



**Minutes of the VSS Board Meeting No 37  
Tuesday, 17 February 2017, 9.30am  
Seatem House, Belfast**

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**Board Members Present:**

Oliver Wilkinson (OW)	Board Member (Chair)
Patricia Haren (PH)	Board Member
Séamus Magee (SM)	Board Member
Richard Solomon (RS)	Board Member
Beverley Clarke (BC)	Board Member

**VSS Officers in Attendance:**

Margaret Bateson (MB)	Accounting Officer and CEO
Brendan Smith (BS)	Head of Corporate Services
Geraldine Hamilton (GS)	Head of Health and Wellbeing
Maria McKeown (MMcK)	Business Support Officer (Minutes)

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**A Apologies**

A1 Apologies were received from BMcD and SMcI.

**B Minutes of Previous Meetings**

B1 17 January 2017. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

**C Outstanding agenda items from January 2017 meeting.**

**C1 Audit and Risk Committee: Chairman's report**

The Board asked CEO to present this paper. The detail of the report was noted.

**C2 Quarterly ALB Performance Report**

The Board asked CEO to present this paper. The detail of the report was noted.

### **C3 Quarterly Assurance Statement**

The Board asked CEO to present this paper. The detail of the report was noted.

### **D Chairman's Report**

The Chair presented his report and provided feedback to the Board on each of the meetings attended. In particular he highlighted his recent attendance to the Co-Design Seminar in Templepatrick.

### **E CEO/Accounting Officer Update**

The Board asked the CEO to present this report for January 2017.

MB reported there are no key operational issues to note.

Day to day KPI and service delivery targets are on track in the areas of call handling, payments processing etc.

The update this month therefore focuses on the more critical and urgent issues, namely the launch of the 2017/18 programmes.

The Chair confirmed this should be the focus of today's meeting.

#### **New Service Delivery Models**

The overarching risk is the political environment and budget uncertainty for 2017/18.

There are also a number of operational risks around staffing capacity, resources and competing priorities which are being carefully managed.

The key risk to the INP is the agreement of the internal control environment, balancing a victim led approach to public sector governance requirements.

#### **Clarification and Solutions to previous NIAO audit issues**

NIAO raised two key issues during the audit of the 2015/16 accounts. These related specifically to the scheme for carers and the disability aids pilot scheme.

Given the spot checks proposed by VSS and the additional audit trail and file review, it is not expected that these issues will result in a qualification of VSS accounts in 2016/17.

A proposed solution was presented to TEO Victims Unit in January 2017 and engagement between VSS and **TEO Internal Audit** will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2017. It is expected the opinion of TEO Accounting Officer will be sought thereafter.

MB confirmed the final paper was issued to TEO with proposed solutions on 16 February and VSS is awaiting a response from the TEO Accounting Officer.

The Board requested the presentation from the INP staff planning day be re-circulated to the board.

***AP1: VSS to re-circulate the INP staff planning day presentation to all board members.***

## **E1 Update on VSP and Peace IV**

MB carried out a presentation for VSP/Peace IV applications which gave an overview of the application process to date and outlined an initial mapping exercise. The presentation also highlighted some areas for discussion in relation to potential additional terms and conditions for the new Letters of Offer.

MB provided a summary on the current position of VSP/ Peace IV applications.

- Assessment panels are completed with exception to the 5 outstanding EA, the assessment panel will meet next week to finalise these.
- In total **86** applications were received.
- **55** applications have been approved in principle.

Given the assessment process has just completed this week, it is too early to indicatively allocate budget and identify strategic gaps. This will be the focus of the work of the SMT over the coming weeks and a report will be presented at the next VSS Board meeting.

## **F Budget review for 16/17 and 17/18**

The Board asked CEO to present this paper. Progress to date was noted.

While there are no issues foreseen with committing the full budget, the Board noted the risk analysis undertaken on potential underspend and the mitigating actions being undertaken to minimise.

## **G Strategic Risk Register**

The Board noted this paper.

## **H Strategic Planning Day**

The date of the Strategic Planning Day is scheduled for Thursday 27 April 2017.

**I Any Other Business**

The board noted a response received from The Executive Office in relation to the Board's request to meet with ministers.

**J Date of Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 14 March 2017 at 9.30am in Grosvenor House.