



SUMMARY MINUTES of the VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE BOARD

87th Meeting, held on 10 June 2015 at 11:00am

Present: Anne Galbraith CBE (Chairman), Graham Zellick CBE QC (VTE President), John O'Shea (Deputy Chairman), Ronald Barham, 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

There were apologies from Robin Evans and Martin Allingham. There were no declarations of interest.

ITEM 2: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES. MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting of 19 May 2015 were accepted as an accurate record. All of the actions had been completed before the meeting as required; the arrangements for Board members to complete the e-learning module would be made shortly.

There being no Chief Executive's Report for this meeting, the CEO updated the Board on the settlement in the equalities action against the VTE. Following the Board's discussion at its last meeting, and with DCLG's approval, the claim had been settled at £1,435 including costs. There were no other matters arising.

ITEM3: AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Committee Chairman reported that the Committee had received the Governance Statement from the Accounting Officer who had highlighted the 'Significant risks and issues' described in it. The Director of Finance & Information Systems had given the Committee a summary of the development of the Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15. The Audit Completion Report had also been received; there were no major issues and the accounts would be unqualified. The Committee's recommendation to the Board was that the Annual Report and Accounts be approved.

Other matters that had been covered in the meeting included reviewing the annual assurance statements to the Accounting Officer, presented by the Director of Finance & Information Systems and the Director of Operations & Development (in his role as Senior Risk Information Officer), and reviewing the effectiveness of the internal auditors after their first year of engagement.

ITEM 4: MATTERS FOR DECISION

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2014-15. The Board approved the VTS Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15. Its thanks would be conveyed to the Finance team for their work in this.

HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT FOR 2014-15 AND POLICY. There had been four accidents during the year, none resulting in any absence from work. This was pleasing especially given the fact that there had been an office relocation during the year. Though the VTS offices and the nature of the work meant there was a low level of risk, lone working was a concern and the VTS was investigating ways to improve that situation. It was agreed that this policy should also

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incorporate the VTS's duty of care towards VTE members as previously agreed during the year. The Board **approved the Policy, subject to the addition of reference to VTE members.**

VTS-VTE PROTOCOL. This document was first introduced in 2009. The revised Protocol now incorporated some of the legislative framework. Because of its importance, it had been decided that the Board should approve it and it should form part of the governance framework of the VTS Board. **The Board approved the Protocol.**

ITEM 5: IT STRATEGY UPDATE

A technical workshop held with DCLG to explore the practicalities of what they may be able to provide as shared services on the infrastructure had been held. This had led to a number of queries still to be resolved. The discussions had caused a pause in the procurement exercise for a WAN provider as this might have been included in any possible DCLG provision. The VTS had carried out a tender exercise resulting in two bids, which had been evaluated and a preferred supplier identified. It had now been agreed to carry on with the procurement, with the possibility of the preferred bidder later joining a DCLG contract. The latest version of the IT Strategy was presented, setting out the core principles. The **Board approved the IT Strategy, recognising it as a living document. It asked to be kept informed when any amendments or additions needed to be made.**

ITEM 6: INTERNAL KPIS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The CEO explained that the Permanent Secretary was keen to see graphical data on the performance of ALBs and the VTS had forwarded its first performance report against its KPIs and feedback was awaited. This was expected to be a monthly exercise.

The paper before the Board was a template, which would show background volumetrics and non-published performance measures that the Board might find of interest. Comments and suggestions were invited. The Board asked for the template to be populated for its July meeting for a further review. It was agreed that a session in which the Board could identify the VTS's key functions and important features that were driving business improvement could be useful. Ideally the session would be structured, with an external facilitator, and encompass the risk perspective. The opportunity could also be extended to looking at the suitability of the current workload statistics that the Board saw quarterly and consider their positioning in the Board's agenda.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING Wednesday 22 July 2015 at 10.30am.