

A partners meeting would take place at Equality House on 16 March 2016 and further information would be available following this meeting.

Funding

- 4.5. **JT** asked, in the event of a UK withdrawal from the EU, if organisations in Northern Ireland might still access funding through the Republic of Ireland. **AMN** advised that this would be possible as a Junior Partner.

File Storage Review

- 4.6. It was agreed to progress the File Storage Review with the VSS. **JT** highlighted the need to log issues with responses from the VSS.

ACTION: JB

5. Accounting Officer Update

Budget

- 5.1. **JB** advised that the Commission's budget letter had been received which confirmed a budget reduction of 4% on the opening budget for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 5.2. **CG** highlighted fixed costs and cumulative spend to date. Each budget line was reviewed and plans to undertake expenditure of all available funds were discussed, in the context of pressures on the capacity of staff and the time left until the end of the year to undertake and complete any proposed work. This included research plans which may straddle 2015/16 – 2016/17 and legal advice that may be required in response to emerging events.
- 5.3. **JB** highlighted the need to monitor the budget going forward to ensure spend would come in on target and the risk of carry over commitments against the 2016/17 budget.
- 5.4. It was noted that an overspend was predicted for the Forum.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement (Delegated decisions)

- 5.5. The update on Business Cases and Procurement included all delegated decisions taken by the Accounting Officer since the last Board meeting. The Schedule was reviewed and new projects were noted.
- 5.6. An Addendum to the Business Case for the Appointment of a Panel to Sustain Victims and Survivors Forum Membership 2016-19 was approved by the Department.
- 5.7. It was noted that the Invitation to Tender for Communications Support Services had gone out on 26 February 2016 with a closing date of 18 March 2016. A tender evaluation panel had been scheduled for 22 March 2016. **JT** advised that she wished to participate in the tender evaluation panel and in the Recruitment of the Head of Communications and Engagement.

Performance Report

- 5.8. The Business Plan was discussed. Targets that had been completed were noted.
- 5.9. An update was provided on the Pension Project. It was noted that the Invitation to Tender had gone out with a closing date of 12 February 2016 and that the contract had been awarded to a Specialist Legislative Drafter. It was noted that work could not begin on the Project until the Commission were in receipt of the latest draft of the DUP Private Members Bill. **JB** advised that he had followed up directly with the DUP. It was agreed to follow up again as the draft had not been received.

ACTION: SB

- 5.10. It was agreed to contact QUB to ensure work on the Pension Project would not be duplicated.

ACTION: AMN

- 5.11. **AMN** advised that due to work on the Appointment of a Panel to Sustain Victims and Survivors Forum Membership, 2 Forum papers were outstanding at the deadline of 31 January 2016. As a result the RAG status of 2.1 and 3.1 had gone red. Draft papers were available but as the current Forum would not be meeting again before the end of the financial year, there would be no opportunity to gain Forum approval. On 29 February 2016, SMT agreed to amend the RAG status of 1.1 to Amber, 2.1 to Green and 3.1 to Amber for Board consideration. **JT** acknowledged that 2.1 and 3.1 were behind schedule but was reassured in terms of results and impacts, noting that the Forum's Key Guiding Principles for the Establishment of new Organisations to Effectively Deal with the Past had been circulated following a number of recent meeting and feedback had been obtained. She acknowledged that work had been carried out but was not recognised in the reporting mechanisms. The Board approved the changes to the RAG statuses.
- 5.12. It was noted that 1.9 Standards Project was on hold due to other priorities in the lead up to the financial year end.

Risk Management

- 5.13. Updates to the Risk Register were discussed.
- 5.14. The Board approved the change of CR3 to red at the Board meeting on 09 February 2016, noting the mitigating actions in relation to this risk. It was agreed that the Target of CR3 would go amber which would reflect the risk impact of engagement with victims and survivors.
- 5.15. **JT** again highlighted the need to log issues with responses from the VSS under CR1, Failure to effectively review the VSS through lack of communication, data or verification of systems. It was agreed that this would be raised with the Chair of the VSS Board and that the Department would be advised. It was agreed that this would be kept under review.

