



The Commission for  
Victims & Survivors

## BOARD MEETING 15 October 2018 @ 2.00pm

### PRESENT:

Judith Thompson (Chair - JT)                      Commissioner

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Patricia Stewart (PS)                              Head of Research and Policy Development  
Craig Gartley (CG)                                Head of Corporate Services  
Tina McCann (TMC)                                Head of Communications and Engagement  
Sarah Beare (SB) - minutes

*It was noted that, due to time constraints, Agenda items would be discussed as per priority/urgency.*

### 1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1. There were no apologies.

### 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 13 September 2018 were approved.

### 4. Action notes

4.1. AP1 – Meeting with PHA and Healthy Cities re Standards– PS advised that the Policy Officer was discussing dates for meetings and an update would be provided once a date was secured. For further update, see notes at 5.22 – 5.24.

#### ACTION – PS

- 4.2. AP2 – Meeting with Permanent Secretary of DFC – SB advised that a meeting with the Director and Assistant Director of the Department with responsibility for PIP had been arranged for 07 November 2018. This action was noted as complete.
- 4.3. AP3 – Final Verification Data – It was noted that this would be updated under Agenda Item 7.
- 4.4. AP4 – QUB Science Shop re Interns – It was noted that the Commission's Internship Policy had been updated and that this action would be progressed following submission of the Consultation response and advice. Positive feedback on the work of the intern currently with the Commission were noted.

#### ACTION: PS

## 5. Research and Policy Development Update

### Research

#### Peace IV Funded Research Projects

- 5.1. **PS** provided an overview of Research Projects as per the Collaborative Design Highlight Report.
- 5.2. **PS** advised that the PID for the Review of Trauma Services Project had been signed off with the first payment released.
- 5.3. It was noted that an update meeting with the contractor had been scheduled and that a Postdoctoral Researcher had been appointed. Quarterly update meetings would be scheduled.
- 5.4. **PS** advised that the PID for the Trans-generational Research Project had been signed off with the first payment released and it was noted that desk based research had been carried out.
- 5.5. **PS** provided an update on the Effective Advocacy Services Research Project advising that one tender had been received and was unsuccessful as it did not meet the criteria.
- 5.6. **PS** advised that options for the appointment of a contractor to undertake the research had been discussed with and approved by SEUPB. It was noted that the Commission had the approval to proceed with a DAC to ensure ethical delivery of the project with appropriate resources.
- 5.7. A discussion regarding the skills, knowledge and resources required to deliver the project took place and **JT** asked for an update on contingency plans should a DAC not be progressed.
- 5.8. **PS** advised that the strongly preferred route was to engage a University to deliver the project as they have the required oversight structure (e.g. Ethical approval process, quality assurance etc.) and also greater credibility in the event of challenge. Recruitment of a new member of staff (Researcher) would not be an option due to costs and timeframes but there is the possibility of engaging a Researcher on a temporary basis, either through an agency or directly. **PS** highlighted her concerns regarding this in terms of the additional levels of assurance that would need to then be put in place to assure governance of the project.
- 5.9. **PS** advised that she would provide an update within 1 week.

#### **ACTION: PS**

- 5.10. **PS** advised that, following receipt of a request, she would be meeting with the VSS Programmes Manager.

### Policy

#### Omnibus Survey

- 5.11. It was noted that the Commission were continuing to use data from the Omnibus Survey.

#### Update on Legacy Consultation

- 5.12. **PS** advised that a high level consultation response had been submitted to the NIO on 05 October 2018 and that an Advice Paper was being progressed.
- 5.13. It was noted that an internal meeting to review the Advice Paper would take place on 24 October 2018 and it was agreed to circulate the latest draft to the Communications and Engagement Team for review prior to the meeting.

