

Minutes of VMD Management Board meeting held 23 March 2022

Members

Julia Drown (Chair)
David Catlow
Timothy Riley

Present

Abigail Seager – VMD
Gavin Hall - VMD
Mike Griffiths – VMD
Julian Flexman - VMD
Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

1. Announcements and apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Philippa Hardwick.

2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

2.1 None.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2021

VMDMB 22/02

3.1 The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising/Actions

VMDMB 22/03 & 04

- 4.1 VMD is assessing responses received to its request for comments on SQP training and procedures in advance of a workshop to be held on 30 March. Members looked forward to seeing the outcomes at the next board meeting.
- 4.2 Apologies were given on behalf of VMD's head of Green strategy, Callum Harris, who was not available to attend the meeting but had provided a report on VMD's approach to sustainability which confirmed that it contributes fully to Defra group strategy and is meeting their targets. The biggest contributor to energy use is through goods and services, usage of which has been relatively low during lockdown, but travel will increase significantly soon as VMD looks to resume more business-as-usual activities as the pandemic restrictions ease and also looks to establish working relationships with countries in Africa and elsewhere.
- 4.3 VMD is working with DHSC to look at improving the carbon footprint of supply chains which can involve medicines being moved thousands of miles and standards may be set in legislation in time. It was asked whether a requirement for an environmental impact statement could be added to marketing authorisation documents and VMD agreed to take this under consideration. Methane reducing products for cattle are being developed but understanding the efficacy data is challenging and diet has a large effect.
- 4.4 Members appreciated the report but felt it was necessary to challenge ourselves to do more in a time of crisis and questioned the need for extensive travel and the effectiveness of carbon offsetting policies. They welcomed the fact that the Defra wide advisory committee on tackling climate change was restarting. It was a topic the board would like to revisit and the Chair would find out what our board members felt could be done to reduce our travel.
- ### 5. Civil Service People Survey results
- 5.1 The survey had been run in November and VMD results had shown a decrease of satisfaction in most areas which was concerning. Known problem areas include the effects of covid on working practices and unease with the way the change to the executive structure last year was communicated. The VMD has arranged for an independent assessor to talk to staff and carry out an analysis. Small changes have been made already and progress will be checked at mid-year.
- 5.2 Members noted that certain negative themes were endemic across agencies and that VMD outscored most in several areas and figures should be treated with caution. The

agency had done well to deal with several extreme events in recent years and exhaustion was to be expected. VMD agreed and the focus in the new business plan would be on prioritisation and reducing the current pace of work which was felt to be unsustainable. Members were pleased with the measures being taken to address issues and looked forward to hearing more about them.

6. CEO's Report

VMDMB 22/13

6.1 The CEO's report was presented and reviewed.

7. Delivery against the Business Plan 2021/22

VMDMB 22/06

7.1 The delivery report was reviewed and the good progress made against targets noted. In particular the large increase in social media followers was welcomed.

8. Draft KPIs and Business Plan 2022/23

8.1 VMD reported that it is producing a high-level document setting out the aims for its business plan for next year which will be published in April. Behind this will sit a document for managing internal activities and KPIs which will tie in with Defra aims and next year's annual report for reporting purposes.

9. Finance report

VMDMB 22/07

9.1 The finance report was noted.

10. Contracts

VMDMB 22/08 & 09

10.1 VMD's contracts with a value over 100K were reviewed. It was noted that some of the contracts were for more than one year and it would be useful to know their duration. The importance of negotiating when more than one supplier was available was accepted.

10.2 The delegated authority limits were noted and it was agreed to review these again in three years' time along with procurement policies and procedures.

11. Framework Document

VMDMB 22/10

11.1 VMD's revised framework document setting out its relationship with Defra had been provided and members would send comments in writing.

12. Management Board annual assessment form

VMDMB 22/11

12.1 The form was agreed and would be circulated to attendees to complete.

13. Management Board work plan

VMDMB 22/12

13.1 VMD agreed to bring its annual report on communications to the board when ready. Members also asked for an update on anthelmintic resistance to be given at the September meeting.

14. Any other business

14.1 None.