



The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Minutes

FINAL
(7 April 2016)

Title of meeting	PINS Board Meeting
Date	10 March 2016 Time 12.30pm
Venue	PINS Boardroom, Bristol
Chair	Sara Weller (SW) – Chairman
Present	Steve Quartermain (SQ) – Chief Executive Jayne Erskine (JE) – Non Executive Director Susan Johnson (SJ) - Non Executive Director David Holt (DH) - Non Executive Director Mark Southgate (MS) – Chief Operating Officer Tony Thickett (TT) – Director, Wales Jon Banks (JB) – Acting Director, Corporate Services Peter Schofield (PS) – Director General, DCLG Phil Hammond (PH) – Director, Casework (item 6) Tom Warth (TW) – Head of Operations (item 6) Peter Sloman (PSI) – Head of Finance & Commercial (item 7) Simone Cowdery (SC) – Board Secretary
In attendance	Janet Goodland (JG) – Non Executive Director
Apologies	

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 11 November 2015

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
11.	Jan Ryan	Present deliverables and measures of success at the January Board meeting.	8.9	Complete - JB gave a verbal update at the April meeting.

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 11 February 2016

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Jon Banks	JB to add a workstream in the financial plan to make sure the action against demand management from the January PINS Board meeting is taken forward.	2.2	Complete – included under the fees/ income workstream.
5.	Jon Banks	JB to review in more detail the contributory factors increasing hours/decision, and either include it in the narrative or in a	5.11	Complete – item on the April agenda

		separate paper at the March Board. This agenda item was moved to the April Board.		
8.	Tony Thickett	The Welsh Language Measure update should include how we address funding, either by recharging for the service or budgeting for the cost.	6.14	By 6 September. The September PINS Board will take place in Wales. NP has added to the forward agenda.

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 10 March 2016

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Jon Banks	Look at action 11 from 11 November meeting and either circulate success factors or move the action date.	2.2	Complete - JB gave a verbal update at the April meeting.
2.	Jon Banks	Follow up on action 11 from 9 December re the lack of risk and opportunities which should have been presented at the March ARAC meeting.	2.3	May Board – JB will follow up with a paper.
3.	Natasha Perrett	Add review of the Strategic Risk Register and emerging risks to the PINS Board forward planner.	2.5	Complete – added to the June agenda
4.	Natasha Perrett	Management Board forward planner to be updated to include Whistleblowing reports or concerns. Whistleblowing should be reviewed on a monthly basis.	5.3	Complete – added to the MB session on Governance on 12 April
5.	Sarah Richards & Management Board	Management Board to lead on creating an open culture with SLT which filters through to teams.	5.5	Agenda item for the 12 April SLT meeting.
6.	Phil Hammond	Update the all planning casework expected flow table to include CTP.	6.9	Complete – updated table included under item 5 of the April agenda.
7.	Mark Southgate	Yield management, productivity and workforce planning to come back to the Board in 2-3 months.	6.13 & 6.15	June Board
8.	Phil Hammond	Track the gradual progression and key steps to show the cut over from classic to CTP, showing the reduction in classic and growth in CTP.	6.15	Complete – included under item 5 of the April agenda.
9.	Jon Banks/ Jayne Beeslee	At the April People Committee there should be a deep dive on	7.12	Complete - Verbal update given

		recruitment and training.		at the April People Committee meeting and agenda item added to the People Committee forward planner.
10.	Peter Sloman	Make the following amendments to the MI pack: - A clear set of milestones should be included in the MI pack to the Board. - Add a projection to the budget section of the report. - Move the customer quality section to the front of the report. - Capture the areas of Ministerial confidence and stakeholder reputation as a narrative alongside events and media coverage.	7.13, 7.14 & 7.18	June Board
11.	PINS Board	PINS Board to consider what else should be included in the MI pack.	7.18	29 April – comments to Peter Sloman
12.	PINS Board	PINS Board to provide comments and feedback on the Board forward planner to Natasha.	8.1	Complete
13.	Jon Banks & Sarah Richards	Ensure the key Business Plan topics are included in the agenda forward look for discussion at the April Board.	8.3	Complete

Minutes

1.0	<p>Welcome and Declaration of Interests</p> <p>1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board to the meeting; apologies were received from JG.</p> <p>1.2 The Chair called for declarations of interest of which there were none.</p>
2.0	<p>Minutes of 11 February Board Meeting (Part One)</p> <p>2.1 No further comments were received on the February minutes.</p> <p>2.2 Action 11 from November meeting. SW queried the timeframe as there is not another meeting before 31 March unless Jan Ryan will be circulating success factors. SW asked JB to look into this and to either circulate by end of March or move the action on.</p> <p>2.3 Action 11 from December meeting. SW could not see a risks and</p>

opportunities schedule in the paper submitted to ARAC. SW asked JB to follow up after the meeting.

