

BUSINESS SERVICES ORGANISATION

Minutes of Proceedings

The one hundred and thirty fifth meeting of the Board of the Business Services Organisation was held on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 10.00am via Video Conference.

Present:

Mrs Julie Erskine (Chair)

Mr Robert Bannon
Mr Mark Campbell
Miss Patricia Gordon
Mr Sean McKeever
Mr Jeremy Stewart
Professor Dorothy Whittington

Mrs Karen Bailey (Acting Chief Executive)
Mrs Karen Bryson (Director of Finance)
Mrs Paula Smyth (Director of HR&CS)
Mr Peter Wilson (Interim Director of Operations)

In Attendance:

Mr Alphy Maginness (Chief Legal Adviser)
Mrs Siobhan Fisher (AD CCP)
Miss Amanda Mills (Board Secretary)

1. Chairs Welcome and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Liam McIvor.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially Mr Peter Wilson in his substantive role as Interim Director of Operations. Before the meeting entered business mode Liam McIvor joined the meeting to thank the Board for all their support during his tenure as Chief Executive of BSO. The Chair wished Liam a very long and fulfilling retirement.

2. Conflicts of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

3. Minutes of BSO Board Meeting held on 27 August 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2020 were approved subject to a minor amendment.

4. Chairs Business

The Chair advised she is continuing to hold bi-weekly calls with the Acting Chief Executive. Following a recruitment process on 18 September 2020, Mr Mark Bradley has been appointed as the Interim Director of CCP and will take up post as soon as possible. The Chair and Acting Chief Executive have attended staff engagement events in PALs, CEC and HR&CS during September. She advised that she has been impressed with the dedication and diligence of staff

working during these difficult times. The staff engagement events will continue over the next number of months across all BSO service areas.

4.1 *Non Executive Board Survey – Paper B refers*

Members noted with interest the results from the NED Board survey on communication.

5. *Acting Chief Executive’s Report*

The Acting Chief Executive briefed members on the meetings recently attended.

She advised members that BSO are due to commence the production of its Corporate Plan for 2021-2025 however following a meeting with the Head of DOH Sponsor Branch on 21 September 2020 it was agreed to continue with the current Corporate Plan 2018-21 and develop an Annual Business Plan for 2021-22 to focus on key priorities to support the Management Board and the wider HSC response to re-building services during COVID-19.

PPE and Brexit are now substantive agenda items on SMT and discussions have commenced with DOH regarding scenario planning for supply chain in the event of a no deal Brexit.

Business Cases have been submitted for the contract extension of the current FPL and HRPTS systems which must be replaced by 2024. The Business Systems Replacement Programme Board has met on a number of occasions to review the Strategic Outline case and early pre-OBC work.

The Director of Finance is taking the lead on developing the BSO options to be included in the NIFRS Business Case to support the replacement of its Business Systems; DoH have confirmed they are content with BSO’s approach.

The Rebuilding Programme Board continues to meet on a weekly basis with the main focus being Covid and Brexit and rebuild of the HSC services.

6. Items for Approval

6.1 *Interim Working from Home Policy – Paper BSO 44/2020 refers*

The Director of HR&CS presented paper BSO 44/2020; Interim Working from Home Policy. She explained that a protocol and guidance was produced in early 2020 but due to Covid it was opportune to develop a policy. The draft policy has been shared with Trade Unions and will be reviewed in 2021. A number of questions were posed to the Director of HR&CS regarding the decrease in staff absence since the opportunity of staff being directed to work from home where possible due to Covid, the risk assessment process for home working and the contingency plans in place to purchase additional laptops to allow staff to work from home.

Members approved the interim Working from Home policy.

7. Items for Noting

7.1. Finance Report – Month 5 – Paper BSO 45/2020 refers

The Director of Finance presented paper BSO 45/2020; a finance report for the five month period ending 31 August 2020.

The summary financial position shows the reported income and expenditure position for the period, with an overall deficit reported for this period. She explained that the deficit has been generated once again by core services, which is the result of the significant impact of Covid 19 expenditure. Discussions are ongoing with the DoH to secure funding for Covid 19 pressures and a number of bids have been submitted to DOH and it is hoped that these will be approved in due course as this expenditure has been confirmed as unavoidable as a response to the pandemic. The Director of Finance is in regular communications with the DoH in relation to confirming the funded in year.

