

Title	Minutes of the Board Meeting
Description	Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 08 February 2024
Paper owner	Heather Baily
Paper author	Nick Hill
Agenda reference	01a
Meeting date	15 March 2024

**The Board is invited to approve these minutes.**

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Board members wishing to request clarification on a paper should contact the paper's owner in advance of the meeting (preferably by email). Material responses to the requests will normally be circulated to all Board members prior to, or at, the meeting.

## Freedom of Information

Reference to discussion on this paper at the meeting will usually be published in the Board minutes unless exempted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Board papers may be published or released on request unless exempted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

For completion by the author:

Should this paper be considered for exemption under freedom of information?

**Yes**

If yes, please provide the reason for non-disclosure and exemption that applies:

**Agenda item 1 - action item 1.17 – FOI Exemption applies – s35 – for government policy development.**

**Agenda item 3 paragraph on Home Office priorities – FOI exemption applies s35 – Ministerial / government policy development.**

**Agenda item 4 – FOI Exemption applies – s30 - the obtaining of information from confidential sources.**

**Agenda item 4 – FOI Exemption applies – s35 – for government policy development.**

**Agenda item 5 – FOI Exemption applies – s36 – disclosure would be likely to inhibit free and frank advice and reference to legal advice (covered by legal professional privilege exemption).**

**Agenda item 7 – para 7.9 on pay assumptions - s35 – for government policy development and s41 information provided in confidence.**

# Minutes of the Board Meeting on 08 February 2024

**Date:** 08 February 2024  
**Time:** 10:00 - 16:00  
**Location:** 10 South Colonnade (face to face)  
**Chair:** Heather Baily

## **Attendees:**

Caroline Corby, NED Board member  
Zoe Billingham, NED Board member  
Trevor Reaney, NED Board member  
Simon James, NED Board Member

Michelle Russell, Chief Executive and Board member  
Paul Fullwood, Director of Inspections & Enforcement and Board member  
Steve McCormick, Director of Licensing & Standards and Board member  
Dianne Tranmer, Director of Transformation and Board member  
Natalie Benton, Director of Corporate Services and Board member

Jeremy Bennett, Head of Legal Services & Policy  
Fiona Wilson, Head of Strategy & Governance  
Nick Hill, Governance Manager (secretariat)

Shehla Husain, Deputy Director and Head of Public Protection, Home Office  
Anita Bailey, Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office  
Caroline Rowe, Public Protection Unit, Home Office (items 4, 5, 6 and 7)

Tony Stafford, Principal Policy Advisor (items 4, 5, 6)  
Lawrence Ralph, Senior Manager Strategy & Scheme Design (item 6)  
Alero Harrison, Head of Communications (items 6 and 8)  
Kevin Barretto, Head of Finance & Procurement (items 7 - 10)  
Motunrayo Sholola, Strategy & Planning Manager (item 10)  
Churchill Kayode, Programme Manager, Business Standards (item 12)

External observer

Nicola Hirst, Director for Service Delivery, Animal and Plant Health Agency

Staff observer

Adrienn Lang, Complaints & Information Requests Specialist

Apologies

Iestyn David, Head of Licensing & Service Delivery

## **0. Closed session**

0.1 A closed session with the Board was held; separate minutes have been produced and contain actions Feb-24-01 and Feb-24-02.

## **1. Welcome and apologies for absence, declarations of interest, minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising.**

### **Welcome and apologies**

1.1 The meeting was held face to face.

1.2 There were apologies from the Head of Licensing & Service Delivery.

1.3 The meeting was quorate.

1.4 The Chair welcomed Adrienn Lang, as a SIA staff observer.

1.5 The Chair welcomed Nicola Hirst, Service Delivery Director from the Animal and Plant Health Agency.

1.6 The Chair welcomed Anita Bailey, Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit and Caroline Rowe, Public Protection Unit as external observers from the Home Office.

### **Declarations of interest**

1.7 Caroline Corby declared that she is taking on a new role as Chair of Peabody from April 2024; she did not believe this would present a conflict of interest.

1.8 There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes of previous meeting**

1.9 The November Board meeting minutes were approved, subject to a minor amendment requested by the Official from the Public Protection Unit.

