principles including a meeting of a sub-group of members and discussion with staff at the away-day in March. Maggie King explained that the principles had developed from discussions on purpose following conversations about value statements. Staff had suggested that the phrases were slightly 'wordy' and questioned the balance of science versus regulation.

4.2 Members steered away from specific drafting points and raised a few areas for consideration in the ongoing development, the main points were:

- 4.3** • There is no mention of regulation of research - one of the key roles of HFEA;
- 4.4** • HFEA does not provide "expert advice";
- 4.5** • The phrase "world-class" is too commercial or private sector;
- 4.6** • Unclear of the audience, difficult to construct something for both internal and external audiences;
- 4.7** • Purpose statement should be shorter, maximum of two sentences, too long becomes too cumbersome and invites comment on specific words; and
- 4.8** • Current draft is in too much management consultant speak, needs to be aimed appropriately at its audience.

4.9 Members suggested that the examples given of other regulators as part of the principles based regulation item should be reviewed and used to help develop the HFEA's purpose and principles. It is important that any statement does not work against the HFEA externally. The HFE Bill will require the HFEA to have a statement of purpose but it would be good to work this sooner.

4.10 Lisa Jardine invited members to send further comments to Maggie King and asked that the member subgroup take this work further; the Chair commented that there appeared to be a consensus to move towards fewer words which might, in turn, reduce some of the specific drafting comments.

I confirm this to be a true and accurate record of the meeting

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Chair

Date
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**HUMAN FERTILISATION & EMBRYOLOGY AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE NON-CONFIDENTIAL AUTHORITY MEETING
HELD ON 2 APRIL 2008**

There were 18 members attending, 10 lay members and 8 professional members.

PRESENT

Lisa Jardine	Ruth Fasht
Sharmila Nebhrajani	Neva Haites
Sam Abdalla	Lord Harries
David Archard	Jennie Hunt
Chris Barratt	Emily Jackson
Clare Brown	Maybeth Jamieson
Anna Carragher	Roger Neuberg
Sally Cheshire	Susan Price
Rebekah Dundas	

APOLOGIES

Bill Ledger
Chris Barratt

IN ATTENDANCE

Alan Doran	Trish Davies	Richard Martin
Tim Whitaker	Maggie King	Charles Lister
Sally Townsend	Helen Coath	John-Paul Maytum
David Gomez	Mark Bowden	Catherine Drennan
Richard Cullen	Sarah Marsh	Carmel Dodson-Brown
Emer O'Toole		

OBSERVERS

Ros Gardner - HGC co-opted member

Item 1.	Apologies, Welcome & Declarations of Interest	Action
1.0	Apologies were received from	

Bill Ledger
Chris Barratt

1.1 The Chair, Lisa Jardine, welcomed the Authority to the start of the second day of the April meeting. Lisa Jardine began by drawing members' attention to the overnight announcement from Newcastle University regarding the creation of a cytoplasmic hybrid embryo that survived for three days. This highlights the importance of the HFEA continuing to be an authoritative and positive voice in the media to inform and educate the public on new scientific developments in the field, which she saw as an important part of her role.

- 1.2 Lisa Jardine welcomed Helen Coath who would be taking over as Private Secretary to Alan Doran and would be supporting Lisa in her role as Chair.

**Item 2. Minutes of 20 February Authority Meeting
[HFEA (20/02/08) 434]**

- 2.0 Subject to amendments to paragraphs 8.2, 12.2 and 13.0 the minutes were accepted. Following the update of these paragraphs, the minutes were signed by the Chair.

**Item 3. Chair's Report
(verbal)**

- 3.0 Lisa Jardine reported on a couple of items from her first few days in post:
- 3.1
- The Chair had met with the Minister of State for Health, Dawn Primarolo, on 31st March; the Minister was extremely supportive of the HFEA and its role, and they shared a wide and varied discussion;
- 3.2
- Lisa Jardine commented that she was discussing with all lay members the role of Deputy Chair and hoped to communicate something to members shortly; and
- 3.3
- Mark Henderson from The Times would be interviewing Lisa Jardine on Friday 4th April for an interview based largely around the Chair's view on regulation. This was likely to be the first of many future media commitments.