2.4 Action 5 from February meeting. SW agreed that it was good that this emerging paper on increasing hours per decisions had been pushed back until April for further work to be done.

2.5 DH commented on action 10 from the January meeting. Emerging risks were discussed at ARAC and it was agreed that it was useful for the Board to have sight of this. DH proposed that, at the Board meeting where the Strategic Risk Register is considered, there should also be a paper on emerging risks alongside as this will help inform the Board. This will continue to come to ARAC, principally for December meeting. Therefore, it should come to the Board meeting in the middle of the year. SW suggested adding it to the forward planner when this is discussed at the end of the meeting.

Agreed:

2a) The minutes reflect an accurate record of the February Board meeting.

2b) JB to look at action 11 from 11 November meeting and either circulate success factors by end of March or move the action date.

2c) JB to follow up on action 11 from 9 December meeting re lack of risk and opportunities schedule in the ARAC paper and advise/add to the April finance update.

3.0

Committee Chair: update

(a) Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (meeting of 10 March)

3.1 DH explained the key items that were discussed at the Committee. This included:

- a deep dive on the Strategic Risk Register, which raised questions around programme management and whether we are sufficiently applying lessons learnt around the organisation.
- the positive feedback on reports from external audit, particularly related to follow-up audit on MI reporting, and thinking about how to incorporate this in the Governance statement.
- a useful debate on audit reports.

3.2 SQ commented that Management Board have agreed to raise the profile of these reports and raise their engagement with them.

3.3 Management Board have received a report which looked at the overarching Programme Management approach. It was agreed that the board has a role to play in maintaining an overview of progress on the overall programme.

3.4 SW agreed that a clear forward plan for Board and committees can help by actively adding the key projects to the agendas.

3.5 CQPSC had given a verbal update at the last meeting. SW asked if there

	<p>were any further comments on the minutes included in the Board pack.</p> <p>3.6 SJ followed up from the last meeting on actions 4 and 6 in the minutes. Action 4 centered around contacting the ombudsman to have figures released on how many times they are contact about PINS. In relation to action 6 which focused on the customer charter, SJ said it would be useful to obtain the feedback to find out how the event was received.</p> <p>3.7 Customer groups including our stakeholders is an agenda item on the May CQPSC meeting, which Jo Esson and SJ have discussed and agreed will be a discussion paper. Jo will flesh out the paper with input from the organisation to set out what the groups might look like, which stakeholders should be involved with input from the NEDs.</p> <p>3.8 SW asked MS if he could include in the CO&PS Committee discussion, an outline of his role as customer champion. MS confirmed that Operations Group will take the lead on customers alongside the other Executive groups (for Finance, People and Professional Standards).</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u> 3a) To note the update from the Committee Chairs.</p>
4.0	<p>Chief Executive's update</p> <p>4.1 SQ noted that this would be his last Board meeting before returning to DCLG. He thanked the Board members, Non-executive Directors, Management Board and staff for the support he has received whilst here.</p> <p>4.2 Casework is challenging; however some things are working well. In Casework Transformation Project (CTP), cases are now being dealt with quickly, on target and all inspectors are digital.</p> <p>4.3 SQ confirmed that Jayne Beeslee will be joining us on an interim basis from 1 April to replace Tracy Hodgkiss. She has considerable HR experience, and an understanding of Welsh Government.</p> <p>4.4 SQ also confirmed that final touches are being put in place for the Finance Director post with a view to launch recruitment in March.</p> <p>4.5 Feedback from the Inspectors' Conference has shown it to be highly valued as a learning and networking event. There is, however, scope to reflect on how effective this substantial use of time is for Inspectors and if there is another way to provide similar benefits in the future. The new CEO may wish to consider how to get the learning and interaction in different ways, including through more regular engagement with Inspectors.</p> <p>4.6 The stakeholder event has received good feedback, but based on limited returns so far. There is a need to review Stakeholder engagement; SQ suggested PINS should have more interaction with stakeholders throughout the</p>