ACTION: JT and JB

Audit Recommendations

- 5.16. The update on Audit Recommendations was discussed. **CG** advised that the Commission were working with MCE on a Communications Strategy and would be bringing in a new member of staff who would oversee the implementation of the Communications Strategy. This would be a new post, Head of Engagement and Communication and it was hoped the member of staff would be in place by the end of May 2016.
- 5.17. **JT** highlighted the need to have a Communications Strategy in place as soon as possible.

Pay Awards

- 5.18. It was noted that the 2014/15 Pay Remit remained on the Risk Register. **JB** provided background and advised that the issue had been raised at the Accountability Meeting on 11 January 2016 and the Audit and Risk Committee meeting on 20 January 2016. **JB** highlighted the impact on staff morale and advised that NICS had agreed the Pay Remit for 2015 for civil servants. It was noted that **CG** requested an update from the Department on 08 February 2016.
- 5.19. **CG** advised that the 2014/15 Pay Remit had not yet been approved by DFP, therefore the Commission had been unable to process it in staff salaries. The Department confirmed that their Finance team submitted the completed Pay Remit to DFP on 24 February 2016. One query was raised in relation to 2012/13 which was answered promptly and the Department confirmed it is now under review by DFP. It was noted that approval typically takes 3 weeks and culminates in approval by the Finance Minister.
- 5.20. **CG** was hopeful of getting the appropriate approvals in order to process back pay in the March salaries.
- 5.21. It was agreed to update staff at the afternoon briefing and to send a letter to Mark Browne of the Finance, Strategic Planning and Social Change Directorate regarding approval of the

2014/15 Pay Remit and to seek assurance regarding the approval of the 2015/16 Pay Remit. **JT** endorsed this action.

ACTION: JB and CG

- 5.22. **JT** asked if these issues had arisen in relation to previous Pay Awards. **JB** explained that there were historical issues relating to the 2012/13 Pay Remit. **CG** advised that guidance indicated a 3 week window for processing and submission to DFP who then had a further 3 week window to approve the Pay Remit.
- 5.23. **CG** advised that the 2015/16 Pay Remit forms had been received on 07 March 2016, later than expected as the 2014/15 forms had been received in November 2014. **CG** was concerned that this indicated a delay to the approval of the 2015/16 Pay Remit. It was agreed to seek a meeting with the Department's Finance team to expedite the 2015/16 Pay Remit.

ACTION: CG

Staffing

- 5.24. It was noted that the temporary member of staff filling the role of Policy Support Officer would be leaving on 08 March 2016 to take up a new position. The temporary electronic archiver was on sick leave.
- 5.25. A meeting with HR Connect in relation to progressing the Recruitment of ARAC Members, the Head of Engagement and Communications and the Policy Support Officer, took place on 04 March 2016.
- 5.26. It was noted that a proposal from HR Connect to conduct 3 Recruitment Competitions (Head of Engagement and Communications, Engagement Support Officer and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Members) was accepted by SMT on 29 February 2016. Project initiation meetings would be arranged. It was agreed to provide the Board with an update at the next meeting on 12 April 2016.

ACTION: CG

- 5.27. It was noted that HR Connect had asked for confirmation of panel members for each competition.
- 5.28. **JT** advised that she wished to participate in the tender evaluation panel and in the Recruitment of the Head of Engagement and Communications.

Review of the Commission

- 5.29. It was noted that no date had been confirmed for the triennial review in 2016/17.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 5.30. It was noted that a proposal from HR Connect to conduct the competition for Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Members had been accepted (as above).
- 5.31. **JT** asked if there was an opportunity for existing members to stay on or reapply to ensure continuity. **JB** advised that he would meet with an Audit and Risk Committee member, who had initially been appointed as an interim measure, on 31 March 2016 to discuss the potential of a transition period. **CG** advised that this member could apply for the position of Chair once the competition had been advertised or could remain as a panel member with an extension to her current terms.
- 5.32. It was agreed to arrange lunch for the last meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

ACTION: CG

Gifts & Hospitality

- 5.33. All Gifts and Hospitality for the last quarter had been recorded and approved by the Accounting Officer. No exceptional gifts or hospitality had been received or provided.
- 5.34. All Registers for the last quarter were available on the Commission's website.