**Item 4. Chief Executive's Report - including HFE Bill
(verbal)**

- 4.0 Alan Doran, Chief Executive began with an issue that had recently come to his attention.
Alan Doran continued with his normal Chief Executive briefing, this covered:
- 4.1
- HFE Bill – a briefing drawn up by Charles Lister was circulated to members. Media interest remained high and would continue to do so;
- 4.2
- Office of Government Commerce – The OGC had completed a Gateway 5 report into the Historical Audit Project and sent a draft report with a number of issues to the Executive. A response was being developed and Richard Cullen would meet with OGC on 15th April to follow up. Alan Doran committed to reporting back to the Authority in May;

- 4.3 • Data caveat – the wording on the HFEA internet site regarding the publication of data had been amended, a tabled paper explained this further. Members raised a few queries and the Chief Executive agreed to review this further;
- 4.4 • Alan Doran had given talks at the Royal Society on 6th March regarding the use of embryos in research and at the French Embassy on 7th March regarding regulation of the fertility sector in the UK;
- 4.5 • The Chief Executive had a useful and enjoyable visit to the Aberdeen Fertility Centre on 19th March;
- 4.6 • Recruitment of members – Lisa Jardine and Alan Doran have been liaising with the Department of Health regarding the recruitment of new members. The Appointments Commission will be advertising for the new posts shortly;
- 4.7 • Imports / Exports – A letter was sent to clinics last week detailing the current position, the letter is available on our website. Lisa Jardine will be writing to Dawn Primarolo and to the European Commission to highlight the HFEA's concerns;
- 4.8 • Corporate Management Group – A Corporate Management Group has been established to run the HFEA from a corporate position. The Group will meet monthly and membership will include SMT and Heads. The Group will feed into the Audit Committee and the first meeting will be held on 9th April; and
- 4.9 • NPSA meeting – A meeting is currently being arranged between Lord Patel and Martin Fletcher (NPSA) for Lisa Jardine and Alan Doran to discuss the issue of patient safety and how the two organisations can work together.

5.0 Legal Update & Legal Minutes of 20 February 2008
 5.0 Legal minutes are on a separate confidential document.

Item 6. Compliance and Enforcement
[HFEA (02/04/08) 435]

6.0 Trish Davies, Director of Regulation, took the Authority through the options regarding designating the individuals responsible for obtaining a warrant. The legal advice requested by the Authority had strongly recommended

that any protocol to encourage consultation with members would need to name the members or their positions.

- 6.1 Lisa Jardine thanked Trish Davies for her paper and suggested that in any decision of the Authority for which the Chief Executive is the overall decision maker, this could be done in consultation with the Deputy Chair and Audit Committee Chair, alongside the Authority Chair.
- 6.2 The members considered a number of issues and concerns before reaching a decision, the main areas of discussion were:
- 6.3
- Chair veto - members were concerned that in the most unlikely of events the Chief Executive could make a decision against the expressed views of the Chair, Deputy Chair and Audit Committee Chair. It was suggested that an overall Chair veto would prevent this from occurring;
- 6.4
- Legal requirement - members discussed whether the Chief Executive could be designated with the responsibility, even with a Chair veto; they were advised that this was appropriate.
- 6.5
- It was suggested that the three members being discussed could become a triumvirate to approach for complicated issues. The Chair commented that in most cases it was her preference to consult those members she deemed most appropriate for the issue, but accepted that this policy required a firm approach.
- 6.6 Following the discussion it was agreed that Regulation Committee would be asked to develop a protocol for this policy based on the final decision being taken by the Chief Executive with the Chair having an option of veto. It was expected that the Chief Executive and Chair would consult with the Deputy Chair and Audit Committee Chair as required.
- 6.7 Members wished to stress that at all stages either internal or external legal advice would be made available to all parties involved in the decision making process.

7.0 Multiple Births

[HFEA (02/04/08) 436]

7.0 Jessica Watkin, Policy Manager gave a short presentation on the latest information and decisions required with regard to the multiple births policy. The presentation outlined:

7.1

- 18th March – the Executive met with PRs and embryologists from clinics with a high MB rate - concerns were raised as to the impact the target will have on success rates and that reducing patient choice may encourage reproductive tourism. The meeting suggested that NHS funding was a key consideration and that the current production of outcome data did not support the policy.

7.2

- 28th March - MB National Strategy Stakeholder meeting – there was support for a 25% Year 1 target based on analysis by Peter Braude and Mark Hamilton. The meeting felt that any target needed to be enforceable but that NHS funding remained a concern. The meeting received an update on the development of the website and the first draft of professional guidance.

7.3

- Year 1 - the Authority was invited to endorse a recommendation that the Year 1 target would be 25%; this would require immediate action by about 70% of centres. The target would apply from 1st January 2009.

7.4

- Regulation - an early discussion was welcomed on the Authority's thoughts on regulating the policy. The legal advice was that the best approach would be for a mix of guidance and Directions.

