



## BOARD MEETING 7 July 2020 @ 2.00PM

### PRESENT:

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

### IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Sloan ( <b>AS</b> )	Chief Executive Officer
Leah McDonnell ( <b>LMD</b> )	Research and Policy Officer
Stephen Moore ( <b>SM</b> )	Head of Corporate Services
Alana Fisher ( <b>AF</b> )	Communications and Engagement Officer

Marie Neill (**MN**) - minutes

### 1. Introduction and Apologies

- 1.1 **JT** welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were noted from Neil Foster and Peter Mann
- 1.3 It was noted that **LMD** would be in attendance to represent Research and Policy team.

### 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 21 April 2020 and 3 June 2020 were approved.

### 4. Action Notes

- 4.1. *AP3 – Submit JEGs questionnaires to NICS Grading Unit for consideration (G7 & DP posts)/send JD for DP post to NF and PM – It was noted that this action was now complete as the G7 post had been submitted and agreed by NICS Grading Unit and the DP post had been submitted for review and CVS were awaiting the outcome.*
- 4.2. *AP6 – CVS to formally write to TEO, SEUPB and VSS in order to provide the project board with an update on project plans and to discuss interim reports – It was noted a letter had been drafted for issue to lead partner and project board, pending approval by JT.*

#### ACTION – NF/PM

- 4.3. *AP7 – Liaise with TEO regarding alignment and any revised timeline on policy advice and research projects and updated RPD Team Risk Register accordingly – It was noted that a letter had been issued to TEO and was awaiting response. AS to follow up with TEO.*

## **ACTION – AS**

- 4.4. *AP8 – Website update/redevelopment – make arrangements for a workshop with all staff to take place and bring a presentation to the next board meeting – It was agreed that following the workshop with all staff on 12 June 2020 a project team would be formed in order to progress the business case and procurement.*

## **ACTION – AF**

- 4.5. *AP9 – Provide update on submission of VASPA advice re additional report containing NICOLA dataset – It was noted that further information had been received and a report was being finalised for submission.*

## **ACTION – NF**

- 4.6. *AP11 – Provide draft Communications Strategy for discussion at next board meeting – It was noted that the agreed final draft paper would be ready for presentation at the board meeting on 5 August 2020.*

## **ACTION – Nicky Cahill**

- 4.7. *AP12 – Enquire if surplus PEACE IV funding can be used for events and dissemination – It was noted that this action was ongoing.*

## **ACTION - NF**

## **5. Research and Policy Development**

### **Research - Update on Research projects funded by Peace IV**

- 5.1. The Peace IV Highlight Report was noted.
- 5.2. **AS** advised that following an unsuccessful attempt to appoint the initial preferred candidate to the position of Research Manager for the Needs Review Project, CVS had again approached a number of agencies and have identified another preferred candidate for this position. It was noted that Orla Drummond had commenced work on this project on 6 July 2020 for a period of one year.
- 5.3. It was noted that CVS had informed VSS as Lead Partner of the latest developments in the appointment of the Research Manager.
- 5.4. It was anticipated that an interim report would be due in September 2020.

### **Policy - Update on Policy Advice re the Victims and Survivors Strategy 2009-2019**

- 5.5. It was noted that the survey to inform the Commissioner's advice had closed on 10 June 2020 and a total of 255 completed surveys had been returned. A summary of the high level findings had been provided to TEO.

- 5.6. **AS** advised that following a review of the findings by RPD a summary report had been submitted to TEO on 7 July 2020.
- 5.7. **JT** acknowledged thanks to RPD team for their contribution to the successful completion of the survey and prompt review in order to compile the interim findings paper.
- 5.8. **AF** requested to be kept informed of any updated postcode or breakdown information following completion of the survey.

#### **ACTION – NF/PM**

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

- 5.9. It was noted that the last trilateral meeting took place on 10 June 2020.
- 5.10. **LMD** advised that a verbal update was provided by VSS due to operational pressures on organisations with Covid-19.
- 5.11. It was noted that RPD would be requesting further information in order to draft the latest Quarterly Review Report.
- 5.12. It was noted that **AS** would follow up with TEO confirmation of clearance of all quarterly review reports in order to be uploaded to CVS website.

#### **ACTION - AS**

##### **Update on Monitoring of Standards**

- 5.13. It was noted that the draft reporting schedule had been discussed with the VSS (through the Commissioner's monthly meeting) and would be taken forward at next trilateral meeting.

#### **ACTION – NF/PM**

##### **Update on VASPA Advice**

- 5.14. It was noted that a second report containing analysis of the NICOLA dataset would be submitted as soon available.

#### **ACTION – NF**

- 5.15. It was noted that the Commission had issued an open letter to the Prime Minister and NI Executive calling on them to fulfil their legal obligation to begin implementation of the Victims and Survivors Payments Scheme.

##### **Other issues to note**

- 5.16 It was noted that VSS had developed a new pro forma which was to be used by RPD when submitting information requests for specific data.

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

- 6.1. The Communications and Engagement Team updated report for May activity was noted.
- 6.2. It was noted that there continued to be a significant increase in engagement activity around Forum Replenishment, the new Victims and Survivors Strategy and the Victims and Survivors Payment Scheme.
- 6.3. It was noted that the bid which had been submitted in the June monitoring round for the digital strategy and website redevelopment had been successful and work could commence

in order to progress these projects. Business cases for the website redevelopment and digital campaign would be drafted for approval by TEO in order to proceed with procurement.

