

Minutes of VMD Management Board meeting held on 5 JULY 2022

Members

Julia Drown (Chair)
David Catlow
Philippa Hardwick
Timothy Riley

Present

Abigail Seager – VMD
Gavin Hall - VMD
Mike Griffiths – VMD
Muiz Agbaje - VMD
Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

1. Announcements and apologies for absence

- 1.1 A minute's silence was held in memory of two VMD staff who had died recently.
- 1.2 The Board's attention was drawn to the Pride flag being flown outside VMD and the Board fully supported it being flown for a whole month.

2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

- 2.1 Timothy Riley has been appointed ARAC Chair to the FSA.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022

VMDMB 22/15

- 3.1 The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising/Actions

VMDMB 22/16 & 17

- 4.1 The Information and Co-ordination Engagement (ICE) teams' annual communications report was reviewed. Members requested that the proposal to replace the switchboard service with email contact addresses be formally reviewed to ensure that a good service to the public is maintained. To be more efficient, the team had prioritised and reduced the number of external events it attended and now ran more events virtually which allowed it to better target audiences. The need for physical presence had reduced due to the use of more remote platforms like YouTube and increased use of social media to get messages out.
- 4.2 Members found the report to be a useful record of ICE's activities and it was agreed to review progress annually. The team would be running a stakeholder mapping exercise later this year and it was agreed this would be a useful focus topic.

ACTION

5. Annual Customer Survey Results

VMDMB 22/18

- 5.1 The annual customer survey had been run by the usual provider and 88 responses had been received covering 14 different areas of the VMD's business, 13 of which had been found to be excellent with one falling slightly below this level but still good. Members found these results very encouraging and were pleased that individual teams would be reviewing and learning from them. They also provided good evidence about the standard of the agency's work.

6. CEO's Report

VMDMB 22/19

- 6.1 The CEO's report was presented and members noted the extreme pressure the agency was under due to the falling headcount of permanent staff and recruitment controls. As proposed at ARAC, the Chair of Management Board would write to the Head of FFaB to express their concerns.
- 6.2 The review of staff wellbeing had been completed by an external contractor and it reported that staff felt that communications were improving and appreciated the openness of the new Chief Executive and the measures that had been put in place.

- 6.3 Relations with the EU were deteriorating and the Commission had removed the UK's access to the European product database which was frustrating to VMD and Industry. Availability issues would be discussed at the next meeting of the Animal Health and Welfare Board which was going to be held at the VMD.
- 6.4 The performance of the new travel booking provider was disappointing as it had lost bookings and booked inadequate hotel rooms and this had been taken up with the company and was being monitored. VMD was working with Paul Caldwell, RPA's Operations Director, on safety issues for travellers. Abigail Seager has become an official champion for women's safety and has made it clear to all staff that they do not have to stay anywhere they feel is unsafe. Some travel insurance exclusions were being flagged with Defra and VMD staff would not be sent to any country without appropriate insurance in place.

7. Business Plan 2022/23

VMDMB 22/20

- 7.1 The VMD's new high level business plan containing its eight major objectives for the year was presented and it was noted that detailed KPIs sat behind this for regular review by teams at meetings of the Business Delivery Committee. It was agreed that the plan would be provided at future meetings with reports of KPI progress by exception.
- 7.2 Members asked if a more precise target of environmental efficiencies could be made and VMD said it was a Defra target but they would investigate and report back.

ACTION

8. 2022/23 Budget and Forecast

VMDMB 22/21

- 8.1 The budget and forecast was reviewed and the reduced subsidy from Defra noted.

9. Finance report

- 9.1 Actuals for April and May were not yet available and would be provided for the next meeting.

10. Framework Document

VMDMB 22/22

- 10.1 VMD's framework document setting out its relationship with Defra had been finalised since the last meeting and was in the process of being signed off.

11. Management Board annual assessment results

VMDMB 22/23

- 11.1 The results of the annual assessment exercise were satisfactory and the Board was found to be working effectively. Members asked if they could meet stakeholders and staff members at future meetings and VMD agreed to come up with a proposal.

ACTION

12. Management Board work plan

VMDMB 22/24

- 12.1 The plan was reviewed.

13. Any other business

- 13.1 Dates for meetings next year would be circulated to members for agreement.