



BOARD MEETING

14 February 2017 @ 10.00am

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Beggs (**JB**) Secretary to the Commission
Adrian McNamee (**AMN**) Head of Policy and Research
Tina McCann (**TMC**) Head of Communications and Engagement
Sarah Beare (**SB**) - minutes

1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1. There were apologies from Craig Gartley (**CG**), Head of Corporate Services.

2. Declaration of Interests

2.1. All attendees confirmed they had no conflicts of interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

3.1. It was noted that the minutes of the meeting on 16 January 2017 were under review and would be returned to the next meeting on 14 March 2017 for approval.

4. Action notes

Recognition

4.1. **JB** advised that SMT had not yet been able to consider a process and criteria for selecting individuals who would merit nomination. It was agreed to arrange a meeting to consider criteria for nominations and **JT** offered to assist.

ACTION: SB

4.2. **JT** advised that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had discussed a letter of thanks from the Irish President as a way of recognising exceptional contributions to work with Victims and Survivors as the President's Award was restricted to those living outside the island of Ireland.

4.3. A discussion took place regarding the administrative requirement.

Web tool for Standards

4.4. **JB** advised that an update would be sought from **CG** on his return to the office and noted that a separate contract was not required. It was noted that the Web Bureau's contract would be extended for work on a Web Tool for Standards.

ACTION: CG

QUB Research Project

- 4.4. **AMN** tabled a clarification email from QUB on his role as a Critical Advisor to the Project and provided an overview.
- 4.5. **AMN** noted that there was no formal partnership in place.
- 4.6. **JT** sought the views of the other attendees on any potential conflicts of interest. None were identified.
- 4.7. **TMC** noted that partnerships had been recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence and noted tangible outputs from **AMN**'s participation.
- 4.8. **JB** noted that it was within the Commission's Statutory Remit to provide advice to other parties and noted that this participation would set a precedent for participation in future projects with other academics and organisations.
- 4.9. **AMN** advised that as part of the project, QUB had a budget for a programme of bespoke media training workshops for representatives of victim organisations and that there may be an opportunity for the Commission and the Forum to collaborate with QUB on this. A discussion took place regarding potential collaboration.
- 4.10. It was agreed that it was not necessary to seek any formal contract/partnership.

Annual Conference

- 4.11. It was noted that the Commission's Annual Conference had been deferred to 10 April 2017 (Budget permitting), in light of political uncertainty and other Budget pressures in the current financial year.
- 4.12. It was agreed to schedule Conference Working Group meetings.
ACTION: SB
- 4.13. It was agreed to draft a formal letter of invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.
ACTION: SB
- 4.14. A discussion took place regarding other potential speakers on the topic of Legacy.

5. Accounting Officer's Update

Performance Report

- 5.1. **JB** advised that he had prepared a draft Corporate Plan 2017-20 with input from members of SMT and gave an overview of the draft Plan. Feedback was requested.

ACTION: JT, TMC, AMN, CG

- 5.2. **JB** noted that he had advised the Executive Office that the Commission were preparing draft Corporate and Business Plans to incorporate Outcomes Based Accountability.
- 5.3. It was noted that the Commission would consult publicly and with the sector on the Corporate Plan 2017-20 as soon as possible.
- 5.4. It was agreed to consult with the Forum on the draft Corporate Plan 2017-20 at their next meeting on 24 February 2017.

ACTION: TMC

- 5.5. **JT** welcomed the draft Corporate Plan 2017-20, in particular its outcomes based approach and alignment to the Programme for Government. **JT** noted that the Communications Strategy was still to be aligned to the Corporate Plan.
- 5.6. **JT** suggested that clarification on the roles of the Commission, VSS and the Executive Office be included. **JB** advised that a slide prepared by the Executive Office as part of recent Co-Design workshops provided clarification on these roles.
- 5.7. **JB** noted that consultation on the Corporate Plan would take place in March 2017.
- 5.8. **TMC** advised that a meeting took place with the Infographics provider on 09 February 2017 and noted that an internal meeting to identify key information would take place with the Communications Officer on 14 February 2017. **JT** welcomed the use of Infographics.

- 5.9. A discussion took place regarding dependencies in the plan and identifying outcomes and impacts.
- 5.10. A discussion took place regarding the potential of the population based survey to assess impacts and the possibility of a stakeholder survey was discussed. It was noted that Survey Monkey could be used to carry out an annual stakeholder survey with few costs incurred.
- 5.11. **JB** advised that a draft Business Plan 2017-18 was being drafted and would be tabled at the next Board meeting on 14 March 2017. It was noted that consultation on the Business Plan was not required.

