



- 4.4. **JT** advised that quarterly meetings with the Director of Equality, Victims, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Division would be beneficial. **JB** agreed, noting that this was part of new Steady State Monitoring Arrangements.

**ACTION: SB**

#### **Reflection of Monitoring and implementation of Standards in key corporate documents**

- 4.5. **JB** advised that the Standards were reflected in the Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18 and acknowledged **JT**'s request for this to be expanded. It was noted that **JB** would progress this action.

**ACTION: JB**

- 4.6. **JB** advised that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had discussed the Standards and Steady State Monitoring arrangements at their meeting on 08 May 2017 and it was noted that requested documents had been circulated to Committee members as requested. **JB** also advised that Audit may review the Commission's adherence to the Standards as part of their fieldwork.

#### **Updates to Safeguarding Policy and Development of Client Management Procedures**

- 4.6. **JT** requested an update on progress on amendments to the Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.7. **CG** advised that the policy was currently under review noting that amendments would be progressed following the completion of a new client pathway and updating of management systems.
- 4.8. **JT** sought clarification on progress with the development of the client pathway and management systems noting the progression of amendments to the Safeguarding Policy as a priority.
- 4.9. **JB** advised that SMT were broadly in agreement on the client pathway and management systems and noted that clarity on roles and responsibilities was required to enable completion.
- 4.10. **JT** requested that an updated Safeguarding Policy was available for review at the next meeting on 13 June 2017.

**ACTION: SMT**

#### **PEACE IV Project Plans**

- 4.11 **NF** advised that a public Seminar would be held in June 2017 allowing time for the Research Advisory Committee and working groups to meet during May 2017 to discuss the Terms of Reference in more detail.
- 4.12. **NF** advised that feedback from the Seminar on 05 May 2017 was being considered and that further work on the methodology and Terms of Reference was required. It was noted that the Project Plans would be updated and made available on the Commission's website following the June 2017 Seminar.
- 4.13. **TMC** sought clarification on communications and media requirements to launch the PEACE IV Projects. Following discussion, it was agreed to arrange a meeting for **JB**, **TMC** and **NF** with the Communications Officer to discuss the dissemination of information and the inclusion of a section on PEACE IV on the Commission's website.

**ACTION: SB**

- 4.14. **JT** requested an update on procurement and timeframes. **NF** advised that the VSS had authorised the use of the PEACE IV monies to engage CPD for assistance with project procurement. It was noted that CPD costs were approximately £4k which would provide assistance with the preparation of tender documents and advertisement.
- 4.15. **NF** highlighted the importance of controlling the costs to minimise the impact on the scope of the Research.

- 4.16. Feedback from the Seminar on 05 May 2017 was discussed.
- 4.17. **JT** requested that the Board be kept updated on progress.

#### **Review of the Strategy Final Summary Report**

- 4.18. **NF** advised that design work on the Review of the Strategy Final Summary Report was being progressed.
- 4.19. **JB** advised that he had raised publication of the report with the Executive Office at the Accountability meeting on 02 May 2017 and noted that no major concerns had been raised. **JB** noted that he would discuss the publication of the report with RI as a courtesy, in advance of publication.

**ACTION: JB**

### **5. Accounting Officer's Update**

#### **Performance Report**

- 5.1. **JB** advised that the Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18 had been submitted to the Executive Office on 06 April 2017 following Board approval on 31 March 2017.
- 5.2. **JT** sought clarification on when formal updates would be made to the Corporate Plan 2017-20 and Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18. **JB** advised that updates would be made at the end of Quarter 1 for review at the July 2017 Board meeting.
- 5.3. It was noted that the Executive Office had yet to provide feedback on the Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18.

#### **Budget Report**

- 5.4. **JB** advised that the Commission were operating with a Cash Budget of £279k for the first quarter of the year.
- 5.5. **JB** advised that the Departmental Accounting Officer had agreed to send a letter outlining an indicative Budget to ALB's (subject to caveats). It was noted that this had not yet been received and that the Budget would be reviewed and updated following its receipt.
- 5.6. **JB** advised that an indicative Budget would provide sufficient assurance to allow the Commission to progress activity.
- 5.7. **CG** provided an overview of the Resource Budget, noting that it had been prepared based on a 4% reduction on the opening Budget for 2016/17 and was up to date to the end of April 2017.
- 5.8. **CG** advised that spend had been limited due to uncertainty around the Budget.
- 5.9. **JT** noted that no Budget had been allocated for the Annual Conference. **CG** advised that this would be reviewed on receipt of the indicative Budget letter.
- 5.10. **CG** advised that although a 4% reduction on the opening Budget for 2016/17 was the most favourable scenario, it still represented a challenge for the Commission. **CG** noted that costs for overheads and salaries were increasing and that the programme Budget would be affected.
- 5.11. **JT** acknowledged the pressures on the Budget but highlighted the importance of a Conference in the delivery of the Commission's objectives.
- 5.12. It was agreed to follow up on the indicative Budget letter should it not be received by 15 May 2017.

