

MINUTES OF VMD MANAGEMENT BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2023

Members

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

Present

Chris Abbott – VMD (note taker)

1. Announcements and apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from boardroom apprentice Nicola Charlton.

2. Declarations of interest in the matters to be discussed

2.1 No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023

VMDMB 23/28

3.1 The minutes were agreed.

4. Matters Arising/Actions

VMDMB 23/29

4.1 Prescribing practice and the review of enforcement and regulatory science strategies would be discussed at a future meeting. VMD would provide feedback on the British Cattle Movement Service consultation outside the meeting.

5. Chair's Report

5.1 The Chair introduced the revised agenda format for meetings. It was noted that DG Sally Randall will not be a board member but will be invited to meetings and will attend when available. The Chair is now attending quarterly meetings with the permanent secretary and other ALB board chairs. A new boardroom apprentice has been recruited for next year and an induction session is being planned. It was noted that a new minister, Robbie Douglas-Miller, has been appointed for Biossecurity and Animal Health and Welfare.

6. CEO's Report

VMDMB 23/30

6.1 The CEO reported that it was still an unsettled time at the VMD with staffing issues around resources, location and pay. Performance measurement scores are subsequently down although still in the acceptable range. There has been no further direction from government about freezing headcounts and VMD is starting to recruit again to fill important vacancies. The Board strongly supported this action.

6.2 A useful round table meeting had been held with other government departments, the CVO and Industry to address vaccine availability and an action plan will be formed. A meeting will be held with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) in the new year to address its concerns about banned substances being used in veterinary medicines. It is planned to lay the new SI, including the new fees' structure, on 17 January, but that depends on Defra Legal providing its input in a timely way.

7. Governance review proposals

VMDMB 23/31-33

7.1 The Chair introduced the proposals for amending VMD governance in which the Board's role will be enhanced and clearly separated from the role of the Audit Committee. In order to achieve this the MB Chair will not attend ARAC and the two committees will be held on different days so ARAC can report to MB more effectively. The Board will own corporate

risks and the appetite for them. Members agreed that the proposed measures were sound and would increase the Board's value to the Executive. The revised terms of reference for ARAC and MB were adopted and will be developed in a proportionate and continuous process over the coming year. Teach-in sessions for members will be held at each meeting using existing material and VMD will send members any guidance for board members that it has available.

8. Corporate Risk Register – review of high priority risks **VMDMB 23/34**

8.1 Members discussed amending the Risk Register in order to make it clearer which risks are outside VMD's control and which it can take a strategic view on. It should also include risks facing the public. The Chairs will meet with Mike Griffiths in the new year to discuss revising the register.

9. Business Report - Performance **VMDMB 23/35**

9.1 The report was noted.

10. Business Report - Finance **VMDMB 23/36**

10.1 VMD noted that the additional funding requested from Defra for IT changes may not be needed as the underspend on recruitment can be utilised.

11. Teach-in: Fees and Charges

11.1 The Head of Finance gave an update on how VMD is funded. It receives a centrally agreed budget from Defra for its core programme of work and its regulatory work is funded through fees charged to its customers. Other funding comes from contracts with external providers such as the Fleming Fund.

12. Any other business

12.1 There was no other business.