



BOARD MEETING
28 June 2016 @ 2.30 pm

PRESENT:

Judith Thompson (Chair - **JT**) Commissioner

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Beggs (**JB**) Secretary to the Commission
Adrian McNamee (**AMN**) Head of Policy and Research
Craig Gartley (**CG**) Head of Corporate Services
Marie Neill (**MN**) – minutes
Kerri Denmark (**KD**) - minutes

1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1. There were no apologies.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1. All attendees confirmed they had no conflict of interests.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

3.1. The minutes of the meeting on 10 May 2016 were agreed.

4. Action Notes

Corporate Plan

4.1. It was noted that the draft Corporate Plan had been sent to the Board and a review meeting held on 13 June 2016. Further work is still needed and it was agreed to hold another meeting in advance of the next Board meeting and ARAC meeting.

ACTION: MN

Corporate Planning Day

4.2. It was noted that the Visitors Centre at Crawfordsburn Country Park had been booked for 15 September 2016 and an email issued to all staff with a request to attend.

Communications Service Provider

4.3. It was noted that Emeritus was briefed on the Appointment of a Panel to Sustain Victims & Survivors Forum Membership in anticipation of media queries.

4.4 **MOU with VSS**

It was noted that a meeting has been arranged on 18 July 2016 to meet with VSS to discuss the MOU.

4.5 **Review of the Commission**

It was noted that CG had requested TOR from NICCY from their recent review.

5. **Accounting Officer's Update**

Performance Report

- 5.1. **JB** advised that the Corporate Plan and Business Plan had been updated and re-submitted to the Department on 23 May 2016 and the Department had not provided any further feedback.

Budget Report

- 5.2. The Budget was discussed. **JB** noted that a letter from Mark Browne had been received confirming that the budget of £859k remains unchanged.
- 5.3. **JT** queried if the Commission was on target to deliver. **CG** confirmed that he is confident this is the case, the budget is on target and a quarter of the yearly budget had been spent to date.
- 5.4. **CG** noted the potential increase in the budget next month due to costs associated with setting up the new Forum Panel.
- 5.5. **AMN** highlighted the need to make final decisions about allocation of funding to research projects by September to ensure completion within the business year. It was agreed to discuss this in further detail at the next board meeting.

ACTION: CG

- 5.6. A discussion took place regarding the Omnibus Survey.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 5.7. The update on Business Cases and Procurement was discussed.
- 5.8. **CG** advised that a procurement exercise had been completed for the Printing and Publishing of Commission documents and a contract had been awarded. **AMN** queried if this would have an impact on the programme budget. **CG** confirmed that it would not, the contract was awarded for the next 2 years 9 months and had been accounted for in the overall budget.

External Audit/Annual Report and Accounts

- 5.9. **CG** noted he has been progressing work finalising the draft accounts. **JB** confirmed that NIAO would be carrying out an Audit starting at the beginning of August 2016.
- 5.10. The budget and final outturn was noted. **CG** confirmed that the Commission had a projected underspend of 0.4% which was within the Departmental tolerance limit for 2015/16
- 5.11. It was agreed that the draft Accounts would be reviewed for approval at the next Board meeting in July.

Internal Audit

- 5.12. It was noted the outstanding audit recommendations related to the Communications Strategy which was being progressed.
- 5.13. **CG** advised that field work on Procurement would commence on 28 August 2016.

Risk Management

5.14. It was noted the Commission's Corporate Risk Register currently contains 1 high rated risk with red status, 2 medium rated risks with amber status and 2 low rated risks with green status.

5.15. **JB** confirm that he would review and approve the Risk Register for end of quarter 1.

5.16. **AMN** noted the risk register needed updated to reflect OFMDFM changing to TEO

ACTION: JB

5.17. It was agreed to update the narrative regarding Forum replenishment.

5.18. A discussion took place regarding the risk rating of the exit process of existing Forum members and it was agreed the decision should be made at the next ARAC meeting.

ACTION: JB

Pay Award 2015/2016

5.19. **JB** confirmed the Commission has formally submitted its completed 2015/2016 pay remit for approval. **JT** noted that CVS would be proactive with this matter to ensure staff receive pay in a timely manner. **CG** noted he would expect this to be completed by the end of July. It was agreed to review this matter at the next Board meeting.

Staffing

5.20. It was noted that the Commission currently has 2 vacancies.

5.21. **JB** advised the Engagement Support Officer interviews are now completed and a Letter of Offer had been issued to the successful candidate with an expected start date of 4 July 2016.

5.22. **JB** advised the Head of Communications and Engagement post was due to be advertised week commencing 27 June 2016 with the closing date set at 22 July 2016. The interviews were due to take place in August 2016 with the successful candidate taking up post at the start of October. The panel will consist of 2 Commission staff members and an independent panel member.

5.23. **JT** questioned if there would be capacity issues within the department as there was a heavy programme of work ahead and staff will be on summer leave alongside sickness absence and maternity leave. **CG** advised that cover was in place for the Corporate Service Manager and staff had been made aware to provide telephone cover to cover absence.

Review of the Commission

5.24. **JB** noted that the next Review of the Commission would take place later in the year and would cover 2011 – 2016.

5.25. **JT** noted that there was a slight risk regarding overlap between the review of the Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-2019 and the review of the Commission and that it was important to make sure they would be treated separately.