#### **ACTION: PS**

### **Update on Monitoring and Evaluation (VSS)**

- 5.14. **PS** advised that the Policy Officer had prepared a draft Quarter 1 report for review and that no policy recommendations had been made.
- 5.15. **PS** advised that verification data from the VSS in relation to Standards and Services delivered (Quarter 2) was still outstanding and a discussion followed.
- 5.16. A discussion took place regarding the format of data supplied by the VSS with **JT** seeking clarification on whether or not the data contained sufficient detail to enable further analysis where this was required.
- 5.17. It was noted that the Trilateral minutes would be circulated along with a request for outstanding data and items discussed at the Trilateral meeting.

#### **ACTION: PS**

- 5.18. Following her designation as Accounting Officer, **JT** requested that a clear rationale on the data requested and the purposes of this be prepared prior to the next Accountability meeting scheduled for 26 October 2018. It was also agreed to arrange a meeting to review this.

#### **ACTION: PS/Policy Officer**

- 5.19. Following a discussion, **JT** noted that data provided needs to show both the impact of Service delivery (e.g. CORE data) and data that shows the quality of service as defined by the Standards. This is to provide oversight of the adequacy and effectiveness of Services as set out in the Commission's legislative remit.
- 5.20. It was agreed to provide the Commissioner with a copy of the VSS Clinical and Corporate Governance Paper and a copy of the MOU with the VSS.

#### **ACTION: PS**

- 5.21. **JT** requested copies of papers for recent monthly meetings with the VSS.

#### **ACTION: SB**

### **Update on Standards**

- 5.22. As per notes at 4.4, **PS** advised that the Policy Officer was progressing a meeting with PHA and Healthy Cities representatives to discuss the amalgamation of both the PHA and Commission Standards to ease pressure on smaller dual funded organisations.
- 5.23. **JT** highlighted that there should indeed be integration of PHA standards, where these are applicable, but that there was no reason for this to impact or delay the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the Standards.
- 5.24. **PS** advised that the meeting would be to discuss the comparison report that PHA/Healthy Cities had suggested preparing as a result of perceived overlap in both sets of Standards and confirmed that there would be no delay in monitoring or reporting as a result of the meeting.
- 5.25. Following discussion, it was agreed to re-convene the Standards Working Group.

#### **ACTION: PS**

- 5.26. Following attendance at the SEUPB Victims and Survivors Workshop on 15 October 2018, **CG** provided an update from the meeting and key indicators and requirements were discussed and noted.
- 5.27. Following discussion, it was agreed to review the Letter of Offer and Project Business Plan.

#### **ACTION: PS**

### **Update on Pension**

- 5.28. **PS** provided an update on the Pension advice, advising that the VSS were sending data requested by the contractor regarding age profiles.
- 5.29. It was noted that update meetings with the NIO, the Executive Office and the VSS regarding the Pension advice had been deferred pending confirmation from the NIO on who within their team would take the lead on the project. It was agreed to follow up on this.

#### **ACTION: PS/SB**

### **Welfare Reform**

- 5.30. **PS** advised that the summary of the PIP Independent Review, evaluating the impact of recommendations had been circulated as requested.
- 5.31. It was noted that a meeting with the Permanent Secretary of DFC had been requested as per notes at 4.2.
- 5.32. **PS** advised that she would be meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights during a visit to Northern Ireland.
- 5.33. It was noted that Welfare Reform and its impact on victims and survivors would be discussed with individuals at a meeting on 17 October 2018.

### **Consultations**

- 5.34. As per 5.12, it was noted that the Commission had submitted a high level response to the NIO Consultation on Addressing the Legacy of the Past on 05 October 2018.
- 5.35. **PS** provided an update on a DOJ Consultation on proposals to extend the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme and noted that a launch would take place in 2019.

### **Co-Design**

- 5.36. It was noted that the next Co-Design meeting would take place on 26 October 2018.
- 5.37. It was noted that an introductory meeting with the US Consul General would also take place on 26 October 2018.

