

PPS Management Board

10.00am Tuesday 26 April 2022

Via videoconferencing

Members: Michael Agnew
Marianne O’Kane
Glenn Houston
David Best
Peter Luney

In Attendance: Tom Murphy (Private Office)
Claire Harrison (Comms)
Jo Anne Quinn (Finance) Item 9
Head of RMT Item

Secretariat: Policy and Information Unit

1. Apologies.

Mr Herron.

2. Welcome.

Mr Agnew welcomed members to the April 2022 Management Board and welcomed Mr Luney to his first meeting.

3. Declaration of Board Members’ Interests.

Mr Houston advised that his term as a Non-Executive Director with the Human Tissue Authority would end on 30 April 2022. Mr Best indicated that he will be finishing his term as Chair of the Health and Social Care Pensions Board on 30 June 2022, which included a three-month extension that he had agreed to.

4. Management Board Minutes.

The previous minutes were agreed.

5. Actions from the Management Board Meeting of 23 March 2022.

AP1-22/23 Mr Agnew to consult with PIU and SIT on establishing a DV Working Group tasked with conducting thematic Quality Assurance of the new Domestic Violence offence.

Closed - Mr Agnew advised there has been ongoing engagement with PSNI and they have agreed to put processes in place to monitor the quality of files. There has also been agreement in principle to conduct an early QA, however this will not be completed until the volume of files has increased. The proposal will be discussed further at the next Working Group meeting. PQC will be kept updated on this exercise and Management Board will be briefed as required.

AP3-22/23 Ms Quinn to review options for cost reductions following end of Quarter one if outcome of June Monitoring round not favourable.

Closed – See Item 9

6. Reports from Management Board Committee.

Senior Management Group 14 April 2022.

Members discussed the minutes and actions arising from the Senior Management Group meeting of 14 April 2022.

Mr Agnew advised that updates were provided on training opportunities. Pre-recorded training sessions have been launched online, with priority training identified and engagement with CPS and sharing of resources is ongoing.

Members were advised of an issue in respect of security clearance for the AA grade. Mr Luney advised that NICSHR are seeking legal opinion on the requirements. Considerations are being given to identifying posts that could be filled with lesser clearance, however it is acknowledged there are risks with this approach.

People and Resources Committee – 12 April 2022

Members reviewed and noted the matters discussed and actions arising from the People and Resources Committee meeting of 12 April 2022.

The People Plan presentation has been rescheduled for the 9 May 2022 and the presentation will also be shared with the Board.

There are concerns with management of sick absence compliance in particular recording and completion of return-to-work interviews which are significantly below target. A communication has been issued to staff highlighting the

importance of meeting targets and of signposting staff to areas of support if required. Figures for performance management are more positive, with 37% of staff having completed the end of year appraisals.

Mr Luney provided an update on the New Ways of Working (NWW) Pilot and feedback to date has been positive. TUS have made representations regarding the process for completion of work style agreements and meetings have been scheduled to discuss these matters. Members agreed it would be helpful to have sight of the feedback.

AP 4-22/23 Mr Luney to share feedback from the NWW pilot with members.

Mr Luney outlined that performance metrics have been established for the pilots and to date targets have been met. The Pilot is scheduled to run for 5 weeks, however it is proposed not to revert to the old ways of working but to continue with the NWW model. The Board agreed with this approach. Ms O’Kane outlined that the ADs who are members of PDC and she are of the view that the pilot should be extended as the timeframe has been impacted by Easter leave. It is also important that line managers are available in the office as required to give direction and guidance to staff.

Mr Best noted the agreement to re commence participation in voluntary events. These events are not resource intensive and have benefits in terms of team building and improving staff morale.

Performance and Delivery Committee – 25 April 2022

Ms O’Kane provided a verbal update of the matters discussed at the Performance and Delivery Committee on 25 April 2022.

Ms O’Kane outlined concerns raised by ADs about the risk of discontinuation of recovery funding and the potential for staff to be released. There is concern that this will have a major impact on the ability to maintain a steady state. Staff morale is low in some areas and there is a lack of new resource available to help alleviate pressures. Line Managers are actively encouraging and motivating their staff and are keeping workloads and file allocations manageable. Members discussed ways in which more support could be provided to staff.

Members were advised of ongoing consultation in respect of the report into the SCU review. Updates were provided on an issue identified with the system on flagging Domestic Violence and this is being taking forward with the working group.

Ms O’Kane highlighted that positive feedback has been received on the new intranet, staff are able to access information quickly and finding it much more user friendly, credit is to be given to the Communications Team for this work.

