

## **BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION**

### **Minutes of Proceedings**

The one hundred and eighty seventh meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 27 November 2025 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 Linus McLaughlin

Mr Maynard Mawhinney

Mr Alan Todd

Mr Fred Smyth

Prof Dorothy Whittington

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 and deputising for CX)

Mr Stephen Beattie (Interim Director, SP&CE)

Mr Thomas McCaffrey (Head of Communications)

Miss Amanda Mills (Board Secretary)

At the outset of the meeting the Chair welcomed Alan Todd to his first Board meeting and invited members to introduce themselves. The Chair also acknowledged the departure of Sean McKeever whose tenure as NED ended on 12 November 2025.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Karen Bailey, Lesley Young and Karen Hunter.

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

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

#### **3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 23 October 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

#### **4. Action Template – Paper BSO 78/2025 refers**

Members noted the contents of the Board Action Template. In particular it was noted that the Board Cyber Security Resilience exercise will take place on 27 February 2026. The meeting to facilitate the official handover of the Disability/Equality Champion role to Mr Mawhinney had to be cancelled and will be re-arranged once the AD People & Place returns from leave.

## 5. Chairs Business

The Chair briefed members on her activity during the month of November 2025 which included attendance at a number of Awards events. In particular she congratulated Procurement and Logistics (PALs) for their notable success winning awards at the Health Care Supplies Association (HSCA and the BT Awards along with Encompass. Discussion ensued around the success of the BSO Leadership Conference which took place on 13 November which was regarded by attendees as a highly successful event.

The Chair took the opportunity to recognise and thank those NED colleagues whose tenure is scheduled to end on 30 November 2025.

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

## 6. Chief Executive's Report - Paper BSO 79/2025 refers

Mr Ben Doran presented the Chief Executive's monthly report to the Board which included details of key meetings attended during November 2025.

The Equip addendum was approved by DoH and the design phase is near completion albeit some issues with the supplier still require resolution. Following instruction from DoH the Evolve programme is being accelerated with a series of meetings scheduled with the SRO and representatives from the region.

The Permanent Secretary met with ELT to discuss the financial reset plan on 4 November 2025.

The BSO/DoH Ground Clearing Meeting took place on 24 November 2025 where the main focus of the meeting centred on the financial deficit and Minister's decision to direct BSO to implement AFC pay award. At the meeting BSO took the opportunity to propose ideas on how BSO could assist DoH on regional issues and savings opportunities.

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

## 7. BSO Complaints Policy & Procedure – Paper BSO 80/2025 refers

Members considered and approved the updated BSO Complaints Policy and Procedure. The policy aligns with the Model Policy and removes the requirement for a final review panel focusing on early resolution.

## 8. Finance Agenda Items

### 8.1 Finance Report – Month 7 – Paper BSO 81/2025 refers

The Director of Finance (DOF) presented paper BSO 81/2025; a finance report for the seven month period ending 31 October 2025. 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. A Capital allocation of £104m is expected, including funding for Equip, Encompass, and PaLS fleet replacement. Work continues on a CRM business case for DoH submission with plans to recharge Trusts in 2026–27

The Finance report for month 7 was noted by members.

## **8.2 Year End Break Even Position – Paper BSO 82/2025 refers**

The Director of Finance (DoF) advised members of the position around year-end break-even. The paper highlighted the two areas impacting break-even. The first was the pay award for 2025/26 which is only being funded at 33% by the Dept. The expectation from the Dept is that BSO will record a loss equal to the 67% not funded. This will be the case for all HSC Organisations. The second challenge is the funding to enable the posting of a provision of £12m due to PPE write-off. If the BSO post the provision the loss for BSO would be increased, but the qualification on the valuation of stock would be removed. If the provision is not posted the stock qualification would remain in 2025/26. The Dept have indicated that they will not be in position to update on the availability of funding for the provision until February 2026. The Board discussed implications and agreed that Simon will arrange a meeting with the auditors in the New Year prior to the next GAC meeting (scheduled for 17 February 2026).

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

## **9. FPS Update on the ongoing NI Digital Identity Service (NIDIS) Data Harmonisation Process – Paper BSO 83/2025 refers**

The Interim Director of Operations presented a progress report on the Data Harmonisation process which has been taking place to ensure all patient information is matched to allow smooth transition to the NDIS system. A number of anomalies have been identified which would have implications for those who should be invited to screening programmes and may also have clinical implications for other systems such as Encompass, NIPACs and NIPIMs. An Early Alert was subsequently raised with DoH by the NIDIS SRO and from that a Steering Group was established to oversee this process. Members welcomed the early intervention by BSO and the work undertaken to date by the Steering Group to mitigate any risks.

Members noted the position.

## **10. Implementation of Universal Credit – Paper BSO 84/2025 refers**

The Interim Director of Operations presented Paper BSO 84/2025 setting out the actions BSO has taken to support the automatic entitlement to free sight tests, dental treatment and travel costs for health service treatment which is to be introduced wef 1 December 2025 for eligible Universal Credit (UC) recipients.

Members noted that BSO is in a state of readiness to support this process.

## **11. Business and Development Committee (BaDC)**

### **11.1 Report of Meeting held on 10 November 2025 – Paper BSO 85/2025 refers**

The Chair of BaDC briefed members on the key issues considered at the BaDC meeting held on 10 November 2025. The People Report for Quarter 2 was presented to the Committee and it was agreed that future reports would contain information on mental health absence trends. The minutes of the BaDC meeting held on 8 September 2025 were noted by members was noted by members.

Members noted the report of the BaDC Meeting held on 10 November 2025.

**12. Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee**

**12.1 Report of Meeting held on 27 November 2025**

The Chair of the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee briefed the Board on key issues considered at the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee meeting held earlier today. The Committee considered the mid year performance review for Senior Executives, the outcome of the Kornferry Job Evaluation process and the pay award circular for HSC Chairs and NEDs.

Members noted the report of the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee held on 27 November 2025.

**13. AOB**

The Chair reminded members that all communication from NEDs should come through the Chief Executive's office.

The Chair wished to put on record the work and commitment of the outgoing Board members, Sean McKeever, Robert Bannon and Professor Whittington during her tenure as Chair of BSO over the past nine years. She stated that the BSO has dramatically changed for the better with BSO making a huge commitment to HSC. She also wished to formally thank BSO's Senior Executive Team for their diligence and commitment over the past 9 years.

She wished the BSO incoming Chair, Sharon O Connor and the new NEDs every success.

Mr Smyth on behalf of the Board wished the Chair every success for the future and thanked her for her leadership and support she had put into the role of BSO Chair.

**14. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 22 January 2026 at 10.00am in BSO HQ.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

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Chair

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_