## **6. Communications and Engagement Update**

- 6.1. **TMC** provided an overview of the Stakeholder Engagement during July and August 2018 noting a decrease in activity relating to outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 6 and an increase in outcome 3. It was noted that this was due to engagement around the Legacy consultation.
- 6.2. **TMC** advised that the Communications and Engagement Team were undertaking a review of stakeholder grouping and would provide an update following its completion.
- 6.3. **JT** sought clarification on engagement during July. **TMC** advised that July's focus had been on planning with engagement taking place predominantly in August 2018.
- 6.4. It was noted that figures would be updated following completion of any outstanding Post Engagement Forms.
- 6.5. **TMC** provided an overview of Website traffic for July and August 2018, noting an increase in traffic during this period.
- 6.6. **TMC** highlighted that this was impressive as the Commission had carried out core work in addition to substantial engagement on the Legacy consultation and noted that this had taken place during the summer holiday period.
- 6.7. **JT** asked for clarification on direct and organic origins and **TMC** provided an overview.
- 6.8. **TMC** highlighted the popularity of the Commission's Facebook page, noting that this was currently an untapped resource.
- 6.9. **JT** asked for an update on whether or not duration spent on the Commission's website had increased.
- 6.10. **TMC** advised that she would request an analysis of this from the Communications and Engagement Officer and noted that the average time on the website was 2 minutes.

### **ACTION: TMC**

- 6.11. **TMC** advised that the most popular page during this time was 'understanding legacy' and noted that an increase in time spent would be expected due to the volume of information.

- 6.12. **TMC** advised that social media activity had decreased during the reporting period due to staff undertaking and facilitating engagement relating to the NIO Consultation on Addressing the Legacy of the Past.
- 6.13. **TMC** noted that communications planning meetings across the team to proactively plan social media activity would be reinstated now that the Consultation had closed.
- 6.14. **CG** noted that social media mentions had significantly increased during the reporting period. **TMC** acknowledged this and noted its relation to media engagements carried out by the Commissioner.
- 6.15. **JT** requested that the narrative of a media request on 20 August 2018 be updated to show that it had been pulled by the organiser and not declined by the Commission.

**ACTION: TMC**

- 6.16. It was noted that figures for media activity during the reporting period would be reviewed following the completion of any outstanding Post Engagement Forms as per notes at 6.4.
- 6.17. **JT** thanked **TMC** for the update.

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

### **Performance Report**

#### **Risk Management**

- 7.1. The Corporate Risk Register to the end of Q2 was discussed with **JT** noting 3 risks with a Red rating and 4 with an Amber rating.
- 7.2. Risk 2 (VSF2) Recruitment: Balance of representativeness of Forum was discussed and it was noted that the risk remained Red. **JT** sought views on whether or not this was the correct rating.
- 7.3. The balance of representativeness at the most recent meeting on 12 October 2018 was noted.
- 7.4. **JT** acknowledged actions taken to mitigate the risk and noted the cohesive group and the quality of discussion.
- 7.5. **TMC** clarified that current membership stood at 20 and a discussion took place regarding attendance figures and the upcoming audit on Management of the Forum.
- 7.6. **TMC** advised that members had been asked to commit to 10 meetings per year and noted that a significant number of additional meetings had taken place to date.
- 7.7. **TMC** advised that the Commission also sought views from the Forum outside of formal Forum meetings and noted that this enabled a balanced and representative view to be captured.
- 7.8. It was agreed that attendance figures did not provide an accurate measure of the success and impact of the Forum.
- 7.9. A discussion took place regarding the replenishment of a Panel to Sustain Forum Membership with **TMC** noting that conditions of appointment would be reviewed and that legal advice would be sought.
- 7.10. **JT** agreed that there were external risks in relation to the Forum due to its politically sensitive nature and the external environment and noted that the summary of the risk did not fully reflect this, or the mitigating actions that had already been taken. It was agreed to review and update this risk.