Policy and Quality Committee –

The next meeting is scheduled for 9 May 2022.

7. Strategic Improvement Board – 24 February 2022

Mr Agnew provided members with an overview of the actions and matters discussed at the Strategic Improvement Board meeting held on 12 April 2022. An update was provided on the roll out of the Content Manager project, members discussed the need for ongoing engagement with the ADs and issues were raised regarding the management of material in the libraries and historical emails.

Mr Houston highlighted the benefits of prioritising the projects and raised the potential of tracking progress to determine whether projects are being delivered on time and within resource allocation. Mr Agnew outlined that from a project management aspect, it is scheduled to have PIDs for each of the priority projects. It was agreed it would be helpful to have an overview of progress of the priority projects.

AP 5-22/23 Mr Agnew to consult with SIT to have an overview of the priority projects, including progress against plans in terms of time and resource.

Mr Best queried issues with the AOE business case. Mr Agnew advised that there is potential of additional expenditure and is being raised with DOJ for completeness.

8. Performance Summary.

Quarterly KPI Report

Mr Agnew provided an overview of the Quarterly KPI Report.

Comparing Quarters 1-4 in 2021/22 with figures for the same period in 2020/21 there has been a 1.2% decrease on files received, with a 3.2% increase in case weight 1-4; and 1.7% decrease in case weight 5-8. In the overall caseload there has been a 14.9% decrease since the previous quarter with a 3.4% reduction in case weight 1-4 and 22.8% in case weight 5-8.

Members were advised that the significant drop in the summary cases may be attributed to additional resources having been deployed including the use of overtime, this combined with a focus to clear the DV cases as the profile of queues indicated high numbers of these cases.

The numbers of decisions issued per casework day were reviewed. The decision standards of SPPs in the regional offences were exceeded in March 2022, however the target for PPs were not met. Performance has been impacted as DV specialists were running contests and there may be some underperformance issues. Ms O’Kane agreed to look at the figures and report back to next meeting.

AP 6-22/23 Ms O’Kane to consider figures for the decisions issued and report back to the next Board.

The percentage of indictable decisions where a DIR was required is similar to the position at the end of 2020/21. However, this varies greatly across the regional offices, e.g., Southern at 80.0% compares with Belfast & Eastern at 47.6%

Mr Houston indicated that the number of decisions issued is consistent with performance in the previous year, with a reduction of 0.6% and therefore, in broad terms performance is steady. Mr Agnew advised that the significant increase in decisions issued in indictable prosecutions can be attributed to Case Preparation working to reduce build up created by Covid in the Crown Courts.

Mr Best highlighted the figures for unallocated files and also noted the benefits of having a commentary and indication of performance set out against the organisation’s objectives. Mr Agnew advised that a relatively small reduction in output aligned with a slight increase in CW 1-4 has led to an increase in unallocated files.

Members noted the figure in the Staff Attitude Survey denoting a 10% decrease in the staff who felt that the PPS was a good organisation to work for. It was agreed further clarification on this figure would be helpful.

AP 7-22/23 Mr Luney to provide the Board with clarification of this figure in the Staff Attitude Survey.

9. Finance

Finance Update February 2022.

Members reviewed and discussed the key financial issues being managed by the Finance Team as at February 2022.

Ms Quinn provided updated figures for March and advised that there is now an anticipated resource underspend of approximately £400k and a capital underspend of £150k. Supply have been made aware of these revised projections.

In respect of procurement, contract compliance has been consistent, there are two Direct Award Contracts in place and no new awards in February.

Draft 2022-23 Allocation Proposals

In the latest contingency budget for 2022/23 there has been an allocation of £35.185 m of resource cash and £435K capital. This proposed allocation will not be sufficient to manage the requirements for salary spending, the allocation provides for annual leave and the apprenticeship levy but does not include funding for ongoing projects.

The estimated requirement includes provision for current legacy staffing, overtime and a proportion of recovery staffing. It does not include the remaining requirements for recovery, additional legacy and SCU staff and the pay award. The estimated requirement for GAE and court costs includes counsel fees which have been adjusted for recovery and includes an allocation for funded projects. The non-court related expenditure includes accommodation, ICT, staffing costs and communication and library costs.

The implementation of IFRS 16 in respect of leases will result in a decreased requirement in our cash budgets and a corresponding increase in non-cash. We may be able to attain additional non-cash in respect of this and as such utilise the available cash cover reducing the overall PPS pressure to manage in year. However, DoF Supply may request that any surplus cash cover is provided in lieu of the non-cash cover provided. Mr Agnew queried the timescale to expect clarification on the deployment of this money, Ms Quinn advised that this should be known in the next few weeks.

