

## **BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION**

### **Minutes of Proceedings**

The one hundred and seventy third meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 27 June 2024 at 10.00am in the Boardroom, BSO HQ, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ.

#### **Present:**

Mrs Julie Erskine (Chair)

Mr Robert Bannon

Mr Mark Lowry

Mr Maynard Mawhinney

Mr Sean McKeever

Mr Linus McLaughlin

Mr Frederick Smyth

Professor Dorothy Whittington

Mrs Karen Bailey (CX)

Mr Ben Doran (Interim Director of Digital Ops)

Mrs Karen Hunter (Director of SP&CE)

Mr Simon McGrattan (Acting DoF)

Mrs Paula Smyth (Director of People & Place)

Ms Lesley Young (Director of Operations)

#### **In Attendance:**

Mr Thomas McCaffrey (Head of Communications)

Miss Amanda Mills (Board Secretary)

#### **1. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Mr Mark Campbell.

Members expressed their sympathy of the death of Mr Campbells mother and asked the Chair to convey their condolences.

#### **2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

#### **3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 23 May 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

#### **4. Action Template – Paper BSO 49/2024 refers**

Members noted the contents of the Board Action Template.

#### **5. Chairs Business**

The Chair briefed members on the key meetings she attended during the month of June 2024; these included attendance at an interactive session on Allyship facilitated by the Women in

Leadership Programme, the RCN NI Nurse of the Year Awards 2024 and Royal Gun Salute at Hillsborough Castle to celebrate the Kings Birthday.

The Chair confirmed that the non executive appraisal pro-formas for 2023-24 have been returned to the DoH Public Appointments Unit. She also referred to the ongoing discussions with DOH Sponsor branch enquiring if those BSO NEDs whose 2<sup>nd</sup> term of office is scheduled to expire at the end of November would be amenable to continue in their role for an extended period to allow DOH to run the recruitment process for NEDs.

Members were advised that Mr Mark Campbell has expressed a desire to stand down as a member of GAC however will continue to be a member of BDC until his current term of office ends in November.

#### **6. Chief Executive's Report - Paper BSO 50/2024 refers**

The Chief Executive presented her monthly report to the Board which included details of key meetings attended during June 2024.

The key focus for the Chief Executive and senior staff involved with the Equip Programme has been working on a corrective action plan following a red status from the Gateway Review. Weekly meetings have been arranged to consider options/mitigations to resolve this matter. Discussions are ongoing with the Chief Executives, Directors of Finance and CDIO asking for support and the action plan will be presented to the next meeting of the Equip Programme Board. Craig Young has been appointed as Equip Programme Director on a part time basis to support this critical programme. The Equip Business Case requires updating due to the change in implementation timescales. The Chief Executive stressed how crucial it is to meet the Gateway reviews recommendations to allow the design and implementation phase to proceed.

At a recent meeting of PTEB Trusts were asked to revisit their savings plans in light of the critical financial challenges for HSC. A joint presentation to PTEB on recruitment has been scheduled to take place in the Autumn with the main focus on how to support the Equip Programme. The Director of People & Place took the opportunity to update members on Recruitment Shared Services and highlighted that delays on Occupational Health referrals continue to remain an issue. She assured the Board that BSO remains focussed on improving the performance of RSSC however HSC organisations need to support and engage with this key service area.

The Chief Executive attended the inaugural meeting of All Ireland Chief Executives on 14 June 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to explore areas of mutual interest and benefit and it was agreed that there was merit in establishing a more formal collaboration. The forum will meet on a bi-yearly basis with the next meeting scheduled to take place in the Autumn.

The Chair and Chief Executive attended the BSO Year end assurance meeting with the Permanent Secretary on 25 June 2024 and briefed members on the key discussion items. The key focus of the meeting focussed on BSO's financial plan and savings and the Permanent Secretary confirmed he was content with BSO's approach.

At the meeting DOH stated they envisage an opportunity for BSO to take the lead in Technology, Recruitment, Estates and Regional Procurement and referred to the forthcoming GIRFT report which was likely to make similar recommendations. The Director of SP&CE advised members that once the GIRFT report is endorsed by DoH the Board will receive a briefing on the recommendations.

The Permanent Secretary referred to the BSO Accounts Qualification on the basis of the PPE surplus and recognised that the qualification was not the fault of the BSO.

## **7. Draft 2023-24 BSO Annual Report and Accounts**

### **7.1 Report on the 2023-24 Annual Report and Accounts (Draft) – Paper BSO 51/2024 refers**

The Acting Director of Finance presented the Executive Summary to the BSO Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024; the Director of SP&CE presented the Draft BSO Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024. Members were advised that the Annual Report and Accounts were presented to GAC at its meeting on 20 June 2024 and recommended that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023-24 be approved by the BSO Board.