	<p>year, including the major customers/users of its services.</p> <p>Agreed: 4a) To note the update from the CEO.</p>
5.0	<p>Casework information reporting - follow up audit</p> <p>5.1 The report went to ARAC, but SQ requested a specific item to look at the report. It gives a green rating and highlights the considerable progress that has been made. This is a very good audit opinion. The only criticism relates to awareness of the whistleblowing policy as a scheme.</p> <p>5.2 SQ reported back to the Board on the Whistleblowing policy and what actions had been put in place following the report. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeating the awareness on the data screens as soon as they are back in place after the refurbishment • publish a main article on PINS net • use of notice boards in kitchens to communicate the policy • discussion at SLT meetings and Directors. <p>On the overall culture of transparency and willingness to escalate and deal with issues, it is clear that progress has been made but pressure will need to be maintained to avoid falling back into old ways by default.</p> <p>5.3 DH suggested adding this item to the Management Board meeting to see what concerns/reports have been raised over a certain period. It will help people be proactive and encourage them to report and respond. If added to the agenda of Management Board it may help deliver the message throughout the organisation. SQ agreed that it was a good idea to have a Management Board meeting that deals with Governance and for reports on whistleblowing to be added.</p> <p>5.4 SW agreed that it was about visibility, the process of being out and about, holding roundtables with people, leaving space open for people to speak to you and making sure their feedback is captured and acted upon.</p> <p>5.5 Management Board will need to think how they want to develop the progress made and continue to evolve it. It is about ensuring people in the organisation have a voice, whether it about is good ideas or problems. The SLT need to ensure they are having conversations with their teams and that it gets fed through to create an open culture.</p> <p>Agreed: 5a) Management Board forward planner to be updated to include Whistleblowing reports or concerns. Whistleblowing should be reviewed on a monthly basis. 5b) Management Board to lead on creating an open culture with SLT which filters through to teams.</p>

6.0

Performance update

6.1 MS presented the paper which addressed casework backlog, workforce planning and CTP.

6.2 Analysis indicates that we have reached the tipping point in relation to casework backlog with 20% less in the backlog compared to December last year. Un-started, HAS and CAS cases are on target. The process time for Classic appeals is varied, but the number of cases going through this route is managed and the expectation is a useful metric.

6.3 DH queried the flow of appeals, whether they were CTP or classic, and if we knew where the pinch points were and how we would recognise that. TW explained managers are receiving reports to help them manage more locally and PH said as the pinch points are identified at the front of the process in CTP this is more helpful and action can be taken earlier.

6.4 SW questioned chart 2 and the forward projection, and queried which line reflects the trajectory to guide the board on what they should be monitoring. MS confirmed his expectation is that it should be between the yellow and green lines. The green line is based on performance in the December 15 to February 16 3 month period with the yellow based on December 15 only.

6.5 DH raised a query about the spending review and budgets. 2015/16 may be the last year we have funds available ahead of budget and DH asked if we were convinced that we have used the money early enough and take enough of a risk (eg on resources) rather than leaving investment to the last minute.

6.6 JB spoke on this year's budget and confirmed that there is not much time left to do anything. In the longer term, there will be less on admin resource but inspector resource had been partially protected. Budgets are tight for 16/17 and beyond but MB are exploring how we can generate in year savings which we could use to front load spend.

6.7 MS confirmed that we have already been taking on extra Inspectors, using NSIs and are pushing ACS. JB agreed that we may not have pushed to the limit on these two fronts, and that it is important to be on top of them next year.

6.8 In terms of potential future appeals intake, the latest DCLG quarterly planning statistics are showing a 1% rise in planning applications, but a 4% increase in planning applications allowed. This means the pool of potential appeals is not growing. There is a risk that PINS will lose Inspectors above the current forecast assumption of 20 FTE per annum, due to retirement or reduction in hours. This is being watched closely through the Operations Group.

6.9 There is an appetite to update the all planning casework live table, which looks at the flow of live casework to include CTP. This will help with

understanding the key steps.

