

DEPARTMENTAL BOARD MEETING
- Minutes -
Wednesday 22 February 2017
Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast

Present: Nick Perry (Permanent Secretary)
Clarke Black (Independent Board Member)
Lianne Patterson (Director, Justice Delivery)
David Lavery (Director, Access to Justice)
Anthony Harbinson (Director, Safer Communities)
Ronnie Armour (Director, Reducing Offending)

In Attendance: Maria Watson (Secretary)

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

ACTION

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the February meeting. No apologies were noted.
- 1.2 No conflicts of interest were declared.
- 1.3 The Board agreed the January minutes without amendment.

**Board Secretary to place
January minutes on
Departmental website.**

Critical Issues

- 2.1 The Chair briefed members on political developments. The overriding concern remains around the budget position and DoF are considering how allocations can be made. Departmental officials will meet with ALBs to brief them on the position following the election.

DOJ OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Business Plan/Risk Register Impact Analysis

- 2.2 The Board discussed paper BP(17)5 which provided an analysis of how business delivery targets would be impacted by the dissolution of the Assembly. The paper highlighted a small increase in the targets assigned a red RAG status however the Board welcomed confirmation that a considerable volume of the deliverables would not be affected.

Resourcing

- 2.3 The Director of Justice Delivery briefed members on the current uncertainty around the financial position, due to the political situation. The Director presented paper BP(17)14 which explained that, until an administration is in place, DoF have provided an indicative capital control total for each Department. The paper sought Board approval for the proposed allocation of available capital to enable business critical projects to proceed. The Board approved the content of the paper and the proposed allocations.

STRATEGY

NICS HR Project Presentation

- 3.1 Mark Goodfellow and Judith Black from NICSHR and Jacqui Wallace from DOJHR attended the meeting to deliver a presentation [BP(17)6] on the NICSHR project. The presentation detailed the project progression to date and outlined the new structure and operating arrangements from 3 April 2017.
- 3.2 A discussion followed the presentation which raised issues including the need to better educate line managers about their responsibilities, the provision of management information and the challenge of transformation over the next three years. Mark Goodfellow reassured the Board that their focus was on business continuity from day one and the aim was that customers would see little change in the quality of HR service offered.
- 3.3 The Board thanked Mark, Judith and Jacqui for attending the meeting and noted that Mark, as the Strategic HR Business Partner for DOJ, would be attending the DOJ Board meetings from April onwards.

GOVERNANCE

Corporate Governance Framework

- 4.1 The Director of Justice Delivery presented paper BP(17)7 which briefed members about ongoing work to refresh the “Corporate Governance Framework” for the Department.
- 4.2 The paper was accompanied by an updated CG manual, which had been amended to take account of PfG and included and revised terms of reference for the Departmental Board, SRC, IROC and DARC. The paper noted that work was underway to develop two additional documents; a manual on financial delegations and authorities and a database for governance of Agencies and ALBs.
- 4.3. The Board approved the revised framework and noted the ongoing development work.

Core Performance Management Report/Compliance Update

- 4.4 Derek Anderson, Head of Internal Audit, attended the meeting to present paper BP(17)8 which reported on an Internal Audit review of performance management within the Department. The focus for the review had been on the risk management, control and governance arrangements established by management over performance management.
- 4.5 The Head of Internal Audit explained that, while the review had resulted in an opinion of limited assurance, this was a snapshot at a particular time and he is aware that the figures have improved considerably in the interim period.
- 4.6 The Board expressed disappointment at the findings and noted that, while HR Connect does present some system complications, the majority of issues are a result of human error. It was acknowledged that the new monthly HR business intelligence report provided to managers highlights non-compliance which should be followed up promptly by managers.
- 4.7 The Board then considered paper BP(17)9 which provided an update on the current performance management compliance rates across

the Department. The Chair expressed concern that the rates continue to fall below expectation and asked that Directors follow this up urgently with their management teams.

- 4.8 The Board agreed that the target for completion of reports will be revised to “90% of reports completed by 30 April 2017” and compliance rates will be reviewed at the May Board meeting. Internal Audit will conduct a follow up review during the 2017/18 reporting year and will bring their findings back to the Board.

Sick Absence

- 4.9 The Board discussed paper BP(17)10 which outlined the headline sick absence position for January, as the detailed data was not yet available from NISRA.

Asset Management Plan

- 4.10 The Board noted paper BP(17)11 and approved the DOJ Asset Management Plan for 2016/17.

Workforce Planning Statistics

- 4.11 Paper BP(17)12 provided the Board with the staff in post figures for the Department at 1 January 2017 and staff projections across business areas for the next 3 years. The Chair noted that Prison Grade staff had not been included in the management information and asked if this could be made available for future papers.
- 4.12 Board members discussed the analysis on projected variances and acknowledged that any increase in workforce, although justified, would be difficult to fund within the current financial climate.

COMMUNICATION

Staff Engagement Forum

- 5.1 The Chair invited the Director of Justice Delivery (as Chair of the Staff Engagement Forum) to update board members on their recent meeting.
- 5.2 The Forum held their second formal business meeting on 8 February. The focus of the meeting was taking feedback from members following consultations with staff from their business areas.

5.3 The Director of Justice Delivery noted that it was a lengthy session which drew out a wide range of issues and work needed to be undertaken over the next few weeks to distil this into a formal work plan. Once agreed by forum members, the plan will be shared with the SCS Forum and then brought back to the board for endorsement before implementation.

5.4 The Chair thanked the Director of Justice Delivery for her update, noting the importance of the work she was taking forward on behalf of the Board.

Board Brief

5.5 The Board agreed the draft Board Brief [BP(17)13] with small amendments.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Date of Next Meeting

6.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 28 March 2017 at 11.00 in Locard Building, Seapark.