



The Commission for
Victims & Survivors

BOARD MEETING 22 June 2018 @ 2.30pm

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. There were apologies from Tina McCann (**TMC**), 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 15 May 2018 were approved.

4. Action notes

4.1. AP1 - Research Projects Governance Paper at June Board and June ARAC – it was noted that some clarifications were required. The paper would be included at the August Board Meeting.

ACTION – CG

4.2. AP2 - Outline of Policy Impact statement at June Board – To be included in ODP 2018/19, alongside any updates arising from the outcome of the funding bids submitted in the June Monitoring Round.

ACTION – SMT

4.3. AP3 - Arrange Corporate Planning Day
COMPLETE - scheduled for 13 September 2018.

4.4. AP4 – Communications and Engagement Report – reflect outcomes of meeting on 31 May re structure and planning
COMPLETE – further meeting not required.

- 4.5. AP5 - Assess if additional resources required re Legacy Consultation – **JB** had liaised with TEO on possible arrangements for additional resources and confirmed that a member of TEO staff would be available during July and August if required. The Commissioner acknowledged the support of TEO on the matter. To be taken forward on **TMC** return.

ACTION – JB & TMC

- 4.6. AP6 - Make contact with SEUPB re possibility of funding – **PS** advised that a scheduled meeting had been postponed, but would be rearranged. Discussion took place about the extension of the partnership with the VSS in order to avail of further SEUPB funding, and a request from the VSS for a research proposal to present to them asap was noted.

ACTION – PS

It was noted that clarification is needed whether availing of SEUPB funding in association with the VSS to take forward research projects will meet the Commission's statutory duty to undertake research.

- 4.7. AP7 - Arrange meeting with Standards Working Group – It was noted that a meeting of this group will be required to review and sign off the assessment standards when they are completed.
- 4.8. AP8 - Focus of website should be on Legacy Consultation – **COMPLETE/ONGOING**
- 4.9. AP9 - Advise on timeframe for completion of Legacy pages on website – **COMPLETE/ONGOING**
- 4.10. AP10 - Monitor timeframe for completion of website storyboard project – **ONGOING.**

5. Research and Policy Development Update

Research

Peace IV Funded Research Projects

- 5.1. **PS** presented the Highlight Report on the Peace IV Funded Research Projects. It was noted that a meeting of the Research Advisory Group was due to take place on 5 July, and that the Project Initiation Documents for two of the projects were due to be signed off at this meeting. The Research Teams for the projects would be in attendance at the meeting to answer any questions.
- 5.2. **PS** advised that the tender for the Effective Advocacy Services Project had gone live on eTendersNI, and would end on 31 July 2018.
- 5.3. **PS** noted that the Memorandum of Understanding with the VSS was currently under review and that the Peace IV funded Research Projects, and any other data sharing requirements, would be reflected in it.
- 5.4. It was agreed to arrange a meeting for **the Commissioner, JB** and **PS** to discuss future research projects and availing of finance from other funding streams.

ACTION – PERSONAL SECRETARY

Omnibus Survey

- 5.5. Discussion took place regarding the data and its use. It was agreed not to publish a dedicated report on the data from the survey, but rather to use it as an evidence base, and to include it in any communications and engagement planning on an ongoing basis.

Policy

Update on Legacy Consultation

- 5.6. **PS** noted the NIO Legacy Consultation had commenced on 11 May 2018, and that engagement on the consultation was ongoing.
- 5.7. **PS** advised a submission had been made to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee consultation on the Stormont House Agreement enquiry on 15 June 18.
- 5.8. It was agreed to explore sourcing formal advice on the legislation for the investigative bodies in order to better inform the Commission's submission to the Legacy Consultation.

ACTION – PS

Update on Monitoring and Evaluation (VSS)

- 5.9. **PS** advised that the latest Final Report had been issued to the VSS, and that no policy related recommendations had been made to TEO.
- 5.10. **JB** advised that there had been mitigating circumstances at the VSS which had impacted upon the sourcing and analysing of data which was to be received by the end of Quarter 2, and that it was likely to be late. It was agreed to liaise with the VSS and rearrange the next Tri-lateral meeting, to ensure the data is received and reviewed by the Commission in advance.

ACTION - PS

Update on Standards

- 5.11. **PS** advised that an initial exploratory meeting with the Public Health Agency (PHA), to consider the potential of amalgamating both the PHA and Commission Standards, had been undertaken. Discussion took place regarding how the ability of the Commission to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Standards by groups would be impacted by such an amalgamation. It was noted that further exploration was required and the Commission would meet with the PHA and Healthy Cities representatives to discuss.

ACTION - PS

Update on Pension

- 5.12. **PS** advised the Commission had been requested by the Secretary of State to update its advice on the Pension for the Severely Injured, and that engagement was ongoing in order to inform this.
- 5.13. **JB** advised that discussion had taken place with TEO regarding the funding applied for during the June Monitoring Round, and that, if successful, it may be used to launch the Pension.

Welfare Reform

- 5.14. **PS** advised she had attended a consultation session in the Law Centre NI on 24 May 2018 to highlight victims and survivors issues in relation to Welfare Reform.
- 5.15. The Commissioner noted the good work undertaken by **PS** in this area, and the networking and engagement undertaken with other organisations.

Consultations

- 5.16. **PS** advised the Commission had submitted a response to the Department of Health Service Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being 2018-21. This response highlighted the lack of reference to the establishment of the Regional Trauma Network, and the needs of victims and survivors.
- 5.17. **PS** noted that QUB had updated their Media Guidelines as a result of consultation, and that a new version was expected. It was agreed to send the guidelines onto the Regional Community Network for feedback.

