

BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION

Minutes of Proceedings

The one hundred and sixty fifth meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 28 September 2023 at 10.00am in the Boardroom, BSO HQ, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ.

Present:

	Mrs Julie Erskine (Chair)
Mr Robert Bannon	Mrs Karen Bailey (Chief Executive)
Mr Mark Campbell	Mr Ben Doran (Interim Director of Digital Ops)
Professor Dorothy Whittington	Mrs Karen Hunter (Director of SP&CE)
	Mr Simon McGrattan (Acting DoF)
	Ms Lesley Young (Director of Operations)

In Attendance:

Mr Thomas McCaffrey (Head of Communications)
Mr Robin Arbuthnot (AD HR)
Miss Amanda Mills (Board Secretary)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Miss Patricia Gordon, Mr Sean McKeever and Mrs Paula Smyth.

2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 24 August 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 August 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5. Action Template – Paper BSO 151/2023 refers

Members noted the contents of the Board Action Template.

6. Chairs Business

The Chair briefed members on the key meetings she attended during the month of September.

The Chair has been invited to sit on the interview panel to appoint additional NEDS. The advert for the vacancies is scheduled to be placed at the start of September with the interviews anticipated to take place in late November/early December .

The Chair and Chief Executive attended the BSO's Accountability Meeting with the Permanent Secretary on 29 August 2023 and briefed members on the key issues raised at meeting which included the surplus PPE which resulted in the BSO's year end accounts disqualification and the SPPG hosting arrangement. The Permanent Secretary was briefed on the mitigations to try and resolve the surplus PPE situation. With regard to the SPPG issue the Permanent Secretary offered to attend a future Board meeting and address any questions which members may have . The Board welcomed this offer and the Chief Executives Office will liaise with the Permanent Secretary's office to agree a date.

The Chair along with the Chief Executive recently met with Mr Paul Cummings, Associate for an update on the Review he is undertaking on the review of the BSO's financial Controls; he advised that once the Review is near completion he is content to meet with Board NEDS to take them through his findings.

The Chair informed members that Mrs Karen Bryson has announced that she plans to retire from BSO on 30 November 2023; members asked the Chair to pass on their best wishes to Karen.

Members were asked to note that the Job Title for the Director of HR&CS has been formally replaced with Director of People and Place.

7. Chief Executive's Report - Paper BSO 152/2023 refers

The Chief Executive presented her monthly report to the Board which included details of key meetings she attended during the month of September.

Encompass remains scheduled to Go Live with South Eastern Trust on 9 November 2023 and the level of BSO support has increased significantly in preparation for go live especially from IT and Procurement; she advised that BSO is still awaiting confirmation of the specific support required from BSO. There still remains ambiguity however over the issue of 24/7 support and the fact it is not fully funded within the Encompass FBC however the BSO continues to push Encompass on this matter and have issued its concerns to the SRO Encompass and CDIO.

The Equip Programme has gone out to tender for the procurement of systems integrator and service delivery.

The Chief Executives Forum continues to meet on a weekly basis and recent discussions have centred on the establishment of a Regional Control Centre for Elective Care in NI but these are still in the early stages.

SMT received a presentation on the Data Institute and a presentation will be scheduled later down the line to the Board.

SMT held a Team development session on 26 September 2023. To help embed the governance arrangements around the Strategic Review of BSO it was agreed that a Terms of Reference needs to be produced for SMT which included a renaming of the Group.

8. Approval Items

8.1 BSO Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-2028 - Paper BSO 153/2023 refers

Members considered and approved the draft BSO Equality and Disability Action Plans for 2023-2028. Members were briefed on the consultation process facilitated by the BSO's Equality Unit which included consultation with the 9 Client organisations.

8.2 BSO Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23 – Paper BSO 154/2023 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented the BSO Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23 to the Board for approval in accordance with DoH guidelines instructing organisations to upload the Complaints reports onto their websites by 30 September 2023. Members welcomed this comprehensive report and were reassured by the number of improvements which have been put in place during 2022/23 following feedback from service users.

Members approved the BSO Annual Complaints Report for 2022/23.

