

MINUTES

Board Meeting

Tuesday 22 January 2020 at 09.30

Attendees: Paul Andrews
Tom Burgess
Nuala McAuley
Allen McCartney
Mandy McKay
Stephen Martin
Carolyn McDermott, (Items 20/03)

Secretariat: Joan McShane

LSA/20/01 Apologies & Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

- 01.01 Apologies were received from Lesley Chambers.
- 01.02 No conflicts, other than those previously declared were noted.

LSA/20/02 Governance

- 02.01 Minutes of December Board were agreed.
- 02.02 Progress Against Action Points – Discussion took place in relation to Action LSA/A/100 it was noted an analysis was being undertaken and the Board would be informed on the outcome of the review. It was agreed LSA/A101 could be closed. LSA/A/102 and LSA/A/103 to be reviewed and brought back to the February 2020 Board meeting. In respect of LSA/A/105, it was confirmed that the training budget would be revised and line of business

training would be used for training relating to post LAMS work e.g. Qlik training.

LSA/1/100 – Commission a review of increase in volume of bills

LSA/A/102 – PAR – Action Plan to be shared at the February meeting

LSA/A/103 – Corporate Risk 7 – Stakeholder Engagement to be widened to include LAMS

LSA/A/105 – Line of business training to be agreed and prioritised.

02.03 The Board noted the appointment of Naomi Long as the new Justice Minister Naomi Long and look forward to working with the Minister. There was a wide ranging discussion on potential priorities which would impact on the LSA.

02.04 The Board welcomed the arrangements to include answers to Assembly Question in future Board papers.

02.05 The Board were informed that there were plans for Peter May to attend a future meeting.

LSA/A/106 – The date that Peter May is scheduled to attend to be determined

Carolyn McDermott joined the meeting at 10.10am

LSA/20/03 Shared Service Reporting – Finance and Payments

03.01 Carolyn McDermott provided a synopsis of the FSD report.

03.02 It was confirmed that the work for the interim 9 month accounts was progressing, the first meeting with the Department had taken place and the year-end position would continue to be monitored.

03.03 There was a discussion on file closure in the context of provisions. It was noted that there would be an interim approach to identify cases which should be

deemed as closed for the year end and then a programme to close cases in the new financial year.

- 03.04 It was noted that Registration volume of claims was higher than forecast. The Board welcomed the comparative analysis which will be conducted on January's payments. The results of the analysis will be reported to the Board when completed.

Carolyn McDermott left the meeting at 10.35am

LSA 20/04 Agency Reports

- 04.01 The Board noted the Civil Legal Services Highlight Report. It was reported that KPI's were reflective of the figures up to end of December / early January and the Board welcomed the improvement. The Board welcomed work in hand to address some resourcing issues.
- 04.02 The Board welcomed the initiative to address outstanding Messages on LAMS noting that the number of outstanding Messages had greatly reduced. It was reported that there was active engagement with the stakeholders to diminish the need for messages and that the quicker turnaround in dealing with the cases on the system would result in a further reduction.
- 04.03 There was a discussion on the review of internal processes for adjudication and the movement of work through the system to appeal.
- 04.04 The Board expressed their disappointment that a representative from HR had been unable to attending the meeting to discuss filling posts. The Board expressed the hope that a representative from HR would be able to attend the February meeting to update on filling vacant posts.
- 04.05 The Board noted the Corporate Services Highlight Report. The Board welcomed the planned monthly interface meetings with HR and noted that the first meeting would also include the Employee Relations HR partner. The Board were advised that there was additional resource required to complete a number of Projects. It was confirmed that substantive head count numbers would not increase but that business cases would be developed for specific projects time bounded projects.

- 04.06 The Board noted that the Head of Fraud & Error (Grade 7) had secured a Brexit post. It was confirmed that the post holder had agreed to return on a part time basis for a few weeks in order to complete a handover. The Board raised concerns that Head of Fraud would be vacant and they were advised that the job description had been revised and was with the JEGS team for evaluation. It was confirmed that there were ongoing discussions on the best way to fill the vacancy.
- 04.07 The Board received a briefing on steps being taken to fill posts within the Agency and to stabilise the staffing position. It was agreed that maximising the skillset through training and development was an ideal vision for the future of the organisation.
- 04.08 An update was provided on the building work scheduled to accommodate the Compensation Agency being relocated to Waterfront Plaza.
- 04.09 The Board noted the Dashboard report.
- 04.10 The Fraud and Error Report was discussed. The Board were advised of the initiatives that were being put in place to identify and reduce deemed errors such as non-responses to queries, weekly statistical information to review the non-responses, interventions, calculations for travel and mileage and ICOS anomalies. The Taxing Master certifications, the lack of a breakdown in the calculations and audit implications were discussed. It was reported that engagement with Courts and Tribunals had been helpful. The Board noted that the Fraud and Error report will be considered by the Legal Aid Strategy Group meeting in February.

LSA/20/05 Reform Initiatives

- 05.01 Stephen Martin provided an update in respect of the EAJD Reform Briefing Paper. It was reported that the focus had changed from Criminal Justice to consideration of Problem Solving Courts and Mental Health Courts as well as other possibilities. It was reported that the Board would be kept updated with progress.
- 05.02 The Board noted the KPI Report.

LSA/20/06 Governance and Corporate Risk

- 06.01 The FOI/DPA monitoring report was noted.
- 06.02 The Security Incidents Report was noted.
- 06.03 It was agreed that Corporate Risk Register would be discussed in full at the Business Planning meeting on 23 January 2020. It was reported that in relation to Risk No 6 – Information Security that there had been an attempted unsuccessful hack on the NICS system. It was agreed that in relation to No 7 Stakeholder Engagement new and more positive and different types of engagement would be discussed and developed without having the sole focus on LAMS.
- 06.04 The Business Planning meeting scheduled for 23 January was discussed. A short discussion took place in relation to the Business Plan and the benefits to the Heads of Branch which included a greater understanding of their roles in the process and how they fed into the overall goals and objectives. It was noted that the a Statement of Assurance was in development and the managers would be responsible for completing and signing off on the Stewardship Statements which would be presented to the Board.

LSA/20/07 AOB

- 07.01 Board discussed Values & Behaviours and no concerns were noted.
- 07.02 It was agreed that the calendar of meetings up to September 2020 would be circulated with the Board. For the record it was noted that it had been agreed that the Board members tenure would be extended until September 2020 and that letters of extension had issued.

LSA/A/107 – The calendar of meeting dates up to September 2020 to be circulated with the Board

Meeting ended at 12.15 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday 18 February 2020 at 09.30am