7.5 The members raised a number of considerations regarding development of the multiple births policy; many of the points have been previously raised or discussed as part of earlier multiple birth discussions. The Authority did not feel able to agree to the 25% target without a better feel for the statistical underpinning for proposal; the Authority asked for a composite paper to be tabled in May covering all aspects of the multiple births policy.

7.6 This would include answering many of the members questions from the discussion. The items covered were:

7.7

- It was important to remember that any sanctions applied to centres will affect

- individual patients, these sanctions could reduce the chances of success;
- 7.8
- Any first year target must bring outliers above the average back towards those already close to achieving it – communications on this target will be very important if it is agreed at a level close to, or even above the current national average;
- 7.9
- Inspections must not be seen as the sanction; inspections will occur in centres that do not track towards the overall target, sanctions will come from a Licence Committee;
- 7.10
- Members wanted to know whether there were lessons to be learned from the move of triple to double embryo transfers, and whether the new policy will affect the current practice of triple embryo transfers in those over 40;
- 7.11
- Jessica Watkin agreed to come back to the Authority in May with a paper covering: answers to members questions raised at this meeting; further analysis of the year 1 target, including variances; a full, coherent compilation of the decisions taken and those outstanding; and finally the communications plan, assuming the Authority can settle outstanding policy decisions such as target and regulation.

**Item 8. Opening the Register
[HFEA (02/04/08) 437]**

- 8.0
- Richard Martin, Head of Information, presented to the Authority a proposed policy on Opening the Register, which formalized existing arrangements for disclosure of Register information to applicants and researchers. The policy would develop should the HFE Bill gain Royal Assent and as an overall theme moved the Authority towards a position as an information provider.
- 8.1
- Richard Martin drew out the main considerations:
- 8.2
- Should the Authority be directly involved in counselling?
- 8.3
- Should access to the Register be granted wider than currently: donor-conceived, their parents and donors?
- 8.4
- Should applications for research information be considered by the Research Licence Committee, or some other body?
- 8.5
- Proposed that work associated with supplying

- research information be charged at £250.
- 8.6 Lisa Jardine suggested that given the expected level of debate around the policy and counseling that the fee levying discussion should be held over to a future meeting. The Chair then invited comments from members, these were broadly grouped as:
- 8.7
- **Joint policy** – members felt it important to have separate policies for accessing the register; one for personal approaches and one for researchers. The former needed to be more compassionate and give greater thought to the counseling issue and general handling of applicants. Members welcomed the news that staff dealing with these queries were receiving detailed counseling training;
- 8.8
- **Clinics role** – there were mixed feelings as to the role that clinics should play within this process but it was decided that regardless of their involvement HFEA processes and policy needed to be robust. It was agreed that further work should be done to encourage parents to engage early on with their children on the subject of their assisted conception;
- 8.9
- **Non Register applicants** – members raised the issue of whether the HFEA would insist an applicant in obtaining counseling, or having reasonable opportunity to do so, when the applicant was not on the register. This prompted a debate about vexatious requests that needed to be considered within the policy;
- 8.10
- **Duty of care to donor** – members raised a question as to the duty placed on the HFEA to inform donors before releasing information to donor conceived. It was confirmed that under the proposed HFE Bill the HFEA would be duty bound to try to inform the donor;
- 8.11
- **Research Licence Committee** – members felt that this was not the best committee for research requests. Members suggested this issue was tied in with the current review of committee structure and that SCAG should have input into the research policy.
- 8.12 Alan Doran summed up the discussion by saying that the Executive would consider the very useful comments made and redevelop the proposed policy into two policies. In doing so, further discussion would take place regarding the provision of counseling. The item would be brought to the July meeting of the Authority, and the aim

- 8.13 and purpose of each policy would be clearly expressed.
The Chair thanked Richard Martin for the material provided and the members for a full discussion.

**Item 9. Regulation, HR and Finance Report
[HFEA (02/04/08) 438]**

9.0 **Finance**

Members asked for an update on the accuracy of forecasting fee income which continues to appear to resist improvement. Sally Townsend, Director of Resources, explained that improvements were being made but it remained a difficult task.

9.1 **HR**

There were no comments from members.

9.2 **Regulation**

Members raised two questions: firstly a member asked for an explanation regarding the increase in exports shown in Figure 3a; secondly, concerns were voiced about the performance in report writing within the inspection team - Alan Doran committed to responding to these questions by email. Concerns were also raised that only 60% of inspections reports had been sent out on time during the month of February. Alan Doran committed to a *time and motion* review within inspection in the coming months to begin to tackle issues that have consistently been raised at Regulation Committee.

Item 10. Verbal Report form Committee Chairs

- 10.0 **Resource Committee** - Ruth Fasht, Chair of the Resource Committee, reported that the latest meeting of the committee had discussed a wide range of corporate issues including: Programme 2010; Business Plan 08-09; the Business Continuity Plan; and the management accounts.