## **Matters arising**

- 1.10 Action Nov-23-01: An update on licensing decisions on sexual offences is on the agenda for the February 2024 Board Strategy Day. To be closed following this meeting.
- 1.11 Action Nov-23-02: An update on the Business Approval Scheme consultation included on the agenda. Closed.
- 1.12 Action Nov-23-03: An update on the Business Approval Scheme timelines included as part of the Licensing and Standards update and will form part of this standing item. Closed.
- 1.13 Action Nov-23-04: An update on the progress made to implementing the alternative approach to fulfilling the recommendation of Chapter 2 of the Manchester Arena Inquiry. The Licensing and Standards report provided an update on the latest position. A further update was asked for later in the year. Open.
- 1.14 Action Nov-23-05: An update to the Inspections and Enforcement directorate future KPI's as part of the terms of reference for Project Evolve. The Chair asked that this matter be kept Open.
- 1.15 Action Nov-23-06: An update on the Inspections and Enforcement device trial included as part of the Transformation update. Closed.
- 1.16 Action Nov-23-07: An update on unannounced visits included on the Licensing and Standards update. Closed.

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## **2. Chair's report**

- 2.1 The Chair presented her paper, which was taken as read. She reported that there had been two successful recruitments for NED Board Member replacements for Alec Wood, and for when Trevor Reaney's term finishes in November 2024.

2.2 The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office thanked the Chair for her patience during this process.

### 3. Chief Executive's report

3.1 The Chief Executive presented her paper, highlighting three key points.

3.2 The Chief Executive updated the Board that a workshop had taken place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2024 at executive levels with the Home Office to build a shared understanding of the SIA's evolving role, the Home Office and wider government priorities on public protection, how the legal framework supports the SIA's purpose and where there are gaps in the framework, and the joint priorities for change. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3.3 The Chief Executive updated the Board of changes in the Senior Leadership Team and how the gaps in Director level absence will be managed once the Director of Licensing and Standards departed.

3.4 The Chief Executive updated the Board on the status of the Public Body Review, with a presentation on the findings scheduled at the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 Board.

3.5 Shehla Husain, Deputy Director and Official from the Public Protection from the Home Office joined the meeting.

3.6 The Chief Executive confirmed that Mary Halle, the Head of Sponsorship Unit at the Home Office had left the role, and that Anita Bailey is filling the role whilst permanent recruitment is completed.

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**6. Business approvals scheme (BAS)**

6.1 The Senior Manager for Strategy and Scheme Design joined the meeting and presented his report to the Board, which was made up of three parts. Under the Board scheme of delegations both the approval of the principles of any formal public consultations that the SIA conducts and the strategic communication plans in respect of matters which are of material public, or reputational significance were reserved to the Board.

**Stakeholder engagement**

6.2 The Board was invited to note the outcome of the stakeholder engagement activity on the next stage of the business approvals scheme design.

6.3 87 business leaders had attended workshops, 17 of which were Approved Contractor Scheme members, with no major objections raised on the emerging scheme design and its principles. There had been a high level of agreement at the workshops which provided the SIA with confidence in progressing the initial public consultation.

**Initial public consultation on 'Next Stage Scheme Design'**

6.4 Following the Board's approval of the new Strategy in July 2023, the Board was asked to approve the launch of the public consultation for the BAS next stage scheme design.

6.5 The initial public consultation for the next stage scheme design was scheduled to run for six weeks from February 2024. This had been agreed the with Policy,



Legal and Communications teams, with the intention of analysing the feedback in April 2024 and subsequently publishing a summary of results later.

- 6.6 The Senior Manager for Strategy and Scheme Design confirmed the SIA does not need formal permission from the Home Office Policy Unit to launch the public consultation, which has followed government consultation principles. The SIA met with the Home Office colleagues in January 2024 for a wider perspective on consultations happening across the Home Office. The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office offered to introduce the Senior Manager of Strategy & Scheme Design to the Home Office Insights and Analysis Unit ahead of analysing the consultation responses.
- 6.7 A NED Board Member reminded the Board that the voluntary approvals scheme was second best to business licensing.
- 6.8 The Acting Head of the Public Protection Unit suggested the possibility of business licensing might be advanced through this work. The SIA has a scheme to deliver quality and assess businesses in making a difference to public safety. At present in the Home Office's view there is a significant gap between ACS and business licensing, however by showcasing businesses signing up the BAS on a voluntary basis the SIA would be in a much stronger position to move closer to business licensing.
- 6.9 The Chair asked the team to ensure the consultation gave alternative accessible mechanisms for those responding needing to do so other than through online means.
- 6.10 The Board noted its support for the contents of consultation document.

