

## **Disclosure Scotland Board Meeting**

**Tuesday 5 December 2023: 11am to 1pm**

**Hybrid Meeting - Pacific Quay Boardroom/Microsoft Teams**

### **Minutes of meeting**

#### **Present:**

Gerard Hart	Chief Executive/Chair
Laura Robertson	Deputy Chief Executive
Lynne McMinn	Interim Strategic Director – Digital Programme Delivery
Nicola McBain	Director of Corporate Services
Kathleen McInulty	Director of Safeguarding Operations
Kevin Lee	Interim Director of Policy and Customer Engagement
Andrew Cunningham	Interim Director of Digital
Alastair Sim (AS)	Non-executive Director
Keith Rosser (KR)	Non-executive Director
Lesley Muirhead (LM)	Non-executive Director
Martin Gallagher (MG)	Non-executive Director
Morven MacLean (MM)	Non-executive Director

**In attendance:**

[REDACTED] Head of Change Management

[REDACTED] Head of Finance

[REDACTED] Financial Accountant

[REDACTED] Head of Communications

**Apologies:**

Christopher Wroath Non-executive Director

**Observers:**

Sarah Pumfrett (SP) Non-executive Director

**Secretariat:**

[REDACTED] Governance Manager

[REDACTED] Assistant Governance Manager

**Item 1 - Welcome and apologies**

The chair introduced everyone to the meeting and noted the above apologies.

**Item 2 - Register of interests**

None.

**Item 3 - Previous minutes and action register**

The minutes were agreed as a true reflection of the previous meeting.

The Governance Manager provided an update on open actions.

**Action A2** - Deputy Chief Executive (Digital) to consider the use of commercial partnerships for the digital team – was proposed for closure. The Interim Strategic Director – Programme Delivery advised that this work will be ongoing - whenever we look to deliver anything new, we will consider whether or not Disclosure Scotland or an external company would be best placed to deliver it. The action was closed.

#### **Item 4 – Chief Executive update**

The Chief Executive provided an update on performance. The turnaround time for Basic Disclosures is 2.6 days, while PVG is 6.4 days. This is positive as we come out of peak, and significantly better than previous years.

In terms of the Target operating model within the context of the National Barring Service, the Chief Executive advised that they have requested that the Director of Safeguarding produce a paper detailing next steps. This paper will focus on the need to build a sustainable model for the future, focussing on short, medium, and long term investment needs.

The Chief Executive has requested that Finance colleagues engage with core Scottish Government to address a long-standing issue with our budget. We are mapping out our financing ask line by line in terms of the public services we currently provide without funding, such as the National Barring Service. We also need to invest funding in Digital and the National Barring Service in order to make efficiency savings in future. We must demonstrate our competency, capability, and credibility. We do not have the final budget currently but hope to see the benefits of the approach we have taken in due course.

Within Digital the Chief Executive noted our ambitions to understand our programme of work in a straightforward way with a single view of change. The Interim Strategic Director – Digital Programme Delivery advised that the complexity of the Digital programme has not previously been understood. This has been further hampered by the system. We have now built the bulk of our new platform, and received assurances from technical experts that this will be an improvement and will not require the complex support needed for the legacy system. We are currently working with two systems, however, and there is a large migration piece currently being scoped. Furthermore, they are working to bring everything together, identify the absolute must-haves, and set everything out in a way that makes sense. This is challenging, but we are finding a way forward. We are also bringing in ways of working to address cultural issues by breaking down silos and standardising.

The Interim Strategic Director – Digital Programme Delivery noted that while there are challenges, there are also a lot of positives. We know more about the digital programme than ever before and are taking the right steps forward. We are already seeing changes in ways of working. Other notable successes include improvements to the frequency of our releases. The most recent release allows us to turn on the first increment of the Vetting project. This signifies our ability to get things done and deliver.

The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive both feel much more assured and confident in the ways of working and the approach being taken in Digital. The Deputy Chief Executive noted that we are now seeing a shared understanding and shared direction which will allow us to achieve our strategic goals.

The Chief Executive raised that while governance structures were in place, they did not appear to reflect the reality within Digital and asked the Director of Corporate Services what we have learned from this. The Director of Corporate Services advised that structures can be in place, but it is about how we engage with these to ensure we are getting the correct information, on time, and providing challenge when things are not quite right. The Change Management Team are now there to provide

that tension. Information exchange is also improving. Controls in this area are needed and governance should be viewed as a driver not a blocker.

KR raised highlighted that as we now have 15 months left to Act implementation and there is a need to ensure we are considering all scenarios and have good mitigations in place.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed members that the first meeting of the Change Portfolio Board took place on 4 December. This group is looking at everything we are doing across the organisation and aims to articulate this in a single place. This information can be brought to a Board meeting in the new year.

### **Item 5 – Horizon scanning**

AS raised whether there is a possibility of future financial or delivery issues, and if there is a need to address this.

The Chief Executive advised that the current financial situation and what that means is of course a consideration but noted that we have a lot of assets that we can build on, and we have a history of success. There is a need to emphasise opportunities as well as risks, and to ensure transparency in all aspects. The Chief Executive agrees that the Board needs set events where we look at where we are going, what we are doing, what is going right and wrong, and to take advice on corrective actions where required.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that it is critical to have Board support in managing our delivery of the strategy. In terms of service, ours is the best it has ever been, