The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

FINAL
(16 March 2017)

Minutes

Title of meeting	PINS Board Meeting
Date	16 February 2017 **Time** 12:30
Venue	Brunel, Temple Quay House, Bristol
Chair	Sara Weller (**SW**) – Chairman
Present	Jayne Erskine (**JE**) – Non Executive Director
	David Holt (**DH**) – Non Executive Director
	Susan Johnson (**SJ**) – Non Executive Director
	Tony Thickett (**TT**) – Director of Wales
	Ben Linscott (**BL**) – Director of Inspectors
	Navees Rahman (**NR**) – Director of Corporate Services
	Simon Gallagher (**SG**) – Director of Planning, DCLG
In attendance	Mark Warren (**MW**) – Finance Manager (item 5, 6 & 8)
	Mark Southgate (**MS**) – Director of Major Casework (items 5-9)
	Phil Hammond (**PH**) – Director of Volume Casework (items 5-9)
	Tim Guy (**TG**), Director of Transformation (item 5-9)
	Peter Sloman (**PS**) – Head of Finance & Commercial (item 8)
	Natasha Perrett (**NP**) – Board Secretary
Apology	Sarah Richards (**SR**) – Chief Executive

Part One
Schedule of Actions – 13 October 2016

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
11.	~~Peter Sloman~~ Navees Rahman	Review the MTFP to consider the audience of the document and ensure it is not seen simply as a "cost-cutting" exercise. It needs to reflect a focus on the end-goal of inspectors and decisions. The document should demonstrate the importance of delivering the right service at an affordable cost.	6.5	**10 May –** for 18 May PINS Board
13.	~~Peter Sloman~~ Navees Rahman	Take forward next steps: • to look at how big the productivity phase 1 "BAU" cost reduction might be • consider, in phases 2 and 3, what else might get us to a sustainable footing (changes to the service proposition, fees)	8.6	**10 May –** for 18 May PINS Board

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		• identify the metric that shows we are becoming more productive • identify what needs to be in the budget.		

Part One
Schedule of Actions – 10 November 2016

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
5.	Simone Wilding	Bring a deep dive on band 3 work across the organisation including an overlay of the third runway and organisation capacity of inspectors and support teams.	7.11	**10 May –** for 18 May PINS Board

Part One
Schedule of Actions – 8 December 2016

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Phil Hammond	Submit a further briefing note to the Board which sets out who owns the 6 key outstanding issues from the CTP project, what they are delivering and by when.	2.2	**Complete –** annex attached to the February PINS Board minutes, item 2.
5.	Jo Esson and Management Team	Reassess the Strategic Risk Register to capture s62a work and align with the Business Plan.	4.1	**Complete -** S-14 on the Strategic Risk Register.
6.	Rich Addison & Pete Sloman	The dashboard to include: • Add the target and trajectory to the casework performance graphs.	5.3, 5.4, 5.7 & 5.8	**In progress** – to be reviewed and included in the new reporting year.

Part One
Schedule of Actions – 19 January 2017

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	NEDs and Management Teams	NEDs and Management Team to consider how NEDs can help teams and Directorates in the organisation.	2.2	**Complete –** item 8 on the March agenda.
4.	Tony Thickett	Bring findings of research into difficult customers to the February or April CQPSC meeting. TT to confirm to NP.	4.2	**By 12 April -** for 20 April CQPSC.
6.	Navees Rahman	Circulate the Ministerial budget delegation letter to the PINS Board.	5.2	**Complete**

		Action	Minutes	Timeframe
7.	Mark Southgate	Include the outcomes of the White Paper and impact on Band 3 work in the Workforce Planning review for March Board. As part of the Workforce Planning and Band 3 update to include what demand looks like over the next 12-24 months (e.g. Local Plans, South East Runway etc) and our ability to react.	6.4 & 7.6	**10 May –** for 18 May PINS Board