6.10 MS spoke about workforce planning and looking at where Inspectors are placed. On the face of it, there is a deficit in band 3 but an over-supply in band 2. However, when utilisation of Inspectors at band is factored in this changes substantially, as Band 2 inspectors are used at Bands 1, 2 and 3 to cover work that is locationally convenient and fits their skills profile. There is a need to look at increasing the effective use of band 2 Inspectors on band 2 work and this may happen in CTP. In general terms, MS confirmed that in principle there will be regular recruitment at lower levels to ensure steady supply. A band 2 to band 3 promotion board will be held in April.

6.11 SJ asked in terms of readiness, do we have the volume ready to move on to higher Bands; MS confirmed that we are confident about finding the first tranche of potential promotees, but after that the pipeline may be depleted. This is being looked at through the Operations Group.

6.12 Utilisation was discussed and the need to monitor over time. SQ agreed with this but also explained that there are challenges with having experienced and inexperienced Inspectors in the same band. There are currently on-going talks with Prospect on productivity.

6.13 The Board acknowledged that there had been good progress this month on increasing visibility of workforce planning issues, and that revised ways of looking at effectiveness, such as yield management, may be helpful. A more strategic discussion should come back to the board in due course, looking at ways of increasing and measuring overall workforce productivity and effectiveness.

6.14 PH confirmed that we are building on a firm foundation and e-working is helping the CTP team feel energised. CAT went live today and testing is being carried out this week. There were briefings with staff on Monday which set out some unpalatable figures in relation to productivity savings; our transition plan is to shut classic work down in November.

6.15 SW agreed that seeing the gradual progression and key steps to cut over from classic to CTP would help the board get a sense of the transition from one to the other. Discussions of utilisation and yield management are longer term issues that do not need to be addressed immediately.

Agreed:

- 6a) PH to update the all planning casework expected flow table to include CTP.
- 6b) MS - yield management, productivity and workforce planning to come back to the Board in 2-3 months (June Board).
- 6c) PH to track the gradual progression and key steps to show the cut over from classic to CTP, showing the reduction in classic and growth in CTP.

7.0

Business Plan, Strategic Plan & Delivery Plans

7.1 JB presented a revised slimmed down Strategic and Business Plan detailing priorities and delivery plans for the next year. The focus is on the delivery plans giving the details on what we are going to do. PSI explained that the summary aims to reflect the key issues to make the document clear to use throughout the organisation.

7.2 The board started with the vision and values. They raised a question on who the audience is outside of the people we want it to be, and encouraged management to consider the various stakeholder groups (eg customers).

7.3 PS agreed that the first page will want to jog the consciousness of the organisation; it needs to have the sense of one PINS. DCLG's vision introduced some challenging words, such as "unflinchingly focused on Ministerial Priorities", and as such it got a reaction and got people talking about it. PS encouraged the MB to consider adding something to get people talking about PINS.

7.4 SJ spoke of the visual impact and the use of visuals as they will be remembered more. There should also be congruence across the various strategy and plan documentation that is produced.

7.5 People across the organisation should know their contribution to the Strategic Plan. SQ commented that there had previously been lots of actions in the Plan which weren't clear on how they were being monitored. 'Un-packing' this in the new Plan has helped clarify accountabilities. Staff had previously felt that the Business Plan is full of targets that are not going to be met. DH suggested having a column that looks at where we are today. This could act as an admission that PINS is not where it said last year that it would be by now and this could help staff see the plan as more credible.

7.6 Onward communication of the Plan is a challenge which might be considered by the next People Group under guidance from Jayne Beeslee. There was support from the Board for the one page visual summary, with a number of comments on specific bullet points. The link was made to how we measure progress against these bullet points, and the KPI pack. SW asked the management board to ensure that the Plan is visualised in the right way and links to measures. The Board will return to the Strategy after the end of the summer.

MI reporting pack

7.7 JB presented a proposed MI reporting pack for the coming year. In particular sections this is work in progress, in particular the People section, and captures the areas of measurement talked about over the last few months.

7.8 One proposed change is to extend the reporting timetable so that

Management Board can see the pack to enable it to provide adequate assurance and commentary for the Board. Given the challenge of rearranging Board dates for 2016, the timetable will be curtailed for the next 9 months. Depending on progress, Board dates for 2017 will be set to enable longer reporting timelines if needed.

