



BOARD MEETING

1 February 2018 @ 1.30pm

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

John Beggs (**JB**) Secretary to the Commission
Patricia Stewart (**PS**) Head of Research and Policy Development
Craig Gartley (**CG**) Head of Corporate Services
Laura Loughridge (**LL**) - minutes

1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1. Apologies from Tina McCann, Head of Communications and Engagement.

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 12 December 2017 were approved.

4. Action notes

4.1. AP1 - Contact TEO for further clarification around publication of factual information contained in appendices to BCS review – **JB** to follow up with TEO

ACTION - JB

4.2. AP2 - Seek approval from TEO for extension to business case for C&E provider -

COMPLETE

4.3. AP3 - Progress Storyboard Project as a priority – at next Board Meeting

ACTION - TMC

4.4. AP4 - Review draft Engagement Report and tailor/condense for reporting to Board – to be included at next meeting

ACTION – C&E TEAM

4.5. AP5 - Update Risk Register re GDPR – **COMPLETE**

4.6. AP6 - Provide update report following site visit and review current MoU's and retention schedule – ongoing as part of preparation for introduction of GDPR.

4.7. AP7 - Updated Complaints policy for Forum - **COMPLETE**

4.8. AP8 - Finalise review of Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and review version control - **COMPLETE**

- 4.9. AP9 - Update Corporate Plan 17/20 and ODP 17/18 for Q3 – to be reviewed and approved at February Board meeting

ACTION – CG

- 4.10. AP10 - Present draft quarterly report as per MoU with VSS - Under review by **JB**.
4.11. AP11 - Discuss alternative options to annual conference – no longer required.
4.12. AP12 - Circulate final Communications Strategy to TEO following approval and update to annex 5 - **COMPLETE**
4.13. AP13 - Board Style minutes for Forum meetings to be introduced – In progress as required.
4.14. AP14 - Monitor recommendations from external review - **COMPLETE**
4.15. AP15 - Review of job descriptions – follow process stages as outlined in SMT paper - In progress as required.
4.16. AP16 - Obtain signed copy of Partnership from VSS re PIV - **COMPLETE**
4.17. AP17 - Provide update on publication of tender documentation re PIV - **COMPLETE**
4.18. AP18 - Develop governance paper re drawdowns for PIV – To be completed following meeting with TEO on 31 January 2018

ACTION - CG

- 4.19. AP19 - Take forward options re seminar on memorialisation and need for a policy position – to be undertaken in 2018/19 financial year.

5. Accounting Officer's Update

Performance Report

- 5.1. **JB** provided an overview of the Outcome Delivery Plan 2017/18 updated for Quarter 3. Discussion took place regarding the amber Key Actions. It was agreed that work and activity undertaken by the Commission, in the context of external influences, could result in a number of the amber RAG status being changed to green by the end of Quarter 4.
5.2. Discussion took place regarding Key Action 4.3 - Implementation of the Building for the Future Action Plan. It was agreed to progress the attendance of a NICCY representative at the next Forum meeting.

ACTION – PS

- 5.3. Discussion took place regarding Key Action 5.1 – Standards. **PS** noted that the VSS had advised they had a number of concerns with the draft Assessment of Standards document. It was agreed to follow up on a written outline of the concerns from the VSS.

ACTION – PS

- 5.4. It was agreed to engage directly with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

ACTION – PS

- 5.5. It was agreed that the Commission would progress a visual representation 'map' of the Standards developed.

ACTION – RPD TEAM

- 5.6. It was agreed to amend Key Action 5.1 to Amber.

ACTION - LL

- 5.7. It was noted that drafts of the Corporate Plan 18-20 and Outcome Delivery Plan 2018/19 were under review. It was agreed to issue both documents to the Forum and the Panel for consultation and feedback.

ACTION – C&E TEAM

- 5.8. It was noted that drafts of both documents were due to be submitted to TEO by end February 2018. Both documents to be reviewed at the next Board Meeting on 26 February 2018.

ACTION – CG

Budget Report

- 5.9. **CG** presented the 2017/18 Resource Budget Report highlighting spend to end of December 2017. It was noted that the £10k Annual Conference budget had been reallocated to upcoming Forum activity, preparations for the introduction of GDPR and mandatory Risk Management training for all staff. **CG** noted that a small underspend within tolerance was projected for the end of March 2018.
- 5.10. It was agreed, due to time constraints, that the services to provide Pastoral Support to the Forum and Commission staff would be procured for 2018/19, and that procurement should be undertaken accordingly.

ACTION – CG

- 5.11. A letter from TEO confirming the 2017/18 December Monitoring Budget Allocation was noted.
- 5.12. Discussion took place regarding the projected budget reductions in 2018/19 and 2019/20. **CG** provided an outline of the Impact Assessment he had submitted to the Department of Finance (DoF) on 26 January 2018. He noted that potential budget cuts over the 2 years could result in reductions totaling approx. £104,000, and would have significant impact on the Commission's ability to fulfil its statutory duties. It was noted that the ARAC had expressed surprise and concern at the anticipated budget reductions. **CG** also advised that representatives from TEO had observed the ring-fenced budget allocated to the VSS, and how important the Commission was in providing advice, which in turn became policy implemented by the VSS. **CG** advised he had included this in the Impact Assessment and it was noted to include this at future discussions with DoF or TEO regarding budget allocations.
- 5.13. It was noted that an update meeting hosted by the TEO Accounting Officer had been scheduled for 7 February, and that it was hoped the 2018/19 budget would be confirmed before the end of the financial year.

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 5.14. The update on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 5.15. **JB** advised that procurement for external Communications support services until March 2019 was being progressed, with advice sought from CPD on the process.