ACTION: JB

- 5.12. **JB** advised that communications would be incorporated throughout the draft Business Plan 2017-18 and sought **JT**'s views on this approach. **JT** confirmed that she was content.
- 5.13. **AMN** advised that the Omnibus Survey appeared a number of times within the Business Plan 2017-18. **JT** advised that she was content that there was an overlap and that the Survey belonged in more than one place.

Budget Report

- 5.14. **JB** provided an update on the current Resource Budget noting that the Commission were on target to spend within tolerance.
- 5.15. **JB** highlighted spend on the Forum budget as an area of potential risk advising that £21k of £45k had been spent to date. **JB** outlined meetings, events and induction for new members planned before the end of the financial year.
- 5.16. **TMC** noted that a significant budget had been allocated for induction of the new Forum members and that after scoping options for training, she was concerned that it may not be possible for providers to deliver the induction within the remaining financial year. **TMC** noted the budget uncertainty for the 2017/18 year.
- 5.17. **JB** advised that the Commission had prepared a number of Budget scenarios, including a draft Budget based on 75% of the Commission's opening Budget for 2016/17 and a discussion took place regarding discretionary spend.
- 5.18. It was noted that there may be no budget available for induction of the Forum within the first quarter of the new financial year. **TMC** noted the importance of building the capacity of new members as soon as possible.
- 5.19. **JB** advised that a decision on the budget for the induction of the Forum would be required as soon as possible noting that funds would be reallocated should the induction not proceed.
- 5.20. It was noted that the timeline for the induction could not be brought forward due to the need to appoint new members to the Forum and the schedule for these appointments.
- 5.21. It was noted that a Residential for new members would take place in March 2017. A discussion took place regarding the format and possible facilitation.
- 5.22. It was agreed to arrange a meeting to discuss the induction and forward planning for the Forum.

ACTION: SB

- 5.23. Following discussion, **TMC** advised that she was content that the remaining Forum budget would be spent within the financial year.
- 5.24. **JB** advised that the Omnibus Survey had been postponed until May 2017 in light of budget uncertainty.
- 5.25. It was noted that payment of the remaining £10k for the Review of the Strategy would be released as the Commission were now in receipt of the final report.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 5.26. The update on Business Cases and Procurement was discussed.

External Audit/Annual Report and Accounts

- 5.27. **JB** advised that the paper on the Internal Review of the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16 had been tabled at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on 18 January 2017 where it had been agreed to present the Committee's comments and proposals to the Board.
- 5.28. **JB** provided an overview of the recommendations and advised that the Commission would seek external support and provide additional training for staff.
- 5.29. **JB** noted that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee wanted to avoid dependency on an external contractor and suggested a one year contract.
- 5.30. **JT** noted that the Corporate Services Manager had been on Maternity Leave during the preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16 and acknowledged the additional pressures on the Corporate Services Team as a result.

Internal Audit

- 5.31. The update on Internal Audit was discussed.
- 5.32. It was noted that fieldwork had been completed on the Programme and Project Management review and the Commission were awaiting a draft report.
- 5.33. **JB** advised that the Business Case for the new Audit contract had been approved with the invitation to tender due to be issued on 17 February 2017.

Risk Management

- 5.34. **JB** advised that a review of the Risk Register was currently underway to better reflect the breadth of statutory duties and to set parameters for risk within the control of the Commission, taking into account the complex external dependencies impacting the Business Plan.
- 5.35. **JB** advised that following the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting on 18 January 2017 there was a recommendation to change CR3 from Red to Amber, and CR4 from Green to Amber. The Board approved the change to the RAG status of CR3 and CR4.
- 5.36. It was noted that the Commission's Corporate Risk Register currently contained 0 high rated risks with red status, 4 medium rated risks with amber status and 1 low rated risk with green status.
- 5.37. **JT** noted that the narrative, including that related to PEACE IV was not up to date.
- 5.38. **JB** advised that the new Risk Register, Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Business Plan 2017-18 would be operational by April 2017.

Communications and Engagement Strategy including the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Group Meetings

- 5.39. **TMC** provided an overview of the revised Communications Strategy which had been submitted to SMT on 25 January 2017.
- 5.40. **TMC** provided an update on changes still to be made and advised that **JB** had provided feedback which had not yet been incorporated. It was agreed that **JT** would provide feedback to **TMC**.

ACTION: JT

- 5.41. **TMC** advised that work on the Stakeholder Engagement Plan was ongoing and noted that this would influence the content on the Commission's website and social media platforms.