ACTION – PS

- 5.18. The Commissioner advised she would highlight the guidelines during an upcoming meeting with the BBC.

ACTION – COMMISSIONER

Update on Co-Design

- 5.19. It was noted that the Commissioner and **JB** had attended a planning day with TEO and VSS on 25 May 2018.

6. Communications and Engagement Update

- 6.1. The Communications and Engagement Report was noted. The Commissioner confirmed that she was content with the format of the Report, but expressed concern that a number of engagements undertaken in May were not included in the Report. May Report to be included at the August Board Meeting.

ACTION - TMC

- 6.2. The Commissioner noted a media query received on 8 May, and requested it be followed up.

ACTION – C&E TEAM

7. Accounting Officer's Update

Performance Report

Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2018/19

- 7.1. The draft Outcome Delivery Plan 2018/19 was noted. **JB** advised that the Corporate Plan 2018-21 and the ODP 2018/19 had been positively received by TEO. It was noted the ODP would be updated and resubmitted to the Department pending the outcome of the June Monitoring Round.

Budget Report

- 7.2. The 2018/19 Resource Budget Report, highlighting spend to end of May 2018, was noted. **CG** advised there were no variances to note in May 2018, and at present expenditure was on target for 2018/19.
- 7.3. **CG** advised that the Commission had submitted a bid for additional funding in the June Monitoring Round totalling £53k. This is comprised of £18k for capital funding to procure

ICT equipment and office furniture; £15k for the replenishment of the Forum in year; and £20k for a research project. Business Cases to be completed and signed off ASAP.

ACTION – CG, PS & TMC

- 7.4. **JT** noted it was positive that expenditure was on target, and that a bid for additional funding had been submitted. However, she expressed concern about the downward trend in the Commission's budget in the last 3 years, and acknowledged that a future cut was anticipated in the coming year.
- 7.5. **CG** also noted the changes to the Forum Working Groups, and any impact on the Business Case and upcoming expenditure in year. Changes to be reviewed and any reallocations to be notified to TEO.

ACTION - TMC

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 7.6. The update on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.

Audit

- 7.7. The updated paper on the implementation of audit recommendations was noted.

Internal Audit

- 7.8. The Final Reports on Corporate Governance, the 16/17 Follow Up and the Preparedness for GDPR, all providing satisfactory assurance, were noted.
- 7.9. It was agreed that no further action would be required on the recommendation in the Follow up Report for documenting procedures for the approval of media statements. Internal Audit to be advised.

ACTION – TMC / CG

- 7.10. The Audit Strategy for 2018/19 was noted.

Risk Management

- 7.11. The new Corporate Risk Register was reviewed. It was agreed that Risk 4 would be escalated to High with a red RAG status, and the planned actions would be updated. Thanks were given to the Communications and Engagement Officer for highlighting the issue.
- 7.12. The Commission's Corporate Risk Register contained 1 high rated risk with red status and 6 medium rated risks with amber status. It was agreed to present the Risk Register at the next ARAC meeting.

ACTION - JB

Policies for approval

- 7.13. The updated Data Protection Policy was approved.
- 7.14. The Data Breach Management Procedure was approved.

Other issues to note

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

- 7.15. **CG** advised that the Annual Self-Assessment of the ARAC had taken place on 5 June 2018. The ARAC Annual Report was under review by the ARAC Chair and would be presented to the Board when finalised and approved.
- 7.16. It was noted that meetings were scheduled for Thursday 28 June 2018 and Thursday 11 October 2018.

Freedom of Information

- 7.17. There were no FOI requests received in the last month.

Complaints

- 7.18. There had been one complaint received in the last month.

Gifts & Hospitality

- 7.19. Gifts and Hospitality for the last quarter were under review and would be made available on the Commission's website as soon as possible.
- 7.20. There was no exceptional gifts or hospitality received or provided in the last quarter.

Fraud

- 7.21. There were no reported instances of fraud during the last quarter.

8. Annual Report and Accounts

- 8.1. **CG** presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2018. He advised that the background papers were under review by the Accounting Officer and externally by Deloitte for quality assurance. The ARAC would review the document at their next meeting on 28 June 2018. Any amendments would be incorporated and presented to the Board in an exceptional Board Meeting to be arranged for the last week in July 2018.
- 8.2. The Annual Report and Accounts would then be presented to NIAO by 31 July 2018, with fieldwork and review to be undertaken by them in August and September 2018.
- 8.3. The Commissioner noted that Key Actions under Corporate Outcome 4 - Children and grandchildren of victims and survivors are given the best start in life had not been achieved or had been partially achieved. She noted the importance of ensuring the Commission took forward activity in order to ensure these targets and outcomes were achieved in 2018/19.
- 8.4. The Commissioner queried the projected underspend of 1.3%, advising that year end projections had indicated a smaller percentage underspend. **CG** explained a number of accruals had been less than anticipated, and that he was confident that this figure would be unchanged following NIAO review.
- 8.5. It was noted that the Foreword by the Commissioner would need updated.

ACTION – LL

8.6. The Commissioner noted that this was still a live document and that work was ongoing to finalise it. It was agreed to present the Annual Report and Accounts to the ARAC at their next meeting on 28 June 2018.

ACTION – JB

9. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

9.1. The updated GDPR action plan was noted.

10.AOB

10.1. There was no AOB.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 30/07/18

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