



BOARD MEETING

5 August 2020 @ 2.30PM

PRESENT:

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Andrew Sloan (AS)	Chief Executive Officer
Peter Mann (PM)	Head of Research and Policy Development
Stephen Moore (SM)	Head of Corporate Services
Alana Fisher (AF)	Communications and Engagement Officer
Nicky Cahill (NC)	Forum Replenishment Officer

Marie Neill (**MN**) - minutes

1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1 **JT** welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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 7 July 2020 were approved.

4. Action Notes

- 4.1. *AP2 – 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 issued to lead partner and project board.*
- 4.2. *AP3 – 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 a response had been received.*
- 4.3. *AP4 – 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 noted that a business case was being drafted for review and progress would be reported at the next board meeting.*

ACTION – AF

- 4.4. *AP5 – Provide update on submission of VASPA advice re additional report containing NICOLA dataset – It was noted that this report did not form part of the original contract and a report was being finalised for submission.*

ACTION – NF

- 4.5. *AP6 – 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 27 August 2020.*

ACTION – NC

- 4.6. *AP7 – Enquire if surplus PEACE IV funding can be used for events and dissemination – It was noted that confirmation had been received and this action was complete.*

5. Research and Policy Development

Research - Update on Research projects funded by Peace IV

- 5.1. The Peace IV Highlight Report was noted. **PM** advised that future board reports would include updates and progress on the Needs Review Project.

ACTION – PM/NF

- 5.2. A discussion took place around how the project management, governance and oversight of the Research Advisory Committee would be managed after the Commissioner's appointment comes to an end on 31 August 2020. It was agreed that an internal follow up meeting would take place and an update be provided at the next board meeting.

ACTION – PM/NF

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

- 5.3. It was noted that the policy advice to inform the new Victims and Survivors Strategy was due for submission week commencing 12 October 2020.
- 5.4. **PM** highlighted that the work on the policy advice was on track for submission however further guidance would be sought from TEO in relation to interim arrangements when the Commissioner's appointment comes to an end on 31 August 2020.

Update on Monitoring and Evaluation (VSS)

- 5.5. It was noted that the quarterly review reports would be discussed at the next monthly meeting with **JT**, **AS** and the CEO of VSS.

ACTION – JT/AS

Update on Monitoring of Standards

- 5.6. 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

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

ACTION – NF

Other issues to note

- 5.9. It was noted that RPD were currently drafting a response to DOJ's consultation on proposals to amend the legislation governing the retention of DNA and fingerprints. A draft response would be available week commencing 10 August with a view to submit on 19 August 2020.
- 5.10. It was noted that RSM had contacted the Commission regarding updates on the Mid Term Review recommendations.
- 5.11. It was agreed that **JT** and **AS** would contact TEO in order to raise possible implications around CVS hosting the survey.

ACTION – JT/AS

- 5.12. It was noted that Leah McDonnell would be leaving the commission on 7 August 2020 to begin a new placement. **JT** noted thanks to Leah for her hard work and commitment in particular to the successful response and findings from the survey to inform policy advice for the new strategy. **PM** highlighted the impact this would have on resources and advised that work requests had been issued to the agency in order to have a new person in place as soon as possible.

ACTION – NF/PM

6. Communications and Engagement Team Update

- 6.1. The Communications and Engagement Team updated report for June activity was noted.

7. Forum Replenishment Update

- 7.1. It was noted that the Forum Digital Replenishment Campaign project plan would be updated for approval at the next board meeting.

ACTION – NC

- 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 approval at the next Board meeting.

ACTION – NC

- 7.3. It was agreed that the Forum work plan for 2020-21 would be reviewed for approval at the next board meeting.

ACTION - AF

8. Accounting Officer Update

Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20

- 8.1. It was noted that the audit file for NIAO was being prepared in anticipation of fieldwork commencing in September 2020.

Monthly Management Accounts

- 8.2. **AS** presented the management accounts for April to June 2020 and forecast to 31 March 2021.

Risk Management

- 8.3. The Commission's Corporate Risk Register containing 2 medium rated risk with amber status and 1 high rated risk with red status was noted.
- 8.4. It was agreed that a review of the Corporate Risk Register would take place in light of the Commissioner's appointment coming to an end on 31 August 2020 and the current situation around the uncertainty as to what any interim arrangements would be.

ACTION – AS/SM

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. DAO (DoF) 08/20 – Continued payment of grants during the period of the Covid19 response was noted.
- 8.14. The Non-Industrial Pay Bulletin was noted and **AS** advised that preparations were underway in order to progress the award of the pay remit for August 2019.

9. Corporate Services Update

Outcome Delivery Plan 2020/21

- 9.1. It was noted the Outcome Delivery Plan would be reviewed and updated as necessary, following the recent announcement in relation to the Commissioner's re-appointment. The draft document would be presented at the next board meeting.

ACTION – SM

Outcome Delivery Plan 2019/20

- 9.2. It was noted that further minor updates to the Outcome Delivery Plan would be made and brought back to the next board meeting for formal approval and forward to TEO.

ACTION - SM

Corporate Plan 2020-23

- 9.3. It was noted the Corporate Plan would be reviewed and updated as necessary, following the recent announcement in relation to the Commissioner's re-appointment. The draft document would be presented at the next board meeting

ACTION - SM

Update on Business Cases and Procurement

- 9.4. The update on Business Cases, Procurement and Post Project Evaluations was noted.
- 9.5. The updated Contracts Register was noted.
- 9.6. **SM** advised that the tender for a new Communications Services contract had closed and following an evaluation by the panel a new contract would be awarded.

Audit

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

Policies under Review

- 9.8. The policy review schedule was noted.
- 9.9. It was noted 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 4 November 2020.

Recruitment and Reorganisation Project

9.12. The Recruitment and Reorganisation project plan was noted.

9.13. 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

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

9.15. **SM** advised that further communication had been issued to PRONI and an update would be provided at the next board meeting.

GDPR Action Plan

9.16. The GDPR Action plan was reviewed and noted.

10. Covid-19 Review

10.1. **AS** advised that he attended a meeting with Chief Executives from the other organisations in Equality House. Discussion took place around the approach which would be taken in due course for a possible return to the office.

10.2. The message remains the same 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.

11. AOB

11.1. It was noted that the Equality Commission would be undertaking a recruitment process in order to employ a number of staff following the announcement of additional statutory responsibilities.


11.2. Condolences were noted for the Chair of the Community Relations Council following the sad news of the recent passing of his son.

11.3. It was agreed that preparations would begin in order to make arrangements for outgoing communications around the end of the Commissioners appointment.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

12.1 It was agreed that the next board meeting would take place on 27 August 2020.

NAME: **Judith Thompson**

SIGNED: 

DATE: 28/08/20