5.26. It was noted that CG had requested NICCY's Terms of Reference used for their recent review.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

5.27. **JB** noted the interviews for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee took place on 14 and 15 June 2016. The panel consisted of the Commissioner, the Secretary to the Commission and a representative from the Executive Office. The Commission liaised with TEO throughout this recruitment process to ensure compliance with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) and best practice in the appointment of independent members. **JB** updated that they were at the final stages of vetting and clearance with a view to hold the first new ARAC meeting in July 2016

5.28. **JT** noted that she was very impressed with the quality and experience of the applicants and in particular of the candidates selected.

Guidance Received

5.29. **JB** advised that guidance regarding the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts was noted and being adhered to.

Freedom of Information

5.30. **JB** noted that no Freedom of Information requests had been received in the last quarter.

Complaints

5.31. **JB** noted that one 2nd stage complaint was complete and he understood it was now with the Northern Ireland Ombudsman.

Gifts and Hospitality

5.32. **JB** noted that all Gifts and Hospitality for the last quarter had been recorded and approved by the Accounting Officer.

5.33. There had been no exceptional gifts or hospitality received or provided.

5.34. All registers for the last quarter are to be made available on the Commission's website.

Fraud

5.35. **JB** noted that there have been no reported instances of fraud during the last month..

6. Policies and Procedures

Travel and Subsistence Policy

6.1. **CG** advised that the Travel and Subsistence Policy was due for review and had been updated to bring it in line with NICS Policy.

6.2. **CG** suggested that training should be arranged for July to update staff as per NCIS guidelines. **JT** asked if there were any areas of concern. **CG** confirmed there were no areas of concern but it would be good practice to refresh staff on policy and providing training for new staff.

Whistleblowing Policy

6.3. **CG** advised that the Whistleblowing Policy was due for review and had been updated to bring it in line with NICS Policy however there are no significant changes.

6.4. **JT** asked if there should also be training provided on this policy. **CG** confirmed he would arrange it for later in the year.

6.5. **JB** noted that the Complaints policy also needs to be reviewed and updated.

ACTION: CG

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

7.1. **JB** noted the process for the appointment of a panel to sustain Forum membership closed on 11 May 2016 and a series of Information Session have been taking place throughout June 2016. It is anticipated Forum vacancies and the Panel will be filled by the end of July 2016.

7.2. **JT** expressed concern that there would be media interest surrounding new appointments and that media training should be provided to ensure the new panel were prepared.

7.3. It was agreed that media training should be arranged and offered with letters of appointment.

ACTION: JB

8. Branding

8.1. **CG** provided an update on Branding and the consultation feedback carried out by MCE.

8.2. Following a discussion on the proposed logo, **JT** suggested asking for a variation on the Commission's existing logo.

8.3. **CG** agreed to consult with MCE.

ACTION: CG

9. Children and Young People Project – Final Report

9.1. A discussion took place on the Final Report for the Children and Young People Project.

9.2. **AMN** advised the report covers a very broad area and concluded that services are not in place to carry out the recommendations.

9.3. **AMN** noted that in order to progress, the next steps require identifying outcomes where the Commission could make the biggest impact and developing an Action Plan. **JB** asked if research on PEACE IV could help the Commission to establish priorities. **JT** noted that the Action Plan should link into the Business Plan and the Corporate Plan.

9.4. **JB** noted that the report should be shared with key stakeholders for feedback.

ACTION: AMN

10. Communications Strategy

10.1. A discussion took place regarding the Communications Strategy.

10.2. It was noted that **JB** and **CG** have been working on an implementation and delivery plan for the Communications Strategy. It was agreed that **CG** would follow up with MCE and gather more detail on the strapline of the Strategy.

ACTION: CG

10.3. **JT** noted that the Communications Strategy will provide a much clearer direction for the Commission and will be the key deliverable for the post of Head of Communications.

10.4. It was agreed that the Final draft of the Communications Strategy would be provided for discussion at the next board meeting.

ACTION: JB/CG

11. Update on PEACE IV

11.1. **AMN** provided an update on PEACE IV and advised that the stage 2 application had been submitted on 27 June 2016. Feedback is due early October however it was noted that Brexit could potentially cause delays to this.

11.2. **JT** asked how uncertain funding would be due to Brexit. **AMN** hoped that funding would run to December 2021 but noted that Brexit implications to funding remain unclear.

12. Update on Standards Project

12.1. A discussion took place regarding the Standards Project.

12.2. **AMN** advised that professional assistance had been procured and Cogito was appointed on 2 June 2016.

12.3. **AMN** advised that a Working Group meeting with Cogito has been planned for 29 June prior to consultation commencing with the sector over the summer. Following this a final draft of standards will be produced and opened up for 12 week consultation beginning in July 2016.

13.AOB

Pension queries

13.1. It was noted that **PM** had produced a paper on queries which have emerged from victims and survivors regarding Police and Army pensions. It was agreed that **JB** would share this paper so that a decision could be made at the next Board meeting as to whether the Commission needed to carry out further work on the matter.

ACTION JB

13.2. **JT** highlighted that the Commission needs to have a clear articulated position and also noted that some of the new Panel members have expertise in the area of pensions.

Invitation

AMN advised that Irene Sherry had extended an invitation to any Commission staff wishing to attend the TJI event from 30 September 2016 to 2 October 2016. **JT** and **JB** advised that they would be interesting in attending if their diaries allowed.

ACTION: MN

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED:



DATE: 15/08/16