- 5.42. A discussion took place regarding targets for engagement and **JT** emphasised that engagement was a priority for the Commission.
- 5.43. **JT** requested that the Communications Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan be aligned to the Commission's other key corporate documents.
- 5.44. **TMC** advised that the Engagement Support Officer had prepared a database that would generate a more detailed report on engagement for SMT and the Board. It was noted that the recording of outcomes/impacts required further consideration.
- 5.45. A discussion took place on new procedures for engagement with individuals. It was noted that a meeting regarding the new procedures had been scheduled for 15 February 2017.
- 5.46. **JB** noted that targets within the Communications Strategy had been agreed based on a full staff compliment and prior to uncertainty around the budget. **JB** advised that amendments may be required based on the team's capacity and available budget.
- 5.47. **TMC** noted the resource implications of the appointment of new Forum members and in the preparation and delivery of their induction. **JB** advised that continued investment in the newly replenished Forum was a priority for the Commission.
- 5.48. **TMC** advised that work had begun on infographics and noted that 8 themes had been identified. **TMC** advised that each theme was likely to take 2 weeks to prepare.
- 5.49. **JT** advised that she was content with the direction of travel and acknowledged the pressure on resources.
- 5.50. **JT** thanked **TMC** for her work on the Communications Strategy.

Forum

- 5.51. **TMC** advised that the next Forum meeting would take place on 24 February 2017.
- 5.52. It was noted that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade would host a dinner on 02 March 2017 to recognise the work of the outgoing Forum members. The Commission would also host an event on 09 March 2017.

Staffing

- 5.53. It was noted that the Commission currently had one vacancy. Recruitment for this vacancy would not be progressed at present in light of budget pressures and uncertainty around the 2017-18 budget.
- 5.54. It was noted that an agency worker had taken up post as Communications Officer on 30 January 2017.

Review of the Commission

- 5.55. It was noted that initial meetings with the Review Team had commenced and draft findings were expected in March 2017.
- 5.56. **JB** advised that the Review Team would meet with the Forum on 24 February 2017.

Independent Advice on Organisational Capability and Capacity

- 5.57. **JB** advised that the report on Organisational Capability and Capacity had been received and that recommendations were being considered by SMT. It was agreed to prepare a table outlining recommendations, action and responsibilities and to update the Board at the next meeting on 14 March 2017.

ACTION: JB

- 5.58. It was noted that **JB** would review Job descriptions and training needs for all staff and **JB** advised that he would seek external support to carry out the review.
- 5.59. A discussion took place on options for external support. It was noted that the Commission could avail of their HR SLA with ECNI and if required further support could be obtained from the DoF.
- 5.60. **JB** advised that seeking support from DoF would be more expensive and could result in grading changes.

Freedom of Information

- 5.61. No FOI requests were received in the last month.

Complaints

- 5.62. No complaints were received in the last month.

Gifts & Hospitality

- 5.63. It was noted that no exceptional gifts or hospitality were received or provided.
5.64. **JB** advised that registers for the last quarter were still under review and would be made available on the Commission's website as soon as possible.

Fraud

- 5.65. There were no instances of Fraud reported during the last month.

6. Research Strategy

- 6.1. **AMN** provided an overview of the Research Plan 2017-19.
6.2. A discussion took place regarding the Review of Trauma Services project. **AMN** advised that there would be substantial data for collation and analysis.
6.3. **JT** sought clarification on the roles of the Commission and the VSS in relation to data the VSS would analyse data. It was noted that the VSS would need the data to ensure compliance in relation to their funding decisions whilst the Commission would need the data to assess impact and policy implications. It was noted that it was unlikely that raw data would be supplied to the Commission. The use of data would be clarified at a meeting between Commission and VSS staff.
6.4. It was noted that **AMN** and the Research Officer were preparing an implementation plan for each of the projects listed in the Research Strategy. It was anticipated that the implementation plan would be tabled at SMT on 27 February 2017.

ACTION: AMN

- 6.5. It was noted that **AMN** was preparing information for the VSS for 15 March 2017 in relation to PEACE IV. The information would be sent by the VSS to SEUPB for consideration before letters of offer could be issued. It was expected that PEACE IV monies would be available in April 2017.
6.6. A discussion took place regarding staff resources. **AMN** confirmed that there was no scope for staff costs/additional resources within the PEACE IV Research budget as it had not been included in the initial application. **AMN** advised that, at the time of submitting the application, the Commission had a more certain budget and no concerns regarding staffing resources.
6.7. It was agreed to review the issue of staffing following confirmation of the Commission's 2017-18 budget.