**ACTION: TMC**

- 7.11. It was agreed that the RAG status of Risk 5 (P1) Standards - Inability of CVS to monitor, evaluate and measure the Impact of the Standards would remain Red as the Commission

were still unable to monitor the level of adherence to Standards due to data not being provided.

- 7.12. It was noted that this risk had been elevated to Red at the September Board meeting and the Commission's position remained unchanged.
- 7.13. For further reference, see notes at 5.15 – 5.21.
- 7.14. Risk 6 Inability to develop a Corporate Plan and plan activity due to the lack of a Victims Strategy post September 2019 was discussed with **CG** noting that there was approximately 10 months remaining of the current Strategy and the potential impact of having no Ministers to approve or implement a new Strategy.
- 7.15. The importance of the Strategy and how it underpins the Commission's work and governs the existence of the organisation was discussed and noted by the Board.
- 7.16. It was noted that a Corporate Planning Day had been scheduled for 30 November 2018 in line with timeframes for the development of the Commission's Corporate Plan and would be impacted by the absence of a Strategy.
- 7.17. A discussion took place regarding the Secretary of States' public appointments bill and interim arrangements in the absence of Ministers.
- 7.18. A discussion regarding the Review of the Strategy took place. It was agreed to seek clarification on who would oversee the Research in relation to this at the next Accountability meeting on 26 October 2018.

#### **ACTION: JT/CG**

- 7.19. It was noted that this risk would be kept under review with the potential for it to be escalated to Red at the end of Quarter 3 until clarification on interim arrangements could be provided or a new Strategy implemented.
- 7.20. Risk 7 Inability to maintain Governance Framework and attain performance targets due to vacancy in role of Chief Executive Officer was discussed. It was noted that this remained Amber due to actions taken to mitigate the risk including the designation of the Accounting Officer role to **JT** and the appointment of an Interim Secretary to the Commission.
- 7.21. It was noted that the recruitment competition had commenced and that the vacancy was now live. It was also noted that the transition plan had been discussed and agreed with the Executive Office and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and that an interim Chief Executive would take up post on 22 October 2018.
- 7.22. Risk 4 (R1) Peace IV Research Programme – Inability to procure contractor for Advocacy research project was noted as a Red risk. See notes at 5.5 – 5.9.

#### **Outcome Delivery Plan (ODP) 2018/19**

- 7.23. The draft Outcome Delivery Plan 2018/19, updated to the end of Q2, was noted.
- 7.24. **JT** noted that there were 2 key actions with a Red Rag status. These were 3.4. Advocacy Research Project and 5.2. Standards.
- 7.25. 3.4. Advocacy Research Project was reviewed with **JT** noting the significant risk and contingency plans as per notes at 5.5. – 5.9 and 5.2. Standards was noted as per 5.14. – 5.21.

#### **Freedom of Information**

- 7.26. No Freedom of Information requests were received in the reporting period.

#### **Complaints**

- 7.27. No complaints were received in the reporting period.
- 7.28. It was noted that the Commission were copied into correspondence relating to a complaint against another organisation and that this was being reviewed.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

- 7.29. It was noted that there had been no exceptional gifts or hospitality received or provided in last quarter.

### **Fraud**

- 7.30. There were no instances of Fraud reported during the last quarter.

### **Data Breaches**

- 7.31. In August/September 2018 there were 2 incidents which were considered under the Data Breach Management Procedure. Both incidents were due to human error, and were quickly contained.
- 7.32. It was noted that Data Protection would be discussed at the next staff briefing and the pressing need for Equipment was noted.
- 7.33. **CG** advised that the Executive Office were to be notified of any breaches.

## **8. Corporate Services Update**

### **Annual Report and Accounts**

- 8.1. **CG** advised that the NIAO fieldwork commenced on 7 September and was completed on 14 September 2018.
- 8.2. **CG** advised that the Commission had received the Report to those Charged with Governance and noted 1 recommendation.
- 8.3. **CG** advised that the Annual Report and Accounts had been tabled at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meeting on 11 October 2018 and had been laid at the Audit office on 12 October 2018. **CG** advised that the Annual Report and Accounts would be laid with the Assembly by 19 October 2018.
- 8.4. **JT** acknowledged the significant work in the production of the Annual Report and Accounts and noted the achievement.