7.9 DH suggested we may not need all the data available at the same time. It is important to get some data sooner rather than later (for example operational data is critical whereas financial data, given the nature of PINS, may be less time-critical). However, DH agreed that it is important for data coming to the board to have been reviewed by Management Board first.

7.10 JB confirmed that he has asked HR to look at what is in the People Strategy and the measures to be able to pull the People section together.

7.11 After earlier discussions on timescales between recruitment and training, DH is keen to include in the Mi pack a forecast of what the position is going to be in a certain number of months. This gives the board assurance. JB confirmed this will be in the first measure and he is keen that it has a forward look on it. It is also important to separate out admin staff from Inspectors.

7.12 SW pointed out that there will be a People Committee in April and maybe there could be a deep dive on measures and recruitment and training. JB confirmed that this pack will be for the Board and that a more detailed pack will be for the groups. The challenge will be on what is relevant here and what should go to the Board and Executive sub-committees.

7.13 SW mentioned that DCLG have a clear milestone report, which reported on delivery of milestones due in the month. DH agreed talking about the headline milestones helps think of what is important in the course of the year.

7.14 Looking at the Operations section, it mentioned the number of appeals as a baseline which was helpful. It would also be useful to add a projection for the budget section.

7.15 SW suggested that the Board needed sight of performance in other casework to keep the board informed of what is happening in those areas.

7.16 On the reporting of income, TT asked if we were to have a DNS column to which PSI confirmed there will be a separate one next year.

7.17 On the savings, SW confirmed that the audit columns (eg showing rating and RAG in two separate columns) will be changing following the morning's ARAC.

7.18 SW asked for the board to consider what else might be needed. On all charts axes should be clearly labelled. It was suggested that customer measures should be reported at the front of the pack (quality and timeliness)

One thing the Board noted was not captured is Ministerial confidence and Stakeholder reputation. Management were asked to consider how this could be captured, perhaps as a narrative alongside cases, events and media coverage.

7.19 PSI confirmed that the Board will see this pack first at its June meeting, which will have April data; Management Board will see it prior to this.

Agreed:

7a) At the April People Committee there should be a deep dive on recruitment and training.

7b) A clear report of progress against key project milestones should be included in the MI pack to the Board.

7c) Add a projection to the budget section of the report.

7d) Move the customer quality and timeliness section to the front of the report.

7e) PINS Board to consider what else should be included in the MI pack.

7f) Capture the areas of Ministerial confidence and stakeholder reputation eg as a narrative alongside cases, events and media coverage.

8.0 Forward agenda & AOB

8.1 SW discussed the forward look and suggested it should be populated around the business plan. Items discussed today which are not yet on the revised forward include Shared services, Risk appetite matrix & Strategic Risk register review with the emerging risks, and IT strategy update. SW asked the Board to take it away, make comments and feed back to Natasha with a view to having the right forward look agenda by April.

8.2 SW went through the April meeting forward agenda. There were the standard items and Peter was asked if he will provide an overview on policy matters in DCLG. SW asked the board if they wished to add anything to which they didn't and it was agreed that it would be useful to use the time to tour the office and look at the accommodation project outcomes.

8.3 It was suggested that JB and the new CEO should look at the Business plan cycle to identify items which need to be dropped into the forward agenda.

8.4 SW thanked SQ for having stood in admirably in the role of CEO over the last 6 months. He has changed the culture in being visible and approachable and has treated problems as opportunities. SW thanked him for his support, energy, enthusiasm and commitment.

8.5 SQ responded that he had greatly enjoyed his time at PINS and felt that he had made a difference. He thanked everyone around the table for the support received, and especially complemented the new Non-executive Directors for their challenge which had helped Management Board to raise their game.

8.6 PS agreed that SQ came into the role with a long term view and has taken all the steps to put PINS on the right road and that will be his legacy. PS closed

by saying that he was greatly looking forward to welcoming SQ back to DCLG.

Agreed:

8a) PINS Board to provide comments and feedback on the Board forward planner.

8b) JB and Sarah Richards to ensure the key Business Plan topics are included in the agenda forward look for discussion at the April Board.

Next meeting: 7 April, 12.30 – 3.30