

BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION**Minutes of Proceedings**

The one hundred and eighty ninth meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 26 February 2026 at 10.00am in the Boardroom, BSO HQ, 2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ.

Present:

Mrs Sharon O'Connor (Chair)

Mr Mark Lowry
Mrs Bernie McCrory
Mr Linus McLaughlin
Mr Maynard Mawhinney
Mr Peter Russell
Mr Alan Todd
Mr Fred Smyth
Mr Joe Stewart

Mrs Karen Bailey (Chief Executive)
Mr Simon McGrattan (DoF)
Mrs Paula Smyth (Director of People & Place)
Ms Linda O Hare (Interim Director of Ops)

In Attendance:

Mr Ben Doran (Director of Digital)
Mrs Karen Hunter (Director, SP&CE)
Mr Craig Young (Programme Director Equip and Evolve in attendance for Agenda item 9)
Miss Amanda Mills (Board Secretary)

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Lesley Young.

2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 22 January 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. Action Template – Paper BSO 11/2026 refers

Members noted the contents of the Board Action Template.

5. Chairs Business

The Chair briefed members on recent meetings and confirmed an interview panel would take place this afternoon for the Interim Director of People & Place.

The Chair confirmed the non executive Director nominations for BADC and GAC as follows:-

Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)

Bernie McCrory
Joe Stewart

Business and Development Committee (BaDC)

Peter Russell
Alan Todd

Following discussion with Linus McLaughlin it was agreed that he would stand down from the BaDC with immediate effect.

The Chair referred to a number of Board workshops scheduled for 2026 and recognised that members may not be able to join every workshop due to diary conflicts; she advised that arrangements will be put in place to facilitate those who are unable to attend.

The mandatory Governance and Accountability training session for new Board members will take place on Monday 9 March at 2 pm.

Members noted the Chair's Monthly Report to the Board.

6. Chief Executive's Report - Paper BSO 12/2026 refers

The Chief Executive presented her monthly report to the Board which included details of key meetings attended during February 2026

The CX provided a detailed update on the financial situation, ongoing savings modelling, and engagement with the Department of Health. She highlighted that the AFC Pay Award was progressed seamlessly and paid tribute to BSO staff. The Equip Programme continues to prove challenging and is taking up a significant amount of both the Chief Executive and Director of Digital's time. She stated that BSO is providing regular updates on the Equip Programme to the regional Equip Programme Board which the DoH and the Chief Digital Information Officer (CDIO) are members of.

Members noted the Chief Executive's monthly report to the Board.

7. Approval Items**7.1 BSO Annual Business Plan 2026-27 – Paper BSO 13/2026 refers**

The Director of SP&CE presented the draft Business Plan for 2026-27, highlighting its alignment to the final year of the BSO's Corporate Plan. Members queried whether the targets were sufficiently robust, and suggested the use of SMART objectives. The Director SP&CE noted members comments however added that with the significant challenging workload associated with the Equip Programme, particularly this financial year, she requested members approve the Draft Business Plan for 2026-27.

She advised members that work on the production of a new Corporate Plan is scheduled to commence in the Autumn and assured members that BSO will work in conjunction the Board in developing the Plan.

Members approved the BSO Annual Business Plan for 2026-27 which is the final year of the BSO's Corporate Plan.

7.2 Refresh of BSO Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan – Paper BSO 14/2026 refers

Members considered and approved the recommendation by ELT and GAC to approve the updated combined BSO Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan.

8. Finance Agenda Items

8.1 Year End Break Even Position – Paper BSO 15/2026 refers

The DoF provided an update to members on year-end break-even assumptions. With the allocation of funding to support the AFC pay award he confirmed there is now no impact on BSO breakeven. In addition, with the confirmation that no further funding is available to increase the BSO stock provision, it was agreed that no increase in stock provision would be posted within the Financial Statements and therefore would leave BSO in the same position as 2024/25 with an audit qualification in stock valuation.

It was therefore agreed that this agenda item will be stood down and therefore no longer a substantive Board agenda item.

The briefing paper on the year-end break-even position was noted by members.

8.2 Finance Report – Month 10 – Paper BSO 16/2026 refers

The DoF presented paper BSO 16/2026; a finance report for the ten month period ending 31 January 2026. The summary financial position shows the reported income and expenditure position for the period, excluding the impact of the pay award deficit, with an overall surplus reported for this period and at this stage in the year a break- even position is forecast for year end. Members were also advised that the capital and revenue positions remain on target.

The Finance report for month 10 was noted by members.

9. Equip Programme Update

Craig Young, Programme Director Equip and Evolve made an in-depth presentation to the Board on the Equip Programme, explaining the current Design and Build phase, programme governance, risks, and mitigations.

The overall status of the Equip Programme is Red.

Members discussed possible scenarios for implementation progress.

It was noted that a Health Check on Equip was scheduled for w/c 16 March and to that end it was agreed that a further update will be made to the March Board meeting.

Members noted the position.

10. Corporate Risk and Assurance Report (CRAR) – Public Risks – Paper BSO 18/2026 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented the public section of the CRAR. It was noted there were 9 active risks and the closure of the risk relating to the impact of the 2025/26 AFC Pay Award made in February 2026.

Members noted the CRAR.

11. Appointment of a New Chair to BSO Pharmaceutical Committee – Paper BSO 19/2026 refers

Members noted paper BSO 99/2026 advising on the appointment of a new Chair to the BSO Pharmaceutical Committee.

12. Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)

The Chair of GAC briefed members on the key issues considered at the GAC meeting held on 17 February 2026.

The minutes of the GAC meeting held on 16 October 2025 were noted by members (Paper BSO 20/2026 refers).

13. Business and Development Committee (BaDC) – Paper BSO 21/2026 refers

The Chair of BaDC briefed members on the key issues considered at the BaDC meeting held on 18 February 2026.

The minutes of the BaDC meeting held on 10 November 2025 were noted by members.

14. AOB

There was no AOB raised.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 26 March 2026 at 10.00am in BSO HQ.

A Board workshop on Digital Governance and AI is scheduled to take place following the Board meeting that day.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date _____