### **Budget**

- 8.5. **CG** provided an update on the Budget advising that prior to the resignation of the Secretary to the Commission, there had been concern regarding a projected overspend, however there would now be a £29,990 underspend as a result of the resignation. It was noted that this saving would be reallocated and used against the cost of interim arrangements.
- 8.6. **CG** noted that Salary savings had been as a result of the resignation of the Secretary to the Commission.
- 8.7. It was noted that the first draft of the Parliamentary Review had been submitted with minor comments returned. Professional photos for the article had also been taken and were noted.
- 8.8. An increase in expenditure on the Communications contract was highlighted and it was noted that this was as a result of the NIO Consultation on Addressing the Legacy of the Past.
- 8.9. A discussion took place regarding the January Monitoring Round.

- 8.10. **CG** corrected an administrative error in the Corporate Services Board Update noting that the Commission's bid for additional funding for capital expenditure in the October Monitoring Round had not been rejected but noted that funds may not be available until January 2019.

#### **Business Cases and Procurement**

- 8.11. **CG** noted that addition of the Pension Research Project, the Replenishment of a Panel to Sustain Victims and Survivors Forum Membership and Recruitment to fill the vacancy of Chief Executive.
- 8.12. It was noted that all PPE's were currently up to date.

#### **Audit**

- 8.13. **CG** noted receipt of the Report to those charged with Governance.
- 8.14. A discussion took place regarding Terms of Reference and indicative dates for upcoming fieldwork.
- 8.15. It was noted that **CG** and **JT** would meet with ASM following the re-designation of the role of the Accounting Officer to **JT** as a result of the resignation of the Secretary to the Commission.

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

- 8.16. It was noted that a meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee took place on 11 October 2018.

#### **Policies for approval**

- 8.17. *Protocol for Approval of Media Statements* – **TMC** provided an overview of amendments as requested at the September 2018 Board meeting.
- 8.18. **JT** requested that the Proforma for media requests be added as an annexe to the Protocol.
- 8.19. Subject to the inclusion of the Proforma, the Protocol for Approval of Media Statements was approved.
- 8.20. *Records on the Move* – **CG** provided an overview of the policy. **JT** noted her concern as to whether or not the policy could be fully implemented at present and requested that the policy be reviewed, updated and returned to the next Board meeting for approval.

#### **ACTION: CG**

- 8.21. *Equality and Disability Action Plans* – Due to time constraints, these items were deferred to the November 2018 Board meeting.

#### **ACTION: SB**

- 8.22. Following discussion, the *GDPR Action Plan* and *Archiving and Storage Protocol* were approved. It was noted that this was subject to confirmation from **TMC** that the Communications and Engagement Team could meet deadlines for compliance.

#### **ACTION: TMC**

### **9. Research Projects Governance Paper**

- 9.1. **CG** provided an overview of updates to the paper advising that changes requested by the Secretary to the Commission had been incorporated and the Budget and Letter of Offer Annexed.



- 9.2. It was noted that the Research Projects Governance Paper had been tabled at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting in November 2017.
- 9.3. Following discussion, the Board approved the Research Projects Governance Paper.

## **10. Legacy Policy Advice Paper**

- 10.1. **PS** advised that a draft Advice Paper had been prepared and would be reviewed at an internal meeting on 24 October 2018 as per 5.13.
- 10.2. **PS** advised that meetings with key stakeholders to update them on the Advice Paper were being progressed during October and November.
- 10.3. The timeframe for submission of the Advice Paper to the Secretary of State was discussed.
- 10.4. Options for discussing the Advice Paper with the Forum, prior to its submission were discussed.

## **11.AOB**

- 11.1. None noted.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 8/11/18