- 10.1 **Audit Committee** - Sally Cheshire, Audit Committee Chair, reported that the Audit Committee had changed its frequency to meet more regularly, quarterly. Furthermore, the co-opted member, Alison Bexfield, had left the Committee and they would be seeking a new member with expertise in risk and governance.

- 10.2 Sally Cheshire further commented that at a recent training day the HFEA was assessed as being a small

organisation which was well run but there were two concerns: firstly, that risk management could be improved; and secondly, that the official management of the committee process and an appraisal of its performance is not completed adequately.

Item 11. A.O.B.

- 11.0 Neva Haites, a member on SCAG (in full) explained that the Group had recently completed a lay report on its activity that would be good to share with the Authority.
- 11.1 Lisa Jardine commented that she wanted both SCAG and the Ethics & Law Advisory Group to report regularly to the Authority and Alan Doran took this away as a specific action.
- 11.2 The Chair reported that following the presentation by Alan Doran on Programme 2010 on 1st April that included a straw man on future committee structure some members had raised concerns; as a result Lisa Jardine had asked Sally Cheshire to take on a role as the members' link between the Authority and Programme 2010, this would include the work on the future committee structure.

Item 12. Information Workstream (verbal)

- 12.0 Lisa Jardine introduced this section of the Authority meeting as an opportunity for members to think strategically about the Information agenda within the HFEA. The Chair welcomed Bob Gann to the Authority and thanked him for taking his time to present to the Authority.
- 12.1 Maggie King introduced these presentations by explaining that the information agenda was an important part of Programme 2010 and that this was a good opportunity to see how NHS Choices had presented its information and the challenges the HFEA faces as an information provider in the future.
- 12.2 Richard Martin, who will lead the Information Work Stream as part of Programme 2010, gave a presentation on the main information points of the HFEA. From the statutory requirements on the HFEA through to the amount of data and information that the HFEA holds, the presentation showed the unique position that the HFEA holds. As both the custodian of a Register and a body with the requirement to produce performance data, the HFEA has no comparison in terms of information

provider.

- 12.3 Bob Gann then gave a detailed presentation on the development, launch and continued expansion of the NHS Choices website. The website is about putting patients at the heart of all that they do and has been a success in terms of through traffic.
- 12.4 Following the presentations Lisa Jardine invited members to comment on the NHS Choices concept and how some of the ideas in terms of the continued development of the web could affect the HFEA.
- 12.5 The following points were made about NHS Choices with some responses by Bob Gann:
- 12.6
- The NHS Choices website is expensive in terms of initial and ongoing costs, and the manpower required to support it.
- 12.7
- It was asked why the Choices site carried the NHS brand - some NHS developed websites do not do so, for example, Ask FRANK. The response was that research for NHS Choices showed that the brand was strong and was somewhere that the public would go for trusted information. Branching out into Social Care and healthy living would test this branding.
- 12.8
- It was asked how the success of NHS Choices is measured - there are obvious traffic measurement but a simple fact of 2m unique visitors per month does not constitute success; the website is better measured through user qualitative information against questions such as, Did NHS Choices change an individual's original decision?
- 12.9
- It was asked whether NHS Choices was being made the website of choice. The response was that firstly the NHS brand is appealing; secondly, there is negotiation with Google to ensure that the website is high on the search engine; and finally, by accrediting all information that is linked through the website, providing a quality site that will attract visitors.
- 12.10 Members were encouraged to think about how the ideas heard could develop within the HFEA, the significant thoughts were:
- 12.11
- HFEA site has excellent information but it is presented in an old fashioned way on the web

- and could be improved with the development of Web 2.0;
- 12.12
- The comparing of patient experiences could be translated to the use of clinics, particularly in light of patient questionnaires that are completed. Furthermore, this may help with the review of rating performance in terms of star ratings or benchmarking;
- 12.13
- The most sought after requirement by the public during consultation for *Our health, our care, our say* was better information - how can this be translated to the fertility sector?
- 12.14
- Finally, members were challenged to be imaginative in future discussions on information and to think about ways in which the HFEA can get fuller, more accessibly informative and more usable data out into the public domain.
- 12.15
- Lisa Jardine thanked Richard Martin and Bob Gann for their presentations and members for their contributions over the whole Authority meeting. She had found her first full authority meeting both engaging and enjoyable.
- 13.0**
- Date of next meeting**
The next meeting will be held on 7 May 2008 at 21 Bloomsbury Street. Time to be agreed.
I confirm this to be a true and accurate record of the meeting

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Chair

Date