



The Commission for
Victims & Survivors

BOARD MEETING

8 August 2017 @ 9.30am

PRESENT:

Judith Thompson (Chair - JT) Commissioner

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Beggs (JB) Secretary to the Commission
Tina McCann (TMC) Head of Communications and Engagement
Neil Foster (NF) Acting Head of Policy and Research
Laura Loughridge (LL) - 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. The Minutes of the meeting on 15 June 2017 were approved.

4. Action notes

Arrange seminar to launch Strategy Final Summary Report

4.1. To be placed on hold, pending Co Design meeting on 30 August 2017, for review at the next Board meeting.

ACTION – LL

Finalise Policy advice and provide guidance for staff in case of queries

4.2. It was agreed to publish the advice with the sections related to the options analysis removed as these could be misleading and confusing. The Commissioner noted that the document was a very thorough and well-presented piece of work. She noted that, in order to ensure it was well understood, it should be published without the options analysis included.

ACTION – JB

Update on VSS Management Information System (MIS) at next Board meeting

- 4.3. It was noted that the Memorandum of Understanding with the VSS had been signed by both parties. It was noted that data from the MIS was due to be discussed at a meeting on 30 August. An update would be provide at the next Board meeting.

ACTION – JB

Request draft Review of the Commission Report be made available

- 4.4. It was noted that the draft report had been received and comments returned to the Department by 14 July 2017. The Commissioner noted that meeting any recommendations from the report would have an impact on the Commission's Outline Delivery Plan and budget, and therefore it was important the final report be received as soon as possible. It was noted the report was due to be finalised at the end of August 2017. Final draft Report to be requested.

ACTION – JB

5. Accounting Officer's Update

Performance Report

- 5.1. The Corporate Plan 2017-20 and the Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18 (with progress update for end of Quarter 1) were noted. It was noted that any Green/Amber or Amber RAG status were reflective of a slow start to expenditure due to budget uncertainty in the early part of 2017/18 and the existing staff vacancies.
- 5.2. JB advised the documents had been reviewed at the Accountability Meeting on 21 July 2017 and that final drafts were to be submitted to The Executive Office (TEO) once approved by the Board.
- 5.3. The draft Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) was discussed and changes were agreed in relation to key actions on engagement. It was agreed that, once the Commissioner had approved the changes, the ODP could be submitted to TEO.

ACTION – JB

- 5.4. The RAG status of each key action was discussed. It was agreed the ODP would be reviewed at SMT and returned to the Board in October, with all RAG status updated for the end of Quarter 2, to reflect external and internal factors as appropriate.

ACTION - SMT

Budget Report

- 5.5. The 2017/18 Resource Budget Report was noted.
- 5.6. The Commission had received an opening indicative Budget letter from TEO confirming a budget of £843k and reduction of 2.5%. The Commission also received confirmation its cash allocation on 25 July 2017. The revised indicative cash allocation for the Commission for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 November 2017 was £556k.
- 5.7. It was noted that the funding for the Peace IV Research Projects would be managed and monitored separately from the Commission's Grant-in-Aid funding. JB advised a separate budget report would be presented at SMT and Board meetings for review in the coming months.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 5.8. The update on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 5.9. The NISRA survey and timetable for submission of questions and receipt of draft and final reports was discussed.
- 5.10. It was provisionally agreed that the Annual Conference would be scheduled for November 2017.

External Audit & Annual Report and Accounts 2016/17

- 5.11. The update on Audit Recommendations was noted.
- 5.12. The report of the external review of the draft Annual Report and Accounts carried out by Deloitte was noted. **JB** advised that NIAO had commenced audit fieldwork on 7 August 2017.

Internal Audit

- 5.13. **JB** advised the Internal Audit Strategy for 2017-20 had been presented for review to ARAC on 29 June 2017.
- 5.14. ARAC had agreed to recommend that the Board did not approve the IA Strategy until after the Report of the Review of the Commission has been received and its recommendations considered. **JB** recommended that he was content the recommendations provided would not have an impact on the Internal Audit Strategy.
- 5.15. The Internal Audit Strategy was approved. It was agreed to advise the ARAC, and update ASM on the approval.