The Board endorsed the GAC's recommendation that the Annual Report and Accounts of the BSO for 2023/24 should be signed by the Chair, Chief Executive and Acting Director of Finance along with the Letter of Representation (*Paper BSO 54/2024 refers*).

### **7.2 2023-24 Draft Governance Statement – Paper BSO 52/2024 refers**

Members noted the Draft Governance Statement for 2023-24.

### **7.3 The Certificate and Report (Annex A) of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the NI Assembly – Paper BSO 53/2024 refers**

The above mentioned documentation was considered and noted by members.

## **8. BSO Partnership Agreement – Paper BSO 56/2024 refers**

The Director of SP&CE presented a draft Partnership Agreement between the BSO and DoH for members formal approval. The Partnership Agreement template replaces the existing Management Statement/Financial Memorandum (MSFM) which was issued in November 2019 under cover of DAO (DoF) 05/19.

Members approved the BSO Partnership Agreement which will be signed by the Chair and Chief Executive.

## **9. Finance Report – Month 2 – Paper BSO 57/2024 refers**

The Acting Director of Finance presented paper BSO 57/2024; a finance report for the two month period ending 31 May 2024.

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.

## **10. Corporate Balanced Scorecard – May 2024 – Paper BSO 58/2024 refers**

The Director of SP&CE presented paper BSO 58/2024 which set out the performance of key service areas in the BSO for the period up to 31 May 2024. She highlighted those measures with a red rag rating and explained the circumstances which led to the evaluations.

Members noted the BSO Corporate Scorecard for May 2024.

**11. Update on the Management of PPE and Audit Qualification – Paper BSO 59/2024 refers**

The Director of Operations updated members on the mitigating actions being taken to manage the levels of surplus PPE. It was noted that BSO submits 6 monthly progress reports to the DoH outlining the depletion of the stock and tracking the space utilisation in the Carrick Warehouse. The plan is on track that BSO PALs will exit this storage unit in September 2025 which will reduce the PPE storage footprint. Members noted the position.

**12. Business and Development Committee (BDC)**

**12.1 Report of Meeting held on 13 May 2024 – Paper BSO 60/2024 refers**

The Chair of BDC briefed members on the key issues considered at the BDC meeting held on 13 May 2024. BDC considered and recommended that the Board approve a revised version of the Raising a Concern in the Public Interest Policy. The Framework document has been implemented to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place across HSC for staff to raise concerns that are in the public interest. To that end members approved this regional policy and implementation plan. The HRCS report for Quarter 4 was debated by BDC and members were encouraged by the rigorous processes in place to manage staff sickness absence. The Chair of BDC referred to the BSO Portfolio of Digital Change Programmes Dashboard report and suggested it would be beneficial and interesting for the Board to have sight of the high level programmes which BSO is involved.

The minutes of the BDC meeting held on 12 February 2024 were noted by the Board.

**13. Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)**

**13.1 Report of Meeting held on 20 June 2024**

The Chair of GAC briefed members on the key issues discussed at the GAC meeting held on 20 June 2024. As outlined earlier in the Board meeting a large proportion of the meeting was dedicated to consideration of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2023/24 including the Annual Accounts for client organisations. GAC continue to remain focussed on BSO's action to implement outstanding internal audit recommendations and going forward it was suggested that it would be useful to have sight of management comments included in the reports. The Chair of GAC took the opportunity to put on record his thanks and appreciation for the support and input from Mr Campbell during his tenure as GAC member. He also advised members of his intention to stand down as Chair of GAC in the near future and following discussions with the Chair it has been agreed that Mr Smyth will take on this role at the appointed time.

The minutes of the GAC meeting held on 17 May 2024 were noted by members.

**14. AOB**

**14.1 Go Lives – Encompass, NIPIMs, Core Lims**

The Acting Director of Digital Ops informed members that Encompass, NIPIMs and CoreLims went live recently and wished to acknowledge the great achievement of BSO staff working in partnership with other organisations to ensure the success of these major programmes.

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 22 August 2024 at 10.00 am, venue will be Conference Room, Procurement and Logistics Service (PALs), 77 Boucher Crescent, Belfast.

It was agreed to rearrange the Board workshop planned for 25 July 2024 due to the number of Executive Directors scheduled to be on annual leave. The Director of SP&CE will arrange for a doodle poll to be issued with a view to securing a date for September.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive

Date \_\_\_\_\_