8.3 Update to BSO Travel Policy – Paper BSO 155/2023 refers

The Acting DoF presented a revised BSO Travel policy for members approval. The revisions were highlighted to members as follows:-

- DoH Accounting Officer is no longer required to approve Chief Executive overseas travel;
- There is no longer a requirement to obtain DoH Accounting Officer or Ministerial approval should a member of staff travel overseas more than 5 times per year
- DoH will no longer require periodic returns of overseas travel data for monitoring purposes.

Members approved the revised travel policy with the proviso that it should be Equality Screened.

8.4 Board Governance Self Assessment Tool for 2022/23 – Paper BSO 156/2023 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented the Board Governance Self Assessment Tool for 2022/23 for members approval. She reminded members that BSO along with all Arms Length Bodies is required to provide an assurance (via the mid year assurance statement) that the Assessment is completed along with assurance that the actions will be addressed and any exception issues will be raised with DOH.

Members approved the Board Governance Self Assessment Tool for 2022/23 including the summary results of the Board Governance Self Assessment questionnaire, the contents of the Case Study and the Action Plan.

8.5 BSO Customer Engagement Strategy – Paper BSO 157/2023 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented the BSO Customer Engagement Strategy for 2023-2026. She advised that work commenced in early 2023 to develop the strategy which involved a number of interviews and focus groups with BSO customers and staff seeking their views on what a Customer Engagement Strategy should include.

The Strategy focuses on the following five areas:

- Customer Insight
- Organisation Culture
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

Members approved the BSO Customer Engagement Strategy.

8.6 BSO Communications and Engagement Strategy – Paper BSO 158/2023 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented the BSO Communications and Engagement Strategy for members' approval. The Strategy has been presented to SMT and BDC and recommended for formal approval by the Board. The aim of the Strategy is to provide BSO with a foundation to enhance and develop its engagement with audiences and stakeholders, with the ultimate aim of enhancing BSO brand and gaining reward and recognition of the organisation. It was noted that the Strategy is Live and will evolve as the strategy is implemented and developed.

Members approved the BSO Communications and Engagement Strategy.

8.7 BSO Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy – Paper BSO 159/2023 refers

The AD HR presented the BSO Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy for members' approval.

He confirmed that the policy has been considered by SMT and recommended for Board approval by BDC at its meeting held on 11 September 2023.

Members approved the BSO Substance and Alcohol Misuse Policy.

9. Finance Report – Month 5 – Paper BSO 160/2023 refers

The Acting Director of Finance presented paper BSO 160/2023; a finance report for the five month period ending 31 August 2023.

The summary financial position shows the reported income and expenditure position for the period, with an overall surplus reported for this period and at this stage in the year a break even position is forecast for year end. Work is well underway in preparing a mid year review of the financial plan for 2023-24 for presentation to SMT in early October with a further detailed forecast exercise scheduled to take place in early January 2024.

Members noted the finance report for Month 5.

10. Corporate Balanced Scorecard – August – Paper BSO 161/2023 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented paper BSO 161/2023 which set out the performance of key service areas in the BSO for the period up to 31 August 2023. She highlighted those measures with a red rag rating and explained the circumstances which led to the evaluations. With regard to the Indicator Rag rated Red iro “% Available Legal Services Solicitor Time Used” – the Director of SP&CE advised that work is underway to produce service development proposals which will be applied to the new pilot hourly rate for additionality, the increase in the demand for legal services is also being raised with customers at all appropriate Forums and meetings.

Members noted the BSO Corporate Scorecard for August 2023.

11. Business Development Committee

11.1 Report of BDC Meeting held on 11 September 2023 – Paper 162/2023 refers

The Chair of BDC briefed members on the key issues discussed at the BDC meeting held on 11 September 2023. The Committee received an in-depth presentation on the independent review of RSSC. Staff absence has increased with mental health continuing to be the top absence category for long term absence.

The minutes of the BDC meeting held on 12 June 2023 were noted by members.

12. AOB

12.1 CIPD Awards

The Digital Director of Operations informed members that a number of staff from Digital Directorate of Operations have been nominated for a CIPD Award; the event will take place on 12 October 2023.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 26 October 2023 at 10.00 am

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date _____