Overall, there are significant pressures within the contingency budget, with allocations unable to be made in line with requirements. Bids will be submitted at the earliest monitoring round for IT onboarding, recovery, legacy, staffing and non-cash.

Contingency Budget 2022/23 Savings Options.

Board members reviewed the paper detailing the limited options available for managing deficits in the contingency budget, noting potential reductions, funding streams and reliance on bids.

Members discussed the options, including the impact of a reduction in resources on the business and the timescales and associated risks with taking action to address the shortfall. Bids for additional funding have been submitted as part of the Budget 2022-25 exercise and there are ongoing discussions with Supply. It is also noted that the outcomes of any monitoring rounds may not yield funding until further into the financial year.

It was agreed that further analysis was required of the options available in respect of staffing and alongside these business priorities need to be defined. Several

scenarios should be modelled detailing the impacts and consequences on the various areas of the business and based on potential funding outcomes. Mr Luney agreed that Finance and RMT would carry out initial analysis and engage with operational colleagues in relation to priorities and impact.

AP 8-22/23 Mr Luney to coordinate the development of cost scenarios detailing the implications/impact on the business based on the range of potential funding outcomes.

10. People

RMT Update April 2022

Members reviewed and noted the RMT update for April 2022, including staffing levels, recruitment, corporate social responsibility, training and the people agenda.

The Head of RMT provided an update on lack of progress with the PP competition and actions being taken to move this forward. Members were also advised that a review of AA posts is ongoing and it is likely that some posts will be revised incorporating additional duties, consequently converting posts to the AO grade.

Mr Best queried whether there was data available in respect of the uptake in training, particularly relating to staff well-being /mental health. The Head of RMT agreed to make further enquiries and report back to the Board.

AP 9-22/23 Mr Luney to provide data in respect of the uptake of training on wellbeing and mental health.

NICS HR Summary Report April 2022

Members reviewed and discussed the NICS HR April report.

The Head of RMT provided an overview of the staffing position including the breakdown of permanent and agency staff. Mr Best highlighted the 36% increase of Agency staff since the end of March 2021.

Members noted the latest performance management figures and compliance targets for absence management with a particular focus on long term absences.

BCS Review

The Head of RMT advised that the final report and recommendations have been received and are currently under consideration. Consultation is to take place with SCU team members in due course.

11. Governance Issues.

Corporate Risks Register 2022-23

Members discussed the 2022/23 Risk Register and noted the planned actions/ mitigations and status and rating of all the risks.

The residual risk for Risk 1 has been reduced to 6 with the likelihood now 2 and impact 3. The inherent assessment for Risk 2 has been raised to 8 with the impact changed to 4. Members also agreed that the likelihood assessment of the inherent in Risk 8 should be increased to 4 with overall assessment changed to 12.

Amendments were also proposed to the wording and content of the risk descriptions, controls and planned actions in Risks 4, 5 & 6. Reviews of Risks 10 and 11 will be completed following meetings with TUS and feedback from correspondence with NICS HR respectively.

Criminal Justice Inspection Report

Mr Agnew provide an update on the ongoing inspection. A meeting has been scheduled to brief the Director on the emerging findings.

12. AOB.

Policy Framework for Risk Management.

Members reviewed and noted the revised Policy Framework for Risk Management.

13. Papers for noting.

Communication Update.

Ms Harrison provided an overview of the key communication activities including media queries, stakeholder engagement, the Digital Strategy, intranet and internal communications.

Communication Planner.

The Board Members discussed and reviewed the communications planner and update.

14. Next Meeting.

Video Conferencing 20 May 2022 at 10.00am.

Summary of Action Points arising from Management Board.

Meeting of 26 April 2022

AP 4-22/23	<i>Mr Luney to share feedback from the NWW pilot with members.</i>
AP 5-22/23	<i>Mr Agnew to consult with SIT to have an overview of the priority projects, including progress against plans in terms of time and resource.</i>
AP 6-22/23	<i>Ms O’Kane to consider figures for the decisions issued and report back to the next Board.</i>
AP 7-22/23	<i>Mr Luney to provide the Board with Clarification of this figure in the Staff Attitude Survey.</i>
AP 8-22/23	<i>Mr Luney to coordinate the development of cost scenarios detailing he implications/impact on the business based on the range of potential funding outcomes.</i>
AP 9-22/23	<i>Mr Luney to provide data in respect of the uptake of training on wellbeing and mental health.</i>

Action Points carried over from previous meetings.

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