### **Communication and Engagement Plan**

- 6.11 The Board was invited to note the communication and engagement plan for the consultation.
- 6.12 A NED Board Member asked how smaller organisations will be encouraged to participate in the consultation, ensuring that a broad range of stakeholders express their views. The Director of Licensing & Standards assured her that advisory groups consisting of small and mid-sized businesses have been and will be engaged with. The engagement plan has been supported by the Communications team, drawing on the wide list of stakeholders set out in the 2021 SIA Stakeholder Strategy through the SIA Stakeholder Forum and other

stakeholder groups and forums. In response to a query from the Chief Executive, the Director confirmed that the survey would ask the size of any business responding.

6.13 The Senior Manager for Strategy and Scheme Design assured the Board that the Stakeholder Engagement Outcome surveys are being handled by the SIA researcher to ensure all feedback is captured.

6.14 The Senior Manager for Strategy and Scheme Design left the meeting.

**DECISION: The Board approved the request to launch a public consultation for the Business Approval Scheme and the accompanying communications plans.**

## **7. Business Plan 2024 – 2025**

### **Overview and emerging deliverables**

7.1 The Head of Finance & Procurement joined the meeting.

7.2 The Board was invited to endorse the identification of the emerging business plan deliverables and financial assumptions to support the drafting of the plan for final sign off at the Board meeting scheduled for the 15 March 2024.

7.3 The Head of Strategy & Governance informed the Board that the business plan would be circulated by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024 for review by the Board, the Senior Leadership Team and the Home Office. There are number of issues and risks which could impact the plan for the next year, which will be carefully monitored and discussed at Executive and Board level through the year.

7.4 Discussions had been held with Directors to discuss the priority items for the plan and a systematic process had been followed to determine deliverables, budget, staffing resource and metrics. The SIA was maintaining its staffing level as per 2023 – 2024, complying with the central government direction not to increase headcount (419 at the relevant point). The intention is to maintain the same set of key performance indicators (KPIs) throughout the three-year period and as set out in the Strategic Plan 2023-26, in line with NAO best practice guidance.

7.5 The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office queried progress on inclusion of an additional KPI on equality, diversity and inclusion, in line with the

discussion at Board in March 2023, noting the Board that it did not need to be constrained to one KPI.

7.6 A NED Board member reminded the executive of the need to ensure KPIs are suitably stretching in their metrics.

7.7 The Chair reminded the Home Office officials of the ask and need for a timely “Chair’s letter” on yearly priorities from the Minister as part of business planning.

**ACTION: FEB-24:04: The proposal for adding an EDI KPI to be considered at 15 March Board**

**DECISION: The Board endorsed the emerging business plan and key deliverables.**

### **Emerging budget**

7.8 The development of the annual budget for 2024 – 2025 commenced in October 2023, with the SIA required to provide the resource budget totals for the next financial year to the Home Office on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. Due to the deadline, as per the decision at the SIA Board in November 2023, the key budget assumptions were provided and approved by the Chair of ARAC and the finance non-executive representative on ARAC in advance of the submission of figures to the Home Office in early December.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7.10 A NED Board Member noted the assumption that by November 2024 the SIA expected to increase the shared space to 50%, and asked whether this would be realistically achieved. The Director of Transformation informed the Board that work is being done to progress this, but the SIA are constrained by the Government Property Agency (GPA)’s actions. The Chief Executive advised the Board that if the target is not met, that expenditure will be managed in year based on the efficiencies that can be achieved.

## **8. Communications forward look**

- 8.1 The Board was invited to note the quarterly report presented by the Head of Communications. She highlighted that the BBC File on 4 report had received the most coverage. The SIA has provided updates on Gov.uk following the report rather than respond to queries on it enabling control of the narrative. The Director of Inspections & Enforcement noted the positive feedback from the industry due to the SIA's active engagement in communicating with them.
- 8.2 The Head of Communications left the meeting.
- 8.3 The Official from the Public Protection Unit left the meeting.

## **9. Q3 finance report**

- 9.1 The Head of Finance & Procurement sought approval for the Q3 forecast.
- 9.2 The Head of Finance & Procurement assured the Board that based on the full year expected outturn for both income and expenditure, performance expected to be in line with the tolerance of +/-1% as set out in the Accounting Officer's delegation letter.
- 9.3 A NED Board Member queried the difference between the finance report update, and the Chief Executive's report on the number of licence applications. The Chief Executive suggested the reason for differences in figures sometimes is finance work on tracking more recent re-forecasted volumes; other figures referred to original beginning of year forecasts; and some figures referred to applications received and/or paid. She agreed that going forward the executive's papers needed to be clearer which figures are being referred to for the Board update, ideally the same figure reference points should be used and if not, any differences clearly explained.
- 9.4 A NED Board Member queried whether any items could be brought forward so that surplus money forecast for end of year could be reduced. The Chief Executive noted that there were constraints in bring forward major new items to use new surplus funds as the year progresses due to the lead times under public procurement rules. Any expenditure over £10k involves processes that tend to be weeks and sometimes months in duration. The Chief Executive highlighted that new procurement legislation takes effect from October 2024.

