

## Minutes of VMD Management Board Meeting held on 6 July 2023

### Members

Julia Drown (Chair)  
David Catlow  
Philippa Hardwick  
Timothy Riley  
Abigail Seager – VMD  
Gavin Hall - VMD  
Mike Griffiths – VMD  
Muiz Agbaje – VMD

### Present

Marian Bos – VMD  
John Millward – VMD  
Suzanne Eckford - VMD  
Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

#### 1. Announcements and apologies for absence

- 1.1 John Millward was congratulated on being awarded OBE in the King's official birthday honours for services to animal health and welfare.

#### 2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

- 2.1 None.

#### 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023

**VMDMB 23/13**

- 3.1 The minutes were agreed.

#### 4. Matters Arising/Actions

**VMDMB 23/14**

- 4.1 There were no outstanding actions.

#### 5. Enforcement Strategy

**VMDMB 23/15**

- 5.1 John Millward, Head of Inspections and Enforcement, introduced the revised enforcement strategy which set out the section's direction of travel over the next two years. A key objective is to improve the quantity and quality of intelligence received through using technologies, including the Clue database's external whistle-blower interface. An Intelligence Unit has been developed within the team to take responsibility for receiving, collating, analysing, disseminating, and acting on information and intelligence. Relationships with other regulatory partners and enforcement bodies such as Border Force, the Working Group of Enforcement Offices and the National Crime Agency will be strengthened. A stakeholder engagement plan will be created to ensure messaging is disseminated in a timely and targeted way. Internal performance measures will be established to ensure effective results are being achieved.
- 5.2 Members welcomed the measures being taken and the vision set out. It was noted it was a high-level strategy which lacked detail about how breaches of the VMR are prioritised, the trigger points and actions that can be taken. It would be useful to know what reporting is done on activities and the economies involved and VMD agreed to add members to the circulation list for the enforcement newsletter which provides some of this information. VMD noted that it intends to have strategies in place for all its business areas and link them to its overall vision and individuals' objectives. Mr Millward will be auditing the enforcement team's progress in two months' time and it was agreed to revisit the topic at the December meeting.

#### **ACTION VMD**

## **6. Gates Project**

- 6.1 Suzanne Eckford, Head of the International team, gave an overview of the work VMD is involved in under the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). We are focussed on improving medicine regulation in SSA countries in order to achieve high quality, safe and effective veterinary medicines which are critical for livestock health and productivity. During the scoping process her team looked at the regulatory provisions in 28 countries, the resources they have available and their willingness to collaborate with us. Now in phase 2, we are engaging with 90 customers and rolling out self-assessment tools and an IT portal for product application submissions, as well as providing training. Four regional conferences involving 45 countries have been held and feedback has been good. Formal relationships have been established with other delivery partners including GALVmed who are providing financial incentives to manufacturers of FMD vaccines. The aim is for SSA regulators to eventually become self-funding. VMD does not regulate prices and we are wary of acting outside our scope and overextending. The Phase 3 proposal is still under review but the aim is to help countries to identify and address their technical and administrative capacity and improve existing regional processes.

## **7. Veterinary Medicines Regulations review**

- 7.1 Marian Bos, Head of Legislation, reported that the recent VMR consultation had received support across the board and the results are now being put into the final draft of the revised regulations. Some of the many changes which had arisen included restricting advertising to farmers, new immunologicals being assigned the POM-V category and clinical assessment being required before POM-V products can be prescribed. Homeopathic products will still be included as remedies. The process has been very time consuming and, with WTO clearance still to come, it is expected that the SI will be laid before parliament in October. It was noted that statutory fees have not been amended and VMD will not recover costs this year so will need to come up with a strategy for this.

## **8. CEO's Report**

**VMDMB 23/16**

- 8.1 The CEO's report was presented and members were pleased to see that the consultant brought in again this year to assess responses to the annual civil service people survey had found organisational culture had changed significantly for the better since last year. VMD is required to carry out a post-implementation review into the VMR and residues SI which will be completed by the Autumn. It is good to see that staffing levels are stable and a new and improved induction process initiated. There has been a restructure at Defra and Nick Joicey has been appointed as 2<sup>nd</sup> permanent secretary and group COO and Sarah Homer as DG for Portfolio delivery.

## **9. Delivery against the Business Plan 2023/24**

**VMDMB 23/17**

- 9.1 It was noted that delivery against the plan was going well.

## **10. Finance report**

**VMDMB 23/18**

- 10.1 It was noted that funding for the year will be £15.7m.

## **11. Management Board annual assessment results**

**VMDMB 23/19**

- 11.1 The results of the annual assessment exercise showed that the Board was working effectively.

## **12. Management Board work plan**

**VMDMB 23/20**

- 12.1 Members asked that forward thinking topics are brought to the Board and it was agreed to review changes to prescribing practice to the next meeting. The Science Strategy will be reviewed at the December meeting. Other future topics could be delivery models outside the VMD including collaborating more with MHRA and a review of homeopathic remedies continued inclusion in the VMRs.

### **ACTION VMD**

## **13. Any other business**

- 13.1 VMD has applied again for candidates under the Boardroom Apprentice scheme.
- 13.2 This was Julia Drown's last meeting as Chair before her final term as non-executive director ends and she was thanked for the very valuable service she has provided to the VMD over the last 9 years.

**Veterinary Medicines Directorate  
July 2023**