#### **ACTION – AF & NC**

### **7. Forum Replenishment Update**

- 7.1. The Forum Digital Replenishment Campaign project plan was noted. **AS** advised that draft project plan had been shared with TEO.
- 7.2. It was noted a draft Communications Strategy was currently under review by **JT** and **AS**. It was agreed that the final draft would be ready for presentation and discussion at the next Board meeting.

#### **ACTION – Nicky Cahill**

### **8. Accounting Officer Update**

#### **Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20**

- 8.1. **SM** presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20, noting an under spend of 0.53% (within tolerance) or £4,754 was being reported.
- 8.2. The draft Annual Report and Accounts were approved subject to minor changes and it was agreed that these would be presented to the ARAC on 8 July 2020.

#### **ACTION - SM**

#### **Monthly Management Accounts**

- 8.3. **AS** advised that the draft annual budget paper at 8.1 was to be disregarded in view of the recent confirmation from TEO of the Commission's budget allocation for 2020/21. It was agreed that the budget paper would be updated and management accounts for Q1 presentation at the next board meeting.

#### **ACTION – AS/SM**

- 8.4. **AS** advised that the bid of £159k submitted in the June 2020 monitoring round for the development of the website portal, Forum replenishment, population based survey, retention of agency staff and staff learning and development had formally approved by TEO.
- 8.5. **AS** advised that NIAO had issued a draft Audit Strategy which would be presented to ARAC on 8 July 2020.

#### **Risk Management**

- 8.6. The Commission's Corporate Risk Register containing 2 medium rated risk with amber status and 1 high rated risk with red status was reviewed and agreed.

### **Freedom of Information**

- 8.7. No FOI requests had been received since the last meeting.

### **Complaints**

- 8.8. No complaints had been received since the last meeting.

### **Subject Access Requests**

- 8.9. No Subject Access Requests had been received since the last meeting.

### **Gifts & Hospitality**

- 8.10. No exceptional gifts or hospitality had been received or provided since the last meeting.

### **Fraud**

- 8.11. No instances of fraud had been reported since the last meeting.

### **Data Breaches**

- 8.12. No data breaches had been reported since the last meeting.

### **Guidance Received**

- 8.13. No guidance had been received since the last meeting.

## **9. Corporate Services Update**

### **Outcome Delivery Plan 2020/21**

- 9.1. It was noted that the Outcome Delivery Plan would be updated as confirmation of the 2020/21 budget had been received by TEO.

**ACTION – SM**

### **Outcome Delivery Plan 2019/20**

- 9.2. It was noted that the outcome of Key Action 6.10 was to be reviewed and updated.

**ACTION - SM**

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

- 9.3. The update on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 9.4. The updated Contracts Register was noted.
- 9.5. It was noted that it had been agreed to extend the current contract for Communications Services which was due to end on 31 March 2020, until 31 July 2020, following discussions with CPD and implications around Covid-19.
- 9.6. **SM** advised that the tender for a new Communications Services contract had been advertised via the CPD eTenders website on 2 July 2020 and following evaluation the new contract would be awarded from 1 August 2020 until 31 March 2022.

### **Audit**

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

- 9.8. **SM** highlighted the audit recommendation that from Q3 2020/21 Quarterly Assurance Reports were to be prepared by Unit Heads and sent to the Accounting Officer to support overall Assurance Report.
- 9.9. It was noted that that NIAO had issued a draft Audit Strategy which would be presented to ARAC on 8 July 2020.
- 9.10. It was noted that Cavanagh Kelly had issued drafts of the Internal Audit Charter, Internal Audit Strategy 2020-23 and Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 and these would be considered at ARAC on 8 July 2020.

#### **Policies under Review**

- 9.11. The policy review schedule was noted.
- 9.12. **AS** advised that the Whistleblowing policy and the Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy was to be reviewed in line with TEO guidance.

#### **ACTION - MN**

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

- 9.11. It was noted the next meeting of ARAC would take place on 8 July 2020.

#### **Recruitment and Reorganisation Project**

- 9.12. The Recruitment and Reorganisation project plan was noted and would be updated in view of recent confirmation of successful monitoring round bid and budget allocation for 2020/21.
- 9.13. **AS** advised that following recent discussions with TEO business cases were to be drafted and submitted for approval in relation to any posts which were to be re-graded for approval by the Departmental Permanent Secretary.

#### **ACTION – SM**

- 9.14. It was noted that advice had been received from NIPSA in relation to the re-grading of posts and this had been forwarded to TEO.

#### **File Retention & Disposals**

- 9.15. The File Retention & Disposals project plan was reviewed and noted.

#### **GDPR Action Plan**

- 9.16. The GDPR Action plan was reviewed and noted. **SM** advised that updates had been made following recommendations highlighted by internal audit in the Information Management review. The IT team in ECNI were in the progress of installing a safe send option for emails on any desktop or devices used by commission staff.
- 9.17. It was agreed that NICS guidance and advice re IT security and protection of information would be re-circulated to all staff.

#### **ACTION – MN**

## 10. Covid-19 Review

- 10.1. It was discussed and agreed in accordance with government guidance that the commission staff would continue to work from home and that this would be kept under review. Any advice or guidance received in relation to remote working arrangements would be issued to staff. **SM** would produce a review paper for the next Board meeting.

**ACTION - SM**

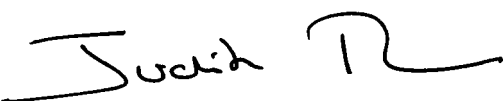
## 11. AOB

- 11.1. The draft Protocol for Zoom Videoconferencing facilities was reviewed and agreed

## 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 It was agreed that the next board meeting would take place on 5 August 2020.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 11/8/2020