ACTION: JB, AMN, CG

- 6.8. A discussion took place regarding Steady State monitoring arrangements and the impact on staff resources, specifically in relation to the Policy Officer.
6.9. **JT** advised that the Commission should advise the Executive Office if the required work load and available resources presented a risk.
6.10. **JT** sought clarification of NISRA's role in relation to the Research Strategy. **AMN** advised that NISRA were involved in the Omnibus Survey. **JT** highlighted the importance of NISRA's engagement in the research design.
6.11. **JB** suggested inviting NISRA to be part of the steering group for the PEACE IV projects

- 6.12. A discussion took place regarding the Building for the Future Action Plan and it was noted that the Research Officer would take the lead on the project.
- 6.13. Welfare Reform was discussed.
- 6.14. The NI Veterans Health and Wellbeing Study was discussed.
- 6.15. **AMN** advised that he planned to host a Research Seminar on 27 April 2017. **TMC** advised of diary commitments around this date and suggested alternative dates be considered.
- 6.16. **JT** thanked **AMN** and the PDR Team for their work on the Research Strategy for 2017-19.

7. Website

- 7.1. **TMC** advised that the Web Bureau had now resolved the technical issues with the website.
- 7.2. It was noted that the Commission's newsletter sign up was not connected to the Commission inbox or other Commission email addresses at present but that this had been raised with the Web Bureau.
- 7.3. **TMC** advised that work on the storyboards for the website content had progressed and requested a meeting with **JB** and the Communications Officer to review these.

ACTION: SB

- 7.4. **TMC** noted that the Review of the Strategy report would be a good basis for content for the website and infographics.
- 7.5. It was agreed to send the table of impacts prepared for the review team to the Communications Officer.

ACTION: AMN

- 7.6. **TMC** advised that the Communication's Officer would require meetings with the PDR team to identify key messages within the Commission's research.
- 7.7. **JT** asked for an update on imagery on the website. **TMC** advised that the issue had been resolved by the Web Bureau.
- 7.8. It was noted that work on the Forum Login was ongoing and that consideration was being given to a blog as an alternative to uploading Forum minutes to the website.
- 7.9. **JT** asked if surveys could be supported on the Commission's website. **TMC** advised that links to surveys using tools such as survey monkey could be added to posts on the website.
- 7.10. **TMC** advised that she had contacted **CG** regarding the costs for inclusion of national papers within the Commission's media monitoring contract.

8. Standards Working Group Terms of Reference

- 8.1. **AMN** provided an overview of the Terms of Reference for the Standards Working Group.
- 8.2. The proposal for membership and the frequency of meetings was discussed.
- 8.3. The inclusion of Forum members in the Working Group was discussed with **TMC** seeking clarification on the role. It was noted that this would enable service users to be represented.
- 8.4. **AMN** advised that the Policy Officer would take the lead on the Standards Working Group.
- 8.5. **JT** welcomed the draft Terms of Reference and suggested that **AMN** give consideration to the connection between the Standards and new Steady State Monitoring arrangements.
- 8.6. **JT** noted that Standards for Assessment were required as a matter of urgency.

9. Review of the Strategy

- 9.1. **AMN** advised that the final summary report was received on 08 February 2017 and was shared with the Steering Group for information.
- 9.2. It was noted that the full report had been received on 10 February 2017.
- 9.3. **AMN** asked for confirmation of next steps, if any, and for permission to release the final payment and close out the project.

- 9.4. A discussion took place regarding the publication of the report and upload to the Commission's website.
- 9.5. It was agreed to arrange for the summary report to be printed and to seek a date for a seminar to launch the report. It was also agreed to upload the summary report to the Commission's website.

ACTION: AMN

10.Outcome of January Monitoring Round Budget Allocation

- 10.1. The outcome of the January Monitoring Round Budget Allocation was noted.
- 10.2. **JB** advised that the Commission had received an additional £1k for depreciation.

11.AOB

Remembering Srebrenica - Northern Ireland Delegation Invitation

- 11.1. **JT** advised that she had been asked to apply to be part of a Northern Ireland delegation visiting Srebrenica.
- 11.2. The application form and proposals for the required memorial events were discussed.

Westminster Engagements – February 2017

- 11.3. **JT** provided an overview of engagements during a trip to Westminster from 6-8 February 2017.
- 11.4. Issues raised, agreed actions and follow up meetings were discussed.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED:



DATE: 31/03/17