ACTION - CG

Risk Management

- 5.16. The Risk Register as per the end of Quarter 1 was reviewed. The Commission's Corporate Risk Register contained 6 medium rated risks with amber status, 1 low rated risk with green status and 1 high rated risk with red status.
- 5.17. It was agreed the Risk Register would be reviewed at SMT and returned to the Board in October, with all RAG status updated for the end of Quarter 2, to reflect external and internal factors as appropriate. The Red Risk Status at CR4 would be changed to Amber in light of mitigating actions taken.

ACTION – JB

- 5.18. The Commissioner noted the agreed updates to the Outcome Delivery Plan and the Risk Register and emphasized the importance of reflecting and monitoring identified risk and activity undertaken or required to address risk by the organisation on an ongoing basis.

Communications Strategy

- 5.19. The draft Communications Strategy was noted. It was agreed that the Strategy would be updated to reflect changes identified by the Commissioner, for approval at the Board meeting in September. The Commissioner noted that the Risk Register should be revised to reflect a raised level of risk relating to communications.

ACTION – JB & TMC

- 5.20. **TMC** advised that a process for managing engagement and communications activity was currently being developed. Discussion took place regarding the historical focus of the organisation and the shift to a proactive, outcomes focused strategy as opposed to an activity focused, reactive approach. It was agreed that the changes would mean a cultural shift within the organisation, to developing a comprehensive approach in managing communications and engagement. Therefore, training would be scheduled for all staff once the Strategy was approved at Board.

ACTION - SMT

Website and Social Media

- 5.21. The activity statistics for June were noted.
- 5.22. **TMC** advised actions to encourage more interactivity in certain areas of the website were being progressed.

Forum

- 5.23. It was noted that the Forum Business Case 2017-19 would exceed the Commission's delegated limits and would therefore require both Board and Departmental approval.
- 5.24. It was agreed that, following review by the Commissioner and **JB**, the Business Case would be submitted to TEO in draft for review. A final draft would be returned to the September Board meeting for approval.

ACTION – TMC & JB

- 5.25. The next Forum meeting was scheduled to take place on 14 September 2017 with a Secretary of State engagement planned..

Other issues to note

Review of the Commission

- 5.26. See update at 4.4.

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 5.27. The next meeting of the ARAC was scheduled for 12 October 2017.

Update on Co-Design Process

- 5.28. It was noted that **JT** and **JB** had attended the first meeting regarding Phase II on Thursday 6 July. **JB** advised were a number of proposals regarding a future Strategy for Victims and Survivors, which would be consulted upon. **JB** & **JT** would attend the next meeting.

Freedom of Information

- 5.29. No FOI requests had been received in the last quarter.

Complaints

- 5.30. No complaints had been received in the last month.

Gifts & Hospitality

- 5.31. No exceptional gifts or hospitality had been received or provided in last quarter.

5.32. **JB** advised the Gifts & Hospitality Policy had been reviewed to include a 'de minimis' level for reporting and the policy has been updated and circulated to all staff for reference.

Fraud

5.33. There had been no reported instances of fraud during the last month.

Staffing

5.34. **JB** advised the Commission currently has two vacancies, Communications and Engagement Officer (SO) and Head of Research and Policy Development (DP).

5.35. HRConnect had been engaged to undertake both recruitment processes.

5.36. The Head of Research and Policy Development post was advertised on 3 July and applications had closed on 28 July 2017. The panel consists of John Beggs (Chair), Judith Thompson and Colin Moffett (TEO).

5.37. The Job Description and Personnel Specification for the new Communications and Engagement Officer had been referred to NICS HR for JEG. A Project Initiation meeting had taken place with HRConnect and the role would be advertised upon receipt of the JEG result. The panel consists of John Beggs (Chair), Tina McCann and Craig Gartley.

5.38. It was noted that staffing structure and job descriptions for all posts were under review by the Secretary to the Commission following a recommendation from the CIPFA review.

6. Annual Report and Accounts

6.1. See update at 5.12.

7. Policies for Approval

7.1. The Pathway for engaging with individual victims or survivors and recording issues from engagement (Individual Pathway) was noted for approval by SMT.

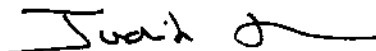
7.2. The following policies were approved;

- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults
- External Complaints Policy
- Social Media Policy

8. AOB

8.1. There was no AOB.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 8/8/17

