



**SUMMARY MINUTES of the VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE BOARD**

**85th Meeting, held on 25 March 2015 at 10:30am**

**Present:** Anne Galbraith CBE (Chairman), Graham Zellick CBE QC (VTE President), John O'Shea (Deputy Chairman), Martin Allingham, Ronald Barham, Robin Evans, Ian Tighe

**In attendance:** Tony Masella (Chief Executive & Chief Operating Officer), Ann Battom (Director of Finance & Information Systems), Lee Anderson (Director of Operations & Development), Diane Russell (Board Secretary)

**ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

1. There were no apologies. The Chairman welcomed Ann Battom to her first Board meeting since being appointed. There were no declarations of interest.

**ITEM 2: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES. MATTERS ARISING**

2. The Minutes of the meeting of 21 January 2015 were accepted and actions were on target for completion as required.

**ITEM 3: MATTERS FOR DECISION**

3. **Forward Plan.** The revised Plan, following Board comments and DCLG's suggestions was with DCLG for approval. In addition to the published KPIs in the Plan, internal KPIs will be developed to assist the Board to monitor performance, and others which operational managers would use. These will be presented to the Board for a decision.

4. **Revised Procurement Policy.** Changes proposed were considered satisfactory. However, there were new regulations on public procurement arising from an EU Directive, and DCLG and CSS guidance was awaited. The Board was content to approve the Policy in its current form until new advice was received.

5. **Members' Training Strategy Group (MTSG).** The Board had originally established MTSG as a Committee to provide assurance about member training and to advise the President of the VTE on training needs. Reservations had been reported about the continued effectiveness of the process and the Registrar, Vice-Presidents and President's Advisory Council (PAC) had concurred. The recommendation that the MTSG should be dispensed with was approved by the Board. The PAC, as representatives of VTE Members, would in future provide the required advice on training needs and the Board would get visibility of this work through a quarterly or annual joint report from the President and CEO.

**ITEM 4: FINANCE**

6. **Finance overview.** Draft minutes of the Finance Committee had been tabled. Its main focus had been to understand the likely position at year end, particularly timing issues on various business cases, e.g. pension consolidation. The consolidation would be concluded during the next financial year and a refresh of the business case was necessary.

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7. **Management accounts to 28 February 2015.** These had been circulated to the Board and were noted. The Director of Finance and Information Systems had proposed a new format for presentation of the management accounts and the Finance Committee had approved the change, which would be evident from Quarter 2.

### **ITEM 5: IT STRATEGY**

8. The draft Strategy was a high level document setting out what systems the VTS currently has, and the requirements for the future. This would be supported by business cases for the elements that would be needed to move forward, assisted by work undertaken by the Business Analyst. There were unknowns about the future direction of the appeals system, but there were fundamental elements that were unlikely to change. There was much to achieve by 2017; the Board would require updates on the critical milestones as reported through PMG. The scale of the programme and a broad indication of likely costs had been made known to DCLG.

9. In replacing the appeals database, there would be a need to exchange information with the VOA. The Board considered that a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the VTS and VOA Accounting Officers would be helpful in assuring that both organisations bore the other's needs in mind in the design of their separate systems.

### **ITEM 6: REVIEW OF VTS RISK REGISTER**

10. The risk register was circulated showing 14 risks; this had been reviewed at the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee meeting along with the revised Policy. Many of the risks were outside the VTS' control, and it was accepted that the current wording in the register was inappropriate and would therefore be changed accordingly.

### **ITEM 7: CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

11. **VTE Member recruitment.** Useful meetings had been held with JAC and the plan was now to recruit 20 members as well as 25 chairs in London and the southeast, starting in July. Free promotion of the recruitment exercise had been arranged in the Magistrates' journal and on their website and also in the IRRV's journals.

12. **Board effectiveness review.** This is scheduled to take place in June.

13. **Register of interests.** Forms had been issued to Board members for completion for 2015-16 and a table summarising the responses will be published on the website.

### **ITEM 8: PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

14. The President provided an update on meetings, hearings and complaints he was currently engaged in, including one complaint against a VTE chairman which had now given rise to a claim in the County Court alleging disability discrimination.

### **ITEM 9: CEO'S REPORT**

15. The Chief Executive's report had been circulated and from it he highlighted –

- Consideration being given to levels of staff complement
- Re-procurement of the WAN contract.
- Business Continuity – following the office move and management structure changes this had been revisited with external advice. The Board would see these documents in May for approval. The Plans would later be tested.

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### **ITEM 10: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT GROUP (PMG) REPORT**

16. The Director of Operations and Development presented a revised format summary report showing those projects that were active as distinct from completed or concept/pending approvals stages.

### **ITEM 11: COMMITTEE REPORTS**

17. *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee* – the Committee’s annual report to the Board had been circulated and the Board received it. John O’Shea gave an oral update of the business conducted at the Committee’s meeting the previous day. The independent member had produced a report on the Committee’s effectiveness, with recommendations.

### **ITEM 12: ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

18. The Board required front sheets to be used for more of the papers it received. There was no other business.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Board meeting is on **Tuesday** 19 May 2015 at 10.30am.