Part One
Schedule of Actions – 16 February 2017

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Katie Hartwright	Provide feedback to DCLG/SG on exit interviews.	3.3	**End of April**
2.	Navees Rahman	Bring a paper to the ARAC meeting on Physical or Cyber attacks.	5.3	**Complete –** included under item 6 on the March ARAC agenda.
3.	Richard Addison	Remove the appeals in the system and future projects graph from page 13 of the MI pack.	5.4	**Complete**
4.	Mark Southgate	Find a different way to present Hearing and Inquiry data to the Board and hold a detailed session on hearing and Inquiry performance at the May Board meeting.	5.5 & 5.7	**10 May –** for 18 May PINS Board.
5.	Navees Rahman	Bring proposals to the March PINS Board meeting which sets out a topic based approach for the MI pack.	5.7	**Complete –** item 5 on the March PINS Board agenda.
6.	Mark Southgate	MS to take forward the principles and next steps: • measures to reflect the experience of all customers • measures should reflect end-to-end experience (and start point, receipt to decision or valid to decision) • they should be simple to understand • they should be comparable, so customers in different casework areas can more easily compare	6.10	**End of April**

		relative performance • a backstop should be added to the measures with a maximum time to deliver • when customers reach the maximum time to deliver, make sure we have clear action points.		
7.	Mark Southgate	Think about unintended consequences of change measures and be clear about what happens for a customer when we are not able to fulfil the commitment.	6.12	**End of April**
8.	Natasha Perrett	Forward Planner **March** • Transformation funding and Budget – update • Status of Delivery Plans, risks and next steps **May** • Full feedback on 2017/18 budget outcome • First use of the revised MI pack and topic based approach - Hearings and Inquiries Deep Dive • Review of workforce plans relating to higher Band Inspector work	5.5, 5.7 & 10.1	**Complete**

Minutes

1.0	**Welcome and Declaration of Interests**
	1.1 The Chair welcomed the Board.
	1.2 Apologies were received from Sarah Richards.
	1.3 The Chair called for Declarations of Interest (DoI) of which there were none.
2.0	**Minutes of 19 January Board Meeting**
	2.1 No further comments were received on the January PINS Board minutes and actions.
	Agreed: 2a) The minutes reflect a true and accurate record of the January meeting.

3.0	**Committee Chair updates, meeting of 16 February** **a) Customer, Quality and Professional Standards Committee** 3.1 SJ reported the key messages from the Customer, Quality and Professional Standards Committee (CQSPSC): • The Committee discussed professional standards, the Inspector Code of Conduct and how the Committee receives assurance inspectors are behaving in an ethical, fair and professional way. The Committee requires the assurance to inform the Annual Report and Accounts. • Customer Strategy – from the list of objectives presented in the Customer Strategy, the Committee suggested the following as the top 3 priorities: - Digital by default and self-serve options - Comprehensive guidance for customers to reduce the waste in the organisation and improve productivity - customer has clear understanding of the appeal process and use clarity to shift behaviours so we get comprehensive submissions. • The Committee's deep dive session was on Local Plans. 3.2 An area of focus for the next meeting will be on cost benefit versus legal cost, including the types of casework processed through the court system and the costs of such activity. TT said that the decision whether or not to defend a challenge should rest solely with the GM or Director for Wales. BL and TT stated a decision to defend was sometimes done to provide clarity for the whole planning system, and that the impact on the motivation of Inspectors should also be considered. **b) People Committee minutes (meeting of 19 January)** 3.3 Since the People Committee meeting, JE and Katie Hartwright have had a follow up conversation to discuss timescales on actions. SG expressed an interest in the feedback received from exit interviews and asked for this to be fed back to the DCLG team. **Agreed:** 3a) To note the update from the Committee Chair. 3b) Katie Hartwright to provide feedback to DCLG/SG on exit interviews.
4.0	**PINS update** 4.1 The Board discussed the feedback received from the internal Strategic Plan (SP) consultation. Concern was raised around the barriers highlighted in the feedback. DH asked how are we going to measure we are moving in the right direction in a way that would be recognisable for all in the organisation. 4.2 TT explained he is the People Objective Workstream Leader (OWL) and he will be supported by Katie Hartwright (KH). KH has put together a plan which builds on the Senior leadership programme; focus is on how we move forward and support the people elements of the Strategic Plan.