**DECISION: The Board approved the Q3 forecast presented by the Head of Finance & Procurement**

## **10. Performance report**

### **Q3 KPI dashboard and quarterly performance report**

- 10.1 The Strategy & Planning Manager joined the meeting.
- 10.2 The Director of Transformation presented the dashboard and report. The report provided an update on the third quarter's performance against the SIA KPI Framework for 2023-24, as well as key accompanying data trends.
- 10.3 The Chief Executive noted licensing demands have eased slightly in Q3 since Q2, although the SIA is 3% ahead of what was originally forecast in January 2023. The Chief Executive noted the larger volume of complex decisions required due to relying on overseas checks, as well as relying on stakeholders' performance – e.g. Disclosure Barring Service and Disclosure Scotland (the latter being paper based, which can slow the licensing process down).
- 10.4 The Chair highlighted the action raised previously regarding the EDI KPI and asked that for update on the development of new KPIs for the future for enforcement outcomes under Project Evolve at the next full Board.

**ACTION: JAN-24:05: update on the development of new KPIs for the future for enforcement outcomes under Project Evolve to be brought to May Board 2024.**

### **Business Plan Q3**

- 10.5 The Strategy & Planning Manager presented her report, updating the Board on the progress made on the Business Plan this financial year. The report showed the progress against the 18 key deliverables set out in the Business Plan. Of the 18:
- a) 6 have been completed
  - b) 6 remain on track
  - c) 5 are amber (anticipated to be delivered later than originally planned but still within year)
  - d) 1 is red and will not be delivered (the full estates reduction)
- 10.6 The Strategy and Planning Manager left the meeting.

## **11. Transformation programme update**

11.1 The Director of Transformation provided an update to the Board. Some workstreams are due to be delivered before April 2024

- a) Step CRM 2016 Upgrade
- b) Estates Strategy phase 1
- c) Final Network Migration (CIVET)
- d) Common Data Platform Infrastructure Build.

11.2 The Director of Transformation noted that SIA had progressed reduction in space through Government Property Agency (GPA), however, there have been challenges in contracting for the completion of the estates refit work (repurposing room space) through the GPA. The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office, offered support if required to minimise the risk of the work not being completed within the financial year and therefore not fully using the capital allocation.

**ACTION: FEB-24:06: The Director of Transformation to deliver a brief and concise overview on what the digital and data transformation programme and its component parts are for 2024 at May Board.**

#### **Licensing checking update**

11.3 The Board was invited to note the rationale for the proposed course of action on digital solutions set out to support improving licence checks. Previously there were three separate projects which were being managed by separate directors. The Director of Transformation advised that the Chief Executive had now directed that all three projects were to be brought under the oversight and control of one single director due to the dependencies and interfaces between each. The Director of Transformation now leads on the totality of the Licence Checker Project. The three works streams are:

- a) Print services procurement (including continuing procurement of licence cards)
- b) Technical changes to the Register of Licence Holders
- c) Remote checking of licences by Inspection & Enforcement staff

11.4 The Director of Transformation informed the Board that following enquiries since the last update, there were possible quick digital solutions to better

enable SIA staff to access systems to check licences in the field. However, these involved third party commercial providers and there were concerns about the cyber risk this creates allowing access to SIA systems and personal data of significant number of people. As a result, the executive were cautious about finding a quick “app” or add on solution, and its preference was to continue to explore with our strategic partner Version 1, a permanent solution.

11.5 The Board noted the importance of this piece of work as it plays a fundamental role in what the SIA does. The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office suggested that the SIA links up with the HO Cyber Risk Lead to provide support on this.

11.6 In response to a question from a NED Board Member, the Director of Transformation explained that she was unable to provide any clarification or reference point on when a strategic solution might be developed and/or be launched in the field. The digital team were due to follow up with Version 1 on the strategic solution options over the next month.

11.7 The NED Board Members expressed general support for a permanent solution that is supported by and helps the SIA staff in inspections and enforcement areas but considered that it was not in a position to advise the executive whether or not the tactical solution should be discounted at this stage. Board Members would need more detailed information about timescales, costs, benefits, outcomes and interdependencies to assess whether the short-term tactical solution would be preferable to the strategic long-term approach.