**ACTION: CG**

#### **Update on Business Cases and Procurement**

- 5.13. The update on Business Cases and Procurement was discussed and it was noted that PPE's were currently up to date.

- 5.14. It was noted that the Executive Office were to provide a contact within CPD to enable the Commission to get procurement for the PEACE IV projects added to CPD's work programme.
- 5.15. It was noted that the Interim Forum Business Case 2017/18 would be added to the log following its approval on 24 April 2017.
- 5.16. **JB** provided an overview of the Interim Forum Business Case 2017/18 advising that it provided authorisation for meetings and expenses to September 2017.
- 5.17. It was noted that the Senior Management Team were considering options for compensation for loss of earnings, paid to employers.
- 5.18. **JB** advised that a further two year Business Case (to 2019) was also being progressed and noted that the Executive Office would be kept informed of resource requirements. **JB** advised that, due to increasing resource requirements, it may be necessary to bid for additional resources in Monitoring rounds should they be reinstated.
- 5.19. **JT** was content with the update.

#### **External Audit/Annual Report and Accounts**

- 5.20. **CG** advised that he had met with the NIAO regarding their Audit Strategy and noted that no significant risks had been identified.
- 5.21. It was noted that fieldwork would commence on 01 August 2017 and that costs were expected to be £10k. **CG** advised that this was in line with current market rates.
- 5.22. **CG** advised that Deloitte had been appointed to provide quality assurance and technical support in the preparation of the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts and provided an overview of timelines for preparation, review by Deloitte and submission to the NIAO.
- 5.23. It was noted that the Annual Report and Accounts would be submitted to the NIAO by the end of July 2017.
- 5.24. **JT** thanked **CG** for the update.

#### **Internal Audit**

- 5.25. It was noted that procurement for a new Internal Audit contract from 01 April 2017 had been undertaken and ASM had been reappointed.
- 5.26. **CG** advised that ASM met with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee on 08 May 2017 to discuss the new Internal Audit Strategy for 2017/20.
- 5.27. **CG** noted that the Annual Assurance Statement 2016/17 had been received with satisfactory assurance.
- 5.28. **TMC** requested that staff were briefed and given preparation time in advance of audit fieldwork commencing.

#### **Risk Management**

- 5.29. It was noted that the final report for the Programme and Project Management review had been received with satisfactory assurance. It was noted that recommendations focussed on the updating of Policies and Procedures.
- 5.30. It was noted that the Corporate Services Manager would update the Project Management Policies on return from Maternity Leave.
- 5.31. **CG** advised that most of the Commission's staff had undertaken PRINCE training and that Microsoft Project had been acquired. It was noted that training on Microsoft Project would be provided for relevant staff.
- 5.32. It was noted that the Risk Management Strategy which outlines the Board's approach to managing risk was reviewed and approved in March 2016.
- 5.33. It was noted that the format of the Risk Register had recently been reviewed and as a result, **CG** was seeking guidance from the Board on a review of the Risk Management Strategy.

- 5.34. **JB** advised that the current Risk Management Strategy aligned to historical objectives and NICS guidance and endorsed a review.
- 5.35. Following discussion, it was agreed to align the Risk Management Strategy to the Corporate Plan 2017-20, Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18 and the revised Risk Register following which the Commission's risk appetite would be agreed. It was noted that historically the risk appetite had been cautious but a move to open in relation to the Forum and engagement was being considered.
- 5.36. **JT** advised that the Commission would remain risk averse in relation to the management of public money. She also noted that the Commission would review its approach to risk in other areas of work, in order to ensure positive impact and effectiveness.
- 5.37. A discussion took place regarding the Risk impact scale. It was noted that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee felt that there was not enough granularity in the current scale for complex risks. **JB** advised that he would circulate a historical paper on proposed amendments which was rejected by the previous Audit and Risk Committee.

**ACTION: JB**

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

- 5.27. The report on engagements during April 2017 was discussed and noted.
- 5.28. Following discussion it was agreed to remove activity statistics from the AO Update until new reporting measures, such as engagement databases, were agreed and in place. It was noted that the current recording mechanism only reviewed activity and did not reflect outcomes and impacts.

**ACTION: TMC**

- 5.29. **TMC** advised that she would focus on the review of the Communications Strategy and the development of the client pathway and stakeholder engagement plan for review at the June 2017 Board meeting.
- 5.30. It was noted that a planning day for **JT**, **JB** and **TMC** with the Forum and Communications Services Provider to discuss the Communications Strategy and Engagement Plans would be progressed once drafts had been prepared for review.

