



BOARD MEETING 13 August 2013

PRESENT:

Commissioner Kathryn Stone (Chair - **KS**)
John Beggs (**JB**) Secretary to the Commission
Adrian McNamee (**AMN**) Head of Policy and Research
Sarah Beare (**SB**) - minutes

1. Apologies

1.1. There were apologies from Arlene McCreight (**AMC**) and Laura Kennedy (**LK**)

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1. All attendees confirmed they had no conflicting interests including any related party transactions with any supplier of the Commission as listed.

3. Minutes of Meeting on 2 July 2013

3.1. Minutes of Board Meeting on 2 July 2013 were confirmed as an accurate record and agreed.

4. Matters Arising

- 4.1. 13.2 - Letter to Lord Eames had been sent and a response received from Lord Eames confirming his appointment as Independent Mentor.
- 4.2. **KS** confirmed she had written to OFMDFM regarding the implications on the work programme and budget of the lack of training for Commission staff to undertake procurement exercises. **JB** advised he has received the requisite training and would liaise with OFMDFM and CPD to confirm he was authorised to procure on behalf of the Commission. **AMC and AMN** to receive training at a later date.
- 4.3. 8.3 - **JB** advised he would be undertaking a review of the Commission's Risk Strategy. Staff training would be on hold until review is complete.

5. Annual Report and Accounts

5.1. **JB** confirmed the draft Accounts were received on 6 August 2013 and that any queries had been discussed and agreed.

5.2. Further discussion was to take place by 16 August 2013 regarding the content of the Annual Report.

ACTION: JB and KS

6. Accounting Officer Update

6.1. It was confirmed this update was prepared by **AMC**.

6.2. **JB** advised he would be undertaking a review of SMT and Board processes and would table suggestions at the next Board meeting in September 2013.

ACTION: JB

6.3. The total budget allocation was confirmed as £1,061,000 for the 2013/2014 year.

JB advised that the Commission budget was on target and the 13/14 Work Programme and Budget were under review.

ACTION: JB

6.4. The Commissions new Internal Audit provider is ASM. A draft strategy for Internal Audit in 2013/14 would be forwarded to the Commission and the ARC for discussion and agreement.

6.5. NIAO had delayed fieldwork by one week and was now due to begin fieldwork on 19 August 2013. NIAO advised that an outsourced Accountant would be undertaking the fieldwork.

All staff had been advised queries from NIAO were to be dealt with in the first instance by **JB**.

6.6. The Secretary to the Commission had been in post since 5th August 2013.

6.7. The candidate for the Policy Officer position had requested additional pay and leave entitlement. Agreed by all the candidate would be offered baseline pay and leave entitlement. If this was not accepted by the candidate the Commission would move to the next candidate on the merit list.

6.8. It was agreed a temporary Policy Officer would be recruited until a permanent Policy Officer is in place.

6.9. **JB** advised he would be undertaking a review of the Commission's staffing structure and therefore the recruitment of an AO would continue to be on hold.

6.10. **JB** expressed concern at the use of HR Connect for filling vacancies with the Commission. It was agreed to consider recruitment by the Commission or through a Consultant if required in future.

6.11. The next ARC meeting would take place on 2 October 2013.

7. Budget

7.1. **JB** noted the Conference on Dealing with the Past as a potential risk.

7.2. **JB** advised he was undertaking an analysis of the Commission's staffing budget.

8. Risk Register

8.1 **JB** advised he had concerns about the number of high risks noted in the Register and would be undertaking a review of the Risk Strategy and Risk Register.

ACTION: JB

9. Corporate Plan

9.1 **AMN** confirmed amendments had been made to the 2013-16 Corporate Plan following consultation. Amendment would also be required following any changes to the 13/14 Work Programme.

ACTION: AMN

9.2 Following a query from **JB**, **AMN** advised the Commission provides advice to the OFMDFM. If it is to be implemented as policy, OFMDFM would be responsible for Equality Screening.

10. Work Programme 2013 /2014

10.1 **AMN** advised he had met with Departmental officials on 30 July 2013 and agreed that 4.1 of the 13/14 Work Programme be replaced. **JB** advised he would liaise with the Department to formalise revisions to the 13/14 Work Programme.

ACTION: JB

11. Work Programme 2014 /2015

11.1 To be discussed at SMT.

12. Policy, Development and Research Update

12.1 1.3 - **AMN** confirmed the Victims and Survivors Service were to provide substantial reports to the Commission by the end of the first week in September 2013.

12.2 1.4 - The Commission was exploring the possibility of recruiting a researcher/statistician to provide analysis at the request of OFMDFM.

12.3 4.2 - **AMN** advised that due to the resignation of the Policy Officer, planning for future Policy Seminars had not been completed.

12.4 5.3 - It was noted that the target for press releases was 15 in 2013/2014 and 4 had been issued to date. It was agreed that increasing the number of press releases would be a priority. **KS** suggested a press release be issued on a weekly basis highlighting the work of the Commission

ACTION: JB and AMN.

12.5 5.4 - It was noted that there was difficulty in responding to consultations due to the resignation of Policy Officer.

13. HR/Corporate Governance/Administration Board Update

- 13.1 **JB** advised an update on the review of the Finance, Assets and Premises Officer post was due in August 2013. It was noted that the Forum Support Manager had also requested a review of their post be undertaken. Concern that other staff may also request review of their posts was noted.

14. Internal Audit

- 14.1 There were no further updates.

15. Update on Audit Recommendations

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

16. Update on OFMDFM Submissions

- 16.1 Responses required from OFMDFM were noted.

17. Section 75 Annual Progress Report

- 17.1 The document was approved for submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

18. Project Management Guidance

- 18.1 It was agreed further discussion on the guidance would be undertaken at SMT
ACTION: SMT.

19. AOB

- 19.1 It was noted that the claim for redundancy by a former Commissioner has been dismissed. A copy of the decision by the Industrial Tribunal Panel would be forwarded to **KS** and to the Department. The Commission noted that the decision could be appealed.
ACTION: JB & SB
- 19.2 Concerns were noted with regards to the resources required to manage the Forum. **KS, TMCC, AMN** and **JB** to meet regarding the evaluation of the Forum and resources.
ACTION: KS, TMCC, AMN and JB
- 19.3 A discussion took place regarding Jeffrey Donaldson's proposed changes to the Definition of a Victim legislation. It was noted that this has not been discussed with the Commission. Further Clarification on this issue would be needed.
ACTION: SMT

NAME: **Kathryn Stone OBE**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 11 November 2013