

**Minutes of the Board Meeting
Monday 27 April at 14:00-16.00**

Meeting held remotely by video conference

Present:

Mrs Helen Pitcher (Chairman)
Miss Karen Kneller (Chief Executive)
Mrs Sally Berlin (Director of Casework Operations)
Ms Heather Lees (Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
Mr Peter Ryan (Interim Director of Finance & Corporate Services)
Mr David Brown (Non-Executive Director)
Mrs Linda Lee (Non-Executive Director)
Mr Rob Ward (Non-Executive Director)
Mr Andre Katz (Independent Non-Executive Director)
Mr Martin Spencer (Independent Non-Executive Director)

Apologies: None

1. Declarations of interest:

None

2. Chairman's update

The Chairman reported that she was receiving weekly updates from the CEO on managing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on business continuity. It is intended to take advantage of some elements of the new ways of working going forward. The Chairman thanked the team for doing an exceptional job.

3. Chief Executive's report (including MIP and oral Covid-19 update)

The report was noted.

Covid-19 update - The majority of staff now had access to the network or to the CJSM system and were working well and keeping in regular contact with their teams. The emphasis now was to look at how the organisation would manage once the lockdown was lifted or relaxed, as well as addressing the challenge of social distancing in the workplace.

MIP – The DOC reported that new applications had begun to arrive since the incoming post was unblocked. Working under the Covid-19 restrictions together with some staff unable to work because of illness or lack of IT equipment had inevitably impacted on casework. However, this was constantly under review to ensure the best possible service to applicants.

4. Transformation Project update

The report was noted.

The interim DFCS said he anticipated work on the Discovery Phase to be completed in April. The Proof of Concept for the data migration was crucial and he was working with the teams to facilitate its development in May 2020.

The Board requested that the July 2019 paper launching the IT Digital Transformation Programme was re-circulated for information. Similarly, the business case would be circulated and it would be helpful if a concise document was produced to supplement the business case which would help inform the Commission's Board of key milestones as well as the CMS requirements process.

The current Covid-19 situation had introduced new working practices which gave an opportunity to test optimum ways of working going forward.

5. Corporate strategy including HR Strategy for approval

The Corporate Plan was due to run until 2023 although the Board noted that it was likely to be revisited before that time due to the fast changing working environment brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Board approved the draft Corporate Plan and HR strategy subject to some minor changes.

6. Annual Report & Accounts

The Head of Communications joined the meeting and asked the Board to comment on the new design of the Annual Report before a full draft was completed. The new style was approved with some minor changes to the layout.

7. Approach to implementing quality

The Head of Quality joined the meeting to discuss the introducing of a formalised Quality Management System to enhance quality culture and practices. The Board agreed that a phased approach starting in casework was appropriate and that there should be a focus on training and development. A paper would come back to the Board.

8. Any other business

It was possible that a large number of junior lawyers would be made redundant after furlough and useful to have this in mind when recruiting new CRMs.

9. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 19 May 10.00 am