**Website and Social Media**

- 5.31. The Activity Statistics report was discussed and it was noted that the Commission now had 1,000 Twitter followers.
- 5.32. **TMC** advised that the decrease in website traffic was being addressed, noting that there had been an increase around the appointment of new Forum members.
- 5.33. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Statistics Report would be included within the AO update going forward.
- 5.34. A discussion took place regarding the questionnaire prepared and utilised by the Departmental review team. **JT** requested that survey feedback was considered when progressing content for the website.
- 5.35. **TMC** advised that content would be tailored to the Commission's target audiences.
- 5.36. Draft Infographics prepared by the Communications Officer were discussed. It was noted that the draft Infographics were representative and informative and were well received by the Board and attendees.
- 5.37. It was agreed that the Communications and Engagement Team could proceed with the use of the Infographics.

**Forum**

- 5.38. **TMC** advised that, as per notes at 5.15 – 5.18, the Interim Forum Business Case 2017/18 had been approved and a further 2 year Business Case would be progressed with assistance from the Corporate Services Manager.

- 5.39. **TMC** advised that induction of the new Forum had begun and would be ongoing to develop the skills of members.
- 5.40. A discussion took place regarding political engagement with the Forum.
- 5.41. It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 31 May 2017 in Belfast.
- 5.42. **TMC** advised that she would progress a benchmarking exercise to scope costs/Budgets for projects similar to the Forum to inform the next Business Case. It was noted that NICCY's Youth Forum was not suitable for comparison as the Youth Forum was not subject to the same risks and complexities as the Victims and Survivors Forum. It was noted that the Youth Forum did not provide strategic advice.

#### **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee**

- 5.43. It was noted that the next Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting would take place on 29 June 2017.
- 5.44. **JB** advised that a meeting with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had taken place on 08 May 2017 to discuss the Annual Report and Accounts and Internal Audit Strategy.
- 5.45. It was noted that **JB** would provide an overview of PEACE IV Project Plans following the next meeting on 29 June 2017.

#### **Staffing**

- 5.46. It was noted that the Commission currently had 2 vacancies.
- 5.47. **JB** advised that recruitment of a Head of Policy and Research was being progressed.
- 5.48. **JB** advised that he would commence a review of staff job descriptions and would take advice, where appropriate, from the Commission's HR service providers. It was noted that legal advice would be sought should the review result in changes to terms and conditions.

#### **Review of the Commission**

- 5.49. It was noted that follow up meetings with the review team had taken place in April 2017 and a final report was awaited.

#### **Freedom of Information**

- 5.50. 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 to January 2017 were available on the Commission's website.

#### **Fraud**

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

### **6. Audit Strategy**

- 6.1. As per notes at 5.20 and 5.21, **CG** advised that he had met with the NIAO regarding their Audit Strategy and noted that no significant risks had been identified. Costs were expected to be £10k.

## 7. Update on Recommendations for the Preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts

- 7.1. As per notes at 5.22, **CG** advised that Deloitte had been appointed to provide quality assurance and technical support in the preparation of the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts.
- 7.2. **CG** advised that financial procedures had been reviewed and that new templates had been adopted.
- 7.3. It was noted that **CG** and the Finance, Assets and Premises Officer had undertaken IFRS training.
- 7.4. **CG** advised that the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee were content with the review carried out by the Accounting Officer, noting that no further review was necessary.

## 8. AOB

### Publication of Advice on New Service Delivery Model and Eligibility

- 8.1. **JB** noted a number of recent media requests in relation to the new service delivery model and eligibility.
- 8.2. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Commission would seek to publish the advice submitted to Ministers in August 2016 for transparency.
- 8.3. It was noted that not all recommendations in the Commission's advice had been accepted.
- 8.4. It was agreed to raise the publication of the advice with the Director of Equality, Victims, Human Rights and Delivering Social Change Division.

**ACTION: JT, JB**

### Update on Standards

- 8.5. It was noted that **NF** and **PM** would meet with the VSS on 24 May 2017 to seek information on their MIS systems and discuss data requirements for Standards and the PEACE IV projects.
- 8.6. It was noted that **JB** would attend the working group meeting convened by the VSS on 19 May 2017.

### Minute Taking

- 8.7. It was noted that **SB** would be commencing Maternity Leave on 19 May 2017 and that minute taking at SMT and Board meetings would be taken over by the Corporate Services Manager during Maternity Leave. **JT** acknowledged that this would be **SB**'s last Board meeting until her return.
- 8.8. **JT** and **JB** thanked **SB** for carrying out this role.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED:



DATE: 5 June 2017