	4.3 SW said it is important we do not make promises in the SP on things that we cannot deliver. Given feedback from staff about their lack of confidence in the MT's ability to deliver the SP, we need to have confidence that we can deliver what we promise. There are critical decisions to be made about the things we will deliver; if commitments are made and we fail to deliver, the issues identified in the SP feedback will resurface. **Agreed:** 4a) To note the PINS update.
5.0	**Monitoring performance** 5.1 There was a drop in planning performance in December, which the report linked to the seasonal availability of inspectors. Compared to last year, there has been an average improvement of 4 weeks on handling planning written representation cases. 5.2 As part of the quarterly budget review PINS handed back £900K of the 2016/17 budget allocation. At present there is a forecast over spend of £84K. MW explained there is confidence, at year end, there will not be an over spend and certain areas are expected to underspend such as Ex gratia payments and contracts. NR confirmed that he is happy with the position and discussions have taken place with DCLG colleagues. 5.3 The Board discussed Strategic Risk 13 which relates to physical or cyber-attacks which is a red risk. DH asked what action is being taken to reduce the level of the risk. DH also queried the number of amber risks. NR offered to provide an update at the March Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) meeting. DH said the Board is seeking assurance that mitigating actions are being taken and agreed a longer session should take place at ARAC to discuss actions taken to reduce the risk. NR explained we are awaiting the outcomes of the DCLG cyber-attack audit. As we share IT systems with DCLG the outcomes of the DCLG audit will help shape our own audit. 5.4 The Board discussed page 13 of the MI pack (number of appeals in the system at baseline) and if the graph is still useful, as the way in which we measure performance has changed. The Board agreed this chart is no longer helpful. MS said the Board should focus on the receipt to start data. The Board agreed to remove the WR graph from the MI pack. 5.5 SW asked the Management Team to think about how Hearing and Inquiry performance data is presented to the Board, so the Board can delve into more detail as it reviewed WR when that was performing well below target. 5.6 NR asked the Board for feedback on the dashboard and MI pack and whether there is anything in particular the Board needs to see. SW said the dashboard and MI pack need to be aligned with the delivery plans and budget

	once those are agreed at next month's Board. Once this is done, a decision can be made on which elements of the pack are no longer required at Board level. Reporting on delivery plan performance should be done using RAG ratings, with commentary and detail presented on the top 2-3 things Management Team want to tell the Board.
	5.7 It was agreed the Board will continue to review the 2 page dashboard on a monthly basis with a themed paper/ pack focusing on a particular area coming to the Board on the bi-monthly cycle. Top issues should be included in the dashboard and specific themes reviewed in detail at the Board meeting.
	5.8 At the May meeting, the Board should focus on MI relating to the budget, delivery/strategic plan, with proposals for the deep-dive topic to be based on key messages from the MI pack. SG agreed that reporting on the data should be dependent on where the main issues are. Whilst it may now be right for volume casework reporting to take place bi-monthly, Hearing and Inquiry performance is needed on a monthly basis. NR agreed and said that the next Board could focus on Hearing and Inquiry performance in more detail.
	Agreed: 5a) NR to bring a paper to the ARAC meeting on Physical or Cyber attacks. 5b) RA to remove the appeals in the system and future projects graph from page 13 of the MI pack. 5c) MS to find a different way to present Hearing and Inquiry data to the Board. 5d) To review the dashboard on a monthly basis and the MI pack on a bi-monthly basis with themed areas identified for Board discussion. 5e) NR to bring proposals to the March PINS Board meeting which sets out a topic based approach for the MI pack. 5f) MS to hold a detailed session on Hearing and Inquiry performance at the next Board meeting.
6.0	**Scoping KPIs/ Targets** 6.1 MS said a new suite of targets across our casework is needed, which groups all planning casework together, all enforcement casework together and all specialist casework together. This aligns with the different Government clients with an interest in our casework. 6.2 The Board discussed the proposed measures and principles set out at section 5 of the paper. These principles were proposed to be: • Measures to reflect the experience of all customers, not some customers; • Measures should reflect end- to-end experience not be based on arbitrary procedural points; • they should be simple to understand (and for PINS to report); • they should be comparable, so customers in different casework

areas can more easily compare relative performance;
- they should be stretching rather than safe;
- 100% targets are inadvisable for standard time periods as one missed case means failure – but this is a more acceptable measure where the time period reflects an individually agreed time period (eg bespoke appeals, plan examinations).

6.3 DH said we must make sure we are holding ourselves to account with the targets that we set. A simple target should be set that says we will deliver a decision in x number of weeks from receipt. We must not allow a backlog of cases to grow outside of the target.

