



BOARD MEETING 6 November 2012

PRESENT:

Commissioner Kathryn Stone (Chair - **KS**)

Richard Buchanan (**RB**)

Non Executive Director

Anne Dorbie (**AD**)

Secretary to the Commission

Arlene McCreight (**AMC**)

Head of Corporate Services

Adrian McNamee (**AMN**)

Head of Policy, Development and Research

Laura Kennedy (**LK**) - notes

1. Apologies

1.1. None

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1. Mr Buchanan, Commissioner Stone and the Secretary confirmed they have no conflicting interests including any related party transactions with any supplier of the Commission as listed.

3. Minutes of Board Meeting – 9 October 2012

3.1. Minutes of Board Meetings of 9 October 2012 were agreed.

4. Matters Arising

4.1. **AD** confirmed she had written to PWC regarding the preparation of Accounts 2011/12.

5. Budget

5.1. **RB** requested the budget summary sheet include as column which details the projected spend to date and a column which details the variance between the projected and cumulative spends to date

ACTION: AMC & LK

5.2. **KS** observed that in year there was money surrendered to the Department, but noted that there were good reasons and rationale for this. **RB** noted that whilst that may be the case there was a risk that perception of such easements could be negative to the Commission. **KS** noted that in moving forward the Commission would take steps to ensure that all funding for the Commission was used effectively and efficiently.

5.3. **AD** advised the Commissioner review the budget for the rest for the current spending review period and identify any areas of potential underspend as soon as possible.

ACTION: Commissioner

6. Risk Strategy and Corporate Risk Register

- 6.1. **AMC** advised the Risk Strategy was the parameters within which the Commission worked to manage any risk and confirmed that once the Work Programme had been finalised the Risk Register would be updated accordingly.

ACTION: SMT

- 6.2. **KS** advised that the Corporate Plan and Work Programme were close to completion.
- 6.3. **RB** suggested the Risk Strategy be reviewed and updated in line with the NIAO publication 'Good Practice in Risk Management'. Agreed by all.

ACTION: SMT

7. Work Programme 2012/13

- 7.1. **RB** asked for an update on the Communications Strategy and its current status, as having previously made suggestions for amendments to the Strategy, it had not been returned to the agenda.
- 7.2. **AMC** confirmed the suggested amendments had been made and that the Communications Strategy was now with the Department.
- 7.3. It was agreed that future practice would ensure revised documents would be returned to the Board to be signed off.

ACTION: AMC & LK

- 7.4. **AD** confirmed she would contact the Department regarding the status of the Communication Strategy.

ACTION: AD

- 7.5. **KS** advised that the wording of the Work Programme was being reviewed in order to ensure key actions and targets were measurable and could be quantified.
- 7.6. **RB** noted that the lack of approval or decision on the Business Case regarding the Commission's accommodation was a risk. **AMC** advised it had been raised at the Accountability/Liaison meeting with the Department on 26 October 2012 and **AD** confirmed she would contact the Department regarding the status of the Business Case

ACTION: AD

8. Corporate Plan 2013-16

- 8.1. It was noted that a revised Corporate Plan was under review by Commissioner and staff.

9. Secretary's Report

- 9.1. **Finance Update** - Easement of £179,000 in October Monitoring Round had not yet accepted. A further £50,000 had been identified and Department advised. The Budget continued to be monitored and reviewed with regards to changes to the Work Programme. Any potential easements would be identified and proposed in the January Monitoring Round.
- 9.2. **Annual Report & Accounts / NIAO** - The Certificate of the C&AG was signed detailing an unqualified opinion on the Annual Report & Accounts for the fourth year running. The document was published and issued as per statutory obligations on 1/11/12. The Secretary formally noted her thanks to all staff involved.
- 9.3. **Accountability/Liaison Meeting** - No finances issues were raised and clarity was provided regarding a query on the Budget. Confirmation of October Monitoring would come in due course. The revised 2012/13 Work Programme would be forwarded to the Department shortly and submitted to Ministers with the 2011-14 Corporate Plan for clearance.