11.8 In the meantime, it was supportive of the executive’s intention that in any event the strategic approach with Version 1 should be explored further however asked for a more detailed update at the May Board. The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office added that it would be useful to understand the context and risk that is being carried of using the third party to check licences.

**ACTION FEB-24:07: Director of Transformation to share a timescales, costs and benefits, interdependencies and outcomes with the Board on the development of the licence checker project at the May Board.**

**Update on award of digital services contract (including capital allocation)**

- 11.9 The Board was reminded that SIA's contract with Version 1, for the support and maintenance of SIA digital services, expired on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2023. The contract was for a period of three years and was extended twice (one year each time), in line with the terms of the contract. The SIA agreed a short extension with Version 1 on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December to allow on-going negotiations to be completed and to ensure business continuity.
- 11.10 Negotiations were finalised by 20<sup>th</sup> December, and the Accounting Officer signed the Digital Services contract, based on the briefings and accounting officer assessment provided.
- 11.11 The Acting Head of Sponsorship Unit, Home Office, informed the Board that the indicative capital allocation figures shared by the Home Office are likely to be the same as the final allocation.

## **12. Licensing and Standards forward look**

- 12.1 The Business Standards Programme Manager joined the meeting.
- 12.2 The Director of Licensing & Standards presented his report and forward look.
- 12.3 The Board was invited to note the report which highlighted initiatives that the Licensing and Standards Directorate will be focusing on during quarter four.

## **Business Approval Strategy (BAS)**

- 12.4 The Business Standards Team are delivering phase 1 of the BAS.
- 12.5 The Business Standards Programme Manager informed the Board that there are some resourcing challenges, therefore some of the work has undergone some reprioritisation to support the delivery of the BAS. The next meeting for the Programme Delivery Board is scheduled on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 2024.

## **Unannounced Visits**

- 12.6 The Director of Licensing & Standards updated the Board on the unannounced visits programme the SIA had undertaken.
- 12.7 The Director of Inspections & Enforcement informed the Board that a more detailed update on actions taken in training malpractice space following the file on four programme will be provided on the 22 February Board Strategy Day.
- 12.8 The Director of Licensing & Standards advised the Board in answer to a question that the regulation of qualification awarding organisations is Ofqual's



responsibility and in turn the awarding organisations approve the commercial training providers; meetings have been held with the Home Office to discuss further challenges with the current regime.

12.9 A NED Board member raised concerns about the extent of the SIA's legal remit on training delivery and the SIA assuming or extending voluntarily its responsibility for this as it was not the regulator of training providers.

12.10 The Official from the Public Protection Unit advised that the SIA had no locus in training delivery – this was Ofqual's responsibility.

12.11 [Secretariat's note: at the Board strategy session on 22 February 2024 similar concerns were raised. Pending the outcome of external legal advice on the limits of the SIA's statutory remit on setting and approving training standards it was agreed an update should be provided at the May 2024 Board.

**ACTION FEB-24:08: An update on the SIA's regulatory remit on setting and approving standards at May 2024 Board.**

12.12 The Business Standards Programme Manager left the meeting.

**13. Inspections and Enforcement forward look**

13.1 The Director of Inspections & Enforcement presented the forward look report.

13.2 The Board was invited to note key activities the I&E Directorate will deliver in quarter four.

13.3 The Chair queried if there was an update on the outcome of the police action into the Brixton Academy tragedy. He informed the Chair the SIA continued to support the police investigation which was ongoing.

**14. ARAC Update**

14.1 The Non-Executive Director with a lead on finance had chaired January's ARAC and provided an update to the Board on the meeting.

14.2 The Director of Transformation had updated that meeting that the Capita data breach and deep dive into disaster recovery updates to ARAC were included with the Board papers to keep the full Board informed and provide assurance. The SIA had received a response from the ICO on the capital issue. They had closed their case on the basis of the SIA update.

14.3 The Director of Transformation informed the Board that there will be a risk deep dive into cyber security at April ARAC and this will form part of the ARAC report to the May Board.

#### **15. People Committee Update**

15.1 The People Committee Chair provided an update to the Board, along with the draft minutes which were noted by the Board.

#### **16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Update**

16.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion update was taken as read.

16.2 The Chief Executive drew the Board's attention to the demographic data snapshot attached at Annex A.

#### **17. Any Other Business**

17.1 The Chair thanked the Board Members for their attendance and all those who contributed recognising the capacity challenges that the SIA currently faces.

**Next meeting Friday 15 March (annual budget and business plan special)**