Members noted the finance report.

7.2 Corporate Balanced Scorecard – Paper BSO 46/2020 refers

The AD CCP presented paper BSO 46/2020 which set out the performance of key service areas in the BSO for the period August 2020. She highlighted those measures with a red rag rating and explained the circumstances which led to the evaluations.

Members noted the BSO Corporate Scorecard.

7.3 Annual Business Plan Performance Report, period ending 30 June 2020 – Paper BSO 47/2020 refers

The AD CCP presented paper BSO 47/2020 which set out a summary exception report on the performance against the Annual Business Plan for 2020/21 as at 30 June 2020. Members were reminded that the impact of Covid 19 pandemic had a significant impact on the ability of service areas to meet their original objectives for the year as agreed in March 2020 and to that end all Heads of Services were asked to revise their Business Plans for 2020/21. The Updated draft Business Plan for 2020/21 which was approved by the Board in August 2020 remains in draft format as it has not been formally signed off by DOH. It was noted at the end of quarter one 96% of the actions within the revised draft Business Plan were reported as complete within the agreed tolerance level.

7.4 Review of Decision Making during Covid 19 - Paper BSO 48/2020 refers

The Chief Legal Adviser presented paper BSO 48/2020; Review of Decision Making during Covid 19. He briefed members on the rationale for the production of the document which was to consider written records of key decisions made during the Covid crisis and whether the rationale behind the decisions were properly recorded. The document was reviewed in depth by members and a lengthy discussion ensued. Members welcomed this comprehensive document and thanked Alphy for the significant amount of work which he had undertaken.

7.5 Encompass Update – Paper BSO 49/2020 refers

The Encompass Programme Director presented Paper BSO 49/2020; Update on the Encompass Programme. The formal responses to the Full Business Case (FBC) conditions of approval have been submitted to DOH, including supporting documentation to provide assurance to DOH; these included a detailed implementation plan, revised affordability profile and the responses and assurances on the recommendations from the DOH Internal Audit Report along with supporting governance information relating to the Encompass Programme Board and the establishment of the Infrastructure Management Board. Mr Bannon suggested that it would be helpful to the

Board to have sight of the Implementation Plan setting out the key issues outlined in the Encompass Update paper including a column setting out timelines/milestones.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the governance role of the BSO Board and its responsibilities. To that end the Chair proposed to convene a meeting as soon as possible to clarify this important issue. Members endorsed this proposal.

Members noted the Encompass Update.

7.6 Covid 19 – Updates from Directors

The Chair invited executive colleagues to update members, on an exception basis, the additional work taking place due to Covid 19. Each Director provided members with a comprehensive update on their services areas.

8. GAC

8.1 Report from GAC Meeting held on 22 September 2020

The Chair of GAC briefed members on the key issues discussed at the GAC meeting held on 22 September 2020.

In particular the GAC Chair emphasised the quality of the service currently being received from Internal Audit, External Audit and BSO Finance in the context of the issue he was briefing the Board today and assured them he was very happy with service and quality from these service areas, particularly in the current difficult circumstances. The Chairman acknowledged the value of the Internal Audit and that the IT audit capability that had been developed and strengthened in recent years, in line with emerging risks. However within this context he raised two primary issues as follows.

1. How to progress IT Audits that have recommendations that require resolution by another authority outside BSO.
2. BSO management response time for implementation of Internal Audit recommendations

It was agreed that the DoF would take the lead on this issue and will produce a paper for consideration by SMT as a matter of urgency with a recommendation that an implementation plan would be produced on how to address the issues raised by GAC. A further meeting of GAC is scheduled to take place on 20 October where members will be updated on the way forward to resolve this matter.

It was also noted that the Chair of BSO has asked Miss P Gordon to become a member of GAC in the short term.

9. AOB

The Chair advised members that she has contacted DoH to remind them that the terms of office for a number of BSO NEDS will expire at the end of December.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BSO Board will take place on Thursday 29 October 2020 at 10.00 am.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Chair

Chief Executive

Date _____