6.4 MS referred to the Manhattan diagrams, reporting the length of the "tail", that had previously been presented to the board. These diagrams would give a clear indication of any issue in the system.

6.5 SW said the choice of whether we were targeting receipt to decision or valid receipt to decision needs to be resolved. We need to have a target and a goal in customers' language, eg the average time for a decision is 18 weeks but it will not take more than 26 weeks for a decision. If it is clear a case is going to take longer, we need to go back to the customer to explain. We should also ensure that targets are achievable consistently rather than too stretching and therefore sometimes undeliverable.

6.6 SG suggested that it would be helpful if targets in year 1 were set in a way that they could be gradually reduced over time as we build more confidence in our processes.

6.7 DH said it would be easier to manage a target of x weeks average with a back stop which will prevent backlogs and stop issues earlier in the system.

6.8 SJ said there are lessons to learn from other organisations with similar customer experiences such as the passport office and DVLA. DH asked if we can work with appellants and applicants in the same way as Local Plans, eg if appellants provide notice one month before submission then we commit to deliver a decision within a specific time. This approach would help with demand management.

6.9 MS agreed this would help reduce the number of incomplete appeals received. PH said open and earlier conversation with those submitting Hearing and Inquiry appeals would enable PINS to improve performance.

6.10 The Board agreed the following principles and next steps:
- measures to reflect the experience of all customers (every customer counts)
- measures should reflect end- to-end experience (with start point being defined as either receipt to decision or valid receipt to decision)
- they should be simple to understand (in particular avoiding the use of percentiles in external communication)

	• the Board was uncertain how important it was that the targets should be comparable across appeal types, so customers in different casework areas can more easily compare relative performance • a backstop should be added to the measures with a maximum time to deliver • when customers reach the maximum time to deliver, we have clear action points and a way of engaging with the customer to agree next steps. 6.11 In discussing the proposed targets with the Minister, SJ said we need to be clear and articulate what we are trying to achieve. JE said it's about the customer experience. SG agreed and said it is about having a productive and predictable service and managing the unit costs. 6.12 SW asked MS to also think about unintended consequences and be clear about what happens for a customer when we are not able to fulfil the commitment. 6.13 TT updated the Board on the new appeal regulations due for PINS Wales casework. To achieve these targets the file will need to be inspector ready in a shorter time. TT is reviewing to understand the costs of potentially doing things in a shorter period of time. Agreed: 6a) MS to take forward the principles and next steps: • measures to reflect the experience of all customers (every customer counts) • measures should reflect end- to-end experience (with start point being defined as either, receipt to decision or valid receipt to decision) • they should be simple to understand (in particular avoiding the use of percentiles in external communication) • the Board was uncertain how important it was that the targetsy should be comparable across appeal types, so customers in different casework areas can more easily compare relative performance • a backstop should be added to the measures with a maximum time to deliver • when customers reach the maximum time to deliver, we have clear action points and a way of engaging with the customer to agree next steps. 6b) MS to also think about unintended consequences of change measures and be clear about what happens for a customer when we are not able to fulfil the commitment.
7.0	**Delivering change within PINS - OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**
8.0	**Review 2017/18 Budget and Inspector Resource – OFFICIAL SENSITIVE**

9.0	**Impact of the White Paper on PINS** 9.1 The Housing White Paper has now been published. The principle focus in relation to PINS is to have a planning system that delivers housing. 9.2 One key impact on PINS is around Local Plan making and the process used which removes some areas of work for PINS, but is replaced by a need for every Local Authority to have a plan in place, the potential for intervention in Plan making, the requirement for Plans to be updated every 5 years and changes to the duty to co-operate test. BL, SG and Steve Quartermain (SQ) are discussing the transitional process. 9.3 SQ will be attending the Annual Training Event for inspectors. Agreed: 9a) To note the update on the White Paper.

10.0	**Forward Planner**
	
	10.1 The Board agreed the following forward planner updates:
	March
	   • Transformation funding and Budget – update
	   • Status of Delivery Plans, risks and next steps
	   • Hearings and Inquiries Deep Dive
	May
	   • Full feedback on 2017/18 budget outcome
	   • First use of the revised MI pack and topic based approach
	   • Review of workforce plans relating to higher Band Inspector work
	
	Agreed:
	10a) The March PINS Board agenda.

Next meeting: 16 March 2017, 12.30pm – 3.30pm