

BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION**Minutes of Proceedings**

The one hundred and eighty fourth meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 28 August 2025 at 10.00am in the Conference Room, BSO Shared Services Payments Centre, Greenmount House, Woodside Industrial Estate, Woodside Road, Ballymena, BT42 4TP.

Present:

Mrs Julie Erskine (Chair)

Mr Robert Bannon

Mr Mark Lowry

Mr Sean McKeever

Mr Linus McLaughlin

Mr Maynard Mawhinney

Mr Frederick Smyth

Prof Dorothy Whittington

Mrs Karen Bailey (CX)

Mr Ben Doran (Acting Director of Digital)

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 Karen Hunter.

2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 26 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 were agreed as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4. Action Template – Paper BSO 53/2025 refers

Members noted the contents of the Board Action Template.

5. Chairs Business

The Chair welcomed members back following the summer period and provided updates on several matters. She has been nominated as a Mentor for the Women in Leadership programme. The Board Self-Assessment Governance document has been completed. The recruitment process has commenced for an interim Director of SP&CE to cover during Karen Hunter's planned sick leave. The interview panel will comprise of the Chair, Chief Executive and a Non-Executive

Director. Advertisements for the Director of Finance and Director of Digital roles have been published.

6. Chief Executive's Report - Paper BSO 54/2025 refers

The Chief Executive presented her monthly report to the Board which included details of key meetings attended during July and August 2025.

Progress continues on the Equip Programme, particularly the Return to Green initiative, with a go-live date scheduled for Autumn 2026. A revised addendum is being submitted due to increased costs, and engagement is ongoing with DHCNI and DoH economists. The new Programme Director, Charlie O'Neill, has taken up post. Senior Executive job descriptions are nearing completion for submission to Korn Ferry (KF). The Chief Executive and Director of People & Place are scheduled to meet with KF in early September for a context calls to ensure that KF has a good understanding of the BSO and the roles in scope.

The Systems Financial Management Group remains a key focus for the Permanent Secretary. BSO is initiating an internal project to support the key workstreams, with a briefing to the Permanent Secretary planned for Autumn by ELT and a paper to be presented to the Board later in the year. Jennifer Welsh's role as SRO for the Evolve Programme remains uncertain, though there still remains an appetite for this programme to come to BSO.

The Chief Executive briefed members on the inaugural Committee in Common meeting where the key agenda items focused on governance and collaborative work; BSO and PHA have been invited as observers. The next meeting is scheduled for November, and the Chair has requested that Fred Smyth attend in her place as her tenure concludes.

The BSO/DOH year end Accountability Meeting is scheduled to take place on 2 September 2025. Agenda items include PPE, BSO Hybrid Working Policy and NRS. The Chair stated the importance of a candid discussion at the meeting with Perm Secretary and Chris Matthews, and the Chief Executive advised that she will take the opportunity to express the need for a change in PPE status and DoH financial support and a more definitive statement of intent.

Members were reminded that the Permanent Secretary will join the October Board meeting

7. Annual Progress Report 2024-25 to the Equality Commission – Paper BSO 55/2025 refers

The Director of People & Place presented the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of Section 75 and the duties under the Disability Discrimination Order to the Equality Commission for 2024/25 for members' approval. Members were briefed on the innovative actions undertaken by the BSO's Equality Unit and members welcomed this very comprehensive document. It was noted that there was a decrease in policy screenings however members were assured that all standards are being met. Mark Lowry suggested that once the Sustainability Strategy is established it should be included in this report.

Members approved the Annual Progress Report for 2024-25 to the Equality Commission.

8. Board Governance Self Assessment Tool for 2024-25 – Paper BSO 56/2025 refers

Members considered and approved the Board Governance Self Assessment Tool for 2024-25 and thanked members for their feedback during the Summer to complete this document.

9. Finance Report – Month 4 – Paper BSO 57/2025 refers

The Acting Director of Finance presented paper BSO 57/2025; a finance report for the four month period ending 31 July 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. In relation to capital he drew members attention to the largest item, Encompass. The Encompass Programme was discussed and is forecast to break even at year end. Members were advised that Trusts are now in post optimisation phase for the next 18 months and once this phase ends Encompass funding will revert to revenue as it will be deemed Business as Usual (BAU).

10. Update on Management of PPE and Audit Qualification – Paper BSO 58/2025 refers

The Director of Operations and Acting DoF updated members on the mitigating actions being taken to manage the levels of surplus PPE. Members were advised that BSO will exit the Carrick warehouse in September. Members were advised of the external auditor's concerns regarding stock levels and funding requests to DoH which may lead to the BSO not achieving breakeven at year end. This matter will be discussed at the September Board meeting where a final decision will be made on what actions will be required.

11. Review of Committee Terms of Reference – Paper BSO 59/2025 refers

Members noted an update on the annual review of the Terms of Reference for the BSO Board sub Committees:-

- Governance and Audit Committee (GAC)
- Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee
- Business and Development Committee (BaDC)

12. Quarterly Board Performance Dashboard (Quarter 1 – June 2025) – Paper BSO 60/2025 refers

Members noted with interest the quarterly Board Performance Dashboard for Quarter 1.

13. Performance against Business Planning (PABP) – Quarter 1 Report – Paper BSO 61/2025 refers

The Director of SP&CE presented paper BSO 61/2025 which set out a summary exception report on the performance against the Annual Business Plan for 2025/26 as at 30 June 2025. It was noted at the end of Quarter 1, 72% of the actions within the Annual Business Plan were reported as Green, ie progressing on target and within the agreed timescales.

14. Presentation – The Role of Counter Fraud and Probity Services (CFPS)

Donna Scott, Head of CFPS made a presentation to the Board on the role of Counter Fraud and Probity Services. Members were advised that the number of fraud investigations has increased significantly year on year with the focus to assist clients to gain the best solution for resolution rather than prosecution. It was noted that the highest category of fraud relates to staff related fraud. In answer to a question from Mr Mawhinney the Head of CFPS confirmed that all investigative staff are accredited and training is updated on a regular basis. Members welcomed this presentation and suggested for future presentations there should be reference to case studies and cultural relevance.

15. Report of Business and Development Committee (BaDC) Meeting held on 29 July 2025

The Chair of BaDC briefed members on the key issues considered at the BaDC meeting held on 29 July 2025. The key agenda item for the meeting was to review the Strategic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for presentation to the Board.

The minutes of the BaDC meeting held on 12 May 2025 were noted by members (Paper BSO 62/2025 refers).

16. Report of Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee held on 22 July 2025.

The Chair briefed members on the key issues considered at the Remuneration and Terms of Service Committee meeting held on 22 July 2025. The Senior Executive Pay award for 2024-25 has been processed. The objectives for BSO Senior Executives for 2025-26 were approved by the Committee and the assessment of performance for Senior Executives for 2024-25 was assessed as Satisfactory. The Chair advised that she will call a further meeting of the Remuneration Committee in November before her tenure ends.

17. Presentation – Accounts Payable Shared Services (APSS) – Update

Mr Raymond Compston, Head of APSS made a presentation to members on the role of APSS. The growth and productivity of this key service area was highlighted to members where it was noted that each staff member processes approx. 34,000 invoices per annum.

18. AOB

There was no AOB.

19. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 28 September 2025 at 10.00am in BSO HQ.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date _____