Fraud

5.35. There had been no reported instances of fraud during the reported period.

Freedom of Information

5.36. No FOI requests had been received this quarter.

Complaints

5.37. No Complaints had been received this quarter.

6. Corporate Plan 2016-19 and Business Plan 2016/17

- 6.1. **JB** advised that a first working draft Business Plan 2016/17 was submitted to the Department on 29 January 2016. Following consultation with the Forum and staff on 11 February 2016, the draft Business Plan 2016/17 and Corporate Plan 2016-19 would be reviewed by Board and would then be formally submitted to the Department once approved. Feedback from the Department has been incorporated in the drafts plans.
- 6.2. It was noted that SMT met on 04 March 2016 to work on both draft plans and had hoped to table papers at today's Board meeting.
- 6.3. It was agreed to defer this item to allow time for the plans to be updated and reviewed by the Commissioner.

ACTION: JT

7. Update on the Appointment of a Panel to Sustain Victims and Survivors Forum Membership 2016-19

- 7.1. **JB** confirmed that the Addendum to the Business Case was approved by the Department on 22 February 2016 and the Candidate Management System was being designed.
- 7.2. The Expression of Interest Form was also being designed. **JB** advised that Legal Advice would be sought for assurance.
- 7.3. **JT** asked for clarification on the risk of the process. **JB** advised that Legal Advice had to be sought in relation to Loss of Earnings and Equality issues and highlighted the financial implications to the Commission should it be agreed to compensate for loss of earnings.
- 7.4. It was agreed that **JT** would accept the invitation to meet the CPANI Commissioner.

ACTION: SB

- 7.5. **JB** advised that external HR Support would be available to assist with the sifting process.
- 7.6. The timeline for the Appointment of a Panel to Sustain Victims and Survivors Forum Membership was discussed. It was expected that the current timeline would be delayed by 2 further weeks due to seeking Legal Advice and Easter holidays. This would allow a 4 week window for submissions.
- 7.7. **JT** appreciated the complexity of the process and was happy with the update.

8. Policies

- 8.1. **CG** advised that a number of policies were due for review and had been updated to bring Commission policies in line with NICS policies.
- 8.2. **JT** asked if the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy was a duplication of the Equal Opportunities policy. **CG** advised that NICS did not have an appropriate policy for the Commission so a separate policy had to be created.
- 8.3. **JB** advised that **CG** was looking at grouping policies where possible.
- 8.4. The following policies were approved by the Board;
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - External Complaints
 - Internal Complaints
 - Information Security

- Publication Scheme
- Records Management
- Risk Management Strategy

- 8.5. A discussion took place around the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy. **CG** advised that the policy had been benchmarked against that of other organisations.
- 8.6. **JT** advised that there should be a link between procedures and actions and gave the linking of 3.5 and 6.4 as an example.
- 8.7. It was noted that the policy had been sent to an external Consultant for comments. The Commission were awaiting her feedback.
- 8.8. **JT** asked if and how the policy would apply to contractors. **JB** advised that the policy could be referenced in the Commission's standard contract.
- 8.9. **JT** advised that she wanted more detail on the line manager's role included in the policy and that the advice of the Safeguarding Board should also be included.
- 8.10. It was noted that the policy would be sent to the Department and the VSS once approved.
- 8.11. A discussion took place on training for staff on the policy.
- 8.12. It was agreed that **JT** and **JB** would review the policy.
- ACTION: JT and JB**
- 8.13. **JT** asked for clarification on the vetting of Commission staff. **JB** advised that Commission staff were subject to an Access NI check before appointment.
- 8.14. It was noted that a proposal for Resilience training had been received from an external Consultant.

9. AOB

Conference

- 9.1. **AMN** provided an update on the Conference. All speakers had been contacted and confirmed except for Lord Alderdice who had been out of the country.
- 9.2. It was noted that presentations had to be finalised by the end of the day to allow for preparation.
- 9.3. It was noted that the temporary Policy Support Officer would not be attending the Conference as he was taking up a new position elsewhere.
- 9.4. Procedures for risk management were discussed.
- 9.5. **JT** asked for pen pics for the Day 1 Panel.

ACTION: AMN

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED:



DATE: 12/04/16