- 9.4. **Internal Audit** - Following identification of a flaw in the Commissions internal processes regarding internet banking, Head of Internal Audit had been undertaking a review of procedures.
- 9.5. **Work Programme** - The Work Programme had been reviewed and amended following discussion with the new Commissioner. A revised draft would be forwarded to the Department for clearance.
- 9.6. **Forum** - The Commissioner met with the Forum on 18 October 2012 and discussed changes to the Forum's working arrangements. The Forum was content with all changes and would continue to fulfil its aims of being a place for consultation and discussion and to provide advice to the Commission.
- 9.7. **Accommodation** - As the lease for Windsor House expires at the end of November 2012, a Business Case for new accommodation was been forwarded to the Department for approval. Queries from the Department were addressed by Corporate Services and the Commission was awaiting a decision from the Department.

10. Policy, Development and Research

- 10.1. **AMN** provided an update outlining the progress and amendment of targets set within the Work Programme for the Policy, Development and Research Team for the 2012/13 year.
- 10.2. Target 2.1 – Historical Investigations and Recovery Report – **RB** noted the potential that this report could attract attention and controversy.
- 10.3. Target 4.2 – Advice to Funders - The Commission would be undertaking further engagement with groups on Friday 9 November to inform its response to the Peace IV Consultation.
- 10.4. Target 3.6. – Children and Young People – and Target 4.3 – Pension Rights for the Seriously Injured – **KS** noted this work had been developed through her preliminary meetings and engagement with the sector.
- 10.5. It was noted that the Department had advised no promotion should take place regarding the CNA as they had imposed an embargo of 3 December 2012. **AD** that **AMN** should continue to pursue this with the Department.
- 10.6. Target 5.6 – Research Bursary programme – **AMN** advised a Business Case was being prepared, however, it was not clear how much funding would be required. **AD** confirmed she would determine what was required.

ACTION: AD

11. Forum Budget

- 11.1. **AMN** advised that a review of the budget had been undertaken and amendments to the Forum Business Case would be considered. It was noted that an evaluation would not be undertaken in year and therefore the budget allocation of £20,000 would be proposed as an easement in the January Monitoring Round.
- 11.2. The need for an evaluation of the Forum was discussed, taking into consideration the changes to the Forum structure, the clear outputs identified in the Forum Work Programme and the triennial review of the Commission. It was agreed further consideration of the need for an evaluation of the Forum was required.

ACTION: Commissioner & AMN

12. HR/Corporate Governance/Administration Board Update

- 12.1. **AMC** presented an outline of the work undertaken by the Corporate Services Team.
- 12.2. There was a reminder to forward details of any gifts and hospitality offered or received by the end of the first week of each month and that Travel and Subsistence claims should be submitted on a monthly basis.

- 12.3. **RB** noted the lack of movement regarding the MSFM. **AMC** gave assurance that whilst the MSFM was under review, the Commission continued to operate under the parameters of the existing version and advised it was a standing agenda item at all Accountability/Liaison meetings with the Department.

13.Staffing/Resources

- 13.1. **KS** noted the importance of ensuring the Commission could provide assurance of a robust and transparent recruitment process. It was agreed that recruitment for the vacant Policy Officer and Personal Secretary posts should be taken forward.

ACTION: AMC

- 13.2. It was agreed that decisions on the recruitment for the Secretary to the Commission post and the Policy Development Support Administration Officer would remain to be confirmed pending confirmation of resignations.
- 13.3. Regarding interim arrangements for the role of the Secretary to the Commission, **KS** advised the Commission was waiting on clarification from the Department before determining the best course of action.

ACTION: Commissioner & SMT

14.Internal Audit

- 14.1. It was noted that the management responses to an internal audit of the Commissions Purchasing and Procurement procedures accepted all recommendations.

15.Update on Recommendations from Internal Audit & NIAO

- 15.1. All recommendations and updates were noted and would continue to be monitored

16.ARC Annual Report

- 16.1. It was noted the ARC would be meeting on Thursday 8 November 2012 to finalise and sign the ARC Annual Report and complete self-assessment in line with Treasury Guidance.

17.Section 75 Annual Progress Report

- 17.1. The report was noted.

18.AOB

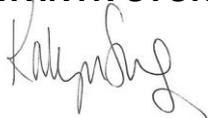
- 18.1. Christmas Coffee Morning – The event would proceed with date to be confirmed.
- 18.2. Christmas Cards – it was agreed the Commission would issue an e-card.

ACTION: AMC & LK

- 18.3. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11 December 2012 @ 10.30am

NAME: **KATHRYN STONE**

SIGNED:



DATE:

7 December 2012