Internal Audit

- 5.16. The update on Audit Recommendations was noted.
- 5.17. **CG** advised that the draft report of the Review of compliance with aspects of the Standards for Services provided to Victims and Survivors and compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding ("MoU") between CVSNI and VSS had been received, with a Satisfactory assurance rating, and one Priority 3 recommendation outlined.
- 5.18. **CG** advised that the Commission was meeting with NIAO for a follow up and planning meeting on 28 February 2018.

- 5.19. The letter received on 19 December 2017 regarding NIAO Director Responsibilities was noted.
- 5.20. **CG** advised that there had not been a representative from NIAO at the ARAC meeting on 25 January 2018. The Chair of the ARAC had followed this up with NIAO and the Commission had agreed to take steps to ensure all relevant personnel are invited to future meetings.

Risk Management

- 5.21. The Risk Register to end of Quarter 3 was noted. It was agreed to change the rating of Corporate Risk 3 to amber resulting in 5 medium rated risks with amber status and 3 low rated risk with green status.
- 5.22. It was noted that Risk Management Training for all staff was arranged for Quarter 4 of 2017/18.
- 5.23. **CG** provided an overview of the plans to ensure the Commission is prepared for the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations on 25 May 2018. It was agreed that an Action Plan would be developed and its implementation reviewed at SMT and at Board. It was agreed to arrange Board level training regarding GDPR for the Commissioner, the Chair of the ARAC and **JB**.

ACTION – CG

- 5.24. Considering Corporate Risk 4, **JB** noted the issues that were being highlighted by victims relating to the transition from DLA to PIP. It was agreed to engage with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Advice NI in order to seek feedback and further develop the Commissions policy position.

ACTION – PS

- 5.25. The lack of an Assembly and Ministers was noted as a continued risk to the Commission being unable to provide advice, as required by its statutory duties. It was agreed that the Commission would submit evidence to the Department for Communities (DoC) that it had gathered from groups, individuals, the VSS and Forum members, noting the previously agreed to special measures for victims and survivors.

ACTION - PS

Communications and Engagement

Website and Social Media

- 5.26. The activity statistics for December 2017 were noted. It was noted that a high level strategic report was under development for presentation at the Board meeting, which would be able to be used and referred to in other areas of Commission work and documentation.

Forum

- 5.27. It was noted that a positive Forum Meeting had taken place on 26 January 2018, and that a busy period of activity until year end was expected for the Forum.
- 5.28. The final draft of the Forum User Guide was approved, pending an updated introduction section from the Commissioner.

ACTION – COMMISSIONER AND C&E TEAM

5.29. It was agreed to issue the Forum Handbook to members and include a planning and induction session on the Forum handbook for the next Forum meeting in February 2018.

ACTION – COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER.

Other issues to note

Review of the Commission - Recommendations

5.30. The Recommendations paper was reviewed and it was agreed to amend Recommendation 6 to Ongoing.

ACTION - LL

Update on Co-Design Process

5.31. **JT** and **PS** had attended the latest Co-Design meeting on 17 January 2018. **PS** advised that TEO had confirmed that the Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation Reports should no longer be published as they were considered to be policy under development. However, they were content for summary or synopsis documents to be published. It was agreed that this should be noted in the minutes of the Co-Design meeting before summary documents were drafted and included as part of future reports.

ACTION - PS

Update on VSS Management Information Systems

5.32. It was noted that data was being received and that it was under review. It had previously been agreed to continue to review and monitor the data to ensure the quality and quantity increases each quarter. If required, the Commission could then take steps to ensure that its requirements, in terms of the data required for monitoring and evaluation, are understood, and would be met.

Freedom of Information

5.33. No FOI requests were received in the last quarter.

Complaints

5.34. No complaints had been received in December 2017. One complaint had been received in January 2018, and Stage 1 had been completed,

Gifts & Hospitality

5.35. There were no exceptional gifts or hospitality received or provided in last quarter.

Fraud

5.36. There were no reported instances of fraud during the last month.

Staffing

5.37. The staffing structure and job descriptions for all posts were under review by the Secretary to the Commission and SMT.

Equality and Good Relations Update

- 5.38. The 5 year review of the Equality Scheme was being reviewed by the Corporate Services Team and the Equality and Good Relations service provider.
- 5.39. **CG** noted that Section 75 training undertaken in January 2018 had been well received by staff.

DAO received

- 5.40. DAO (DoF) 05/17 – Appointment/Designation of Accounting Officers was noted.
- 5.41. **CG** advised that the Management Statement and Financial Memorandum was currently under review by TEO.

6. Peace IV Research Projects

- 6.1. **PS** provided an update on the outcome of the tender process for the three Research Projects, noting that two projects had received one tender each. Evaluation of the received tenders for two of the Research Projects had not taken place to date. It was agreed to confirm with SEUPB if awarding the contract, when only one tender had been received, was a Direct Award Contract.

ACTION – CG

- 6.2. One of the Research Projects had not received any tenders and options to progress the contract for this project were under consideration. The Commission was meeting with SEUPB, and would seek advice, on Monday 5 February 2018.
- 6.3. **CG** advised that he had determined timeframes and a framework for drawdowns and reporting and would be meeting with TEO on 31 January 2018 in order to confirm these structures.

7. Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

- 7.1. The policy was approved pending the following amendments;
- Point 8.13 & Heading 9 – include wording to ensure communication appropriate to each individual can be used.
 - Point 13 – Include the Commission's Pastoral Support arrangements

ACTION – PM

8. AOB

- 8.1. Form signed for banking arrangements by the Commissioner. It was noted that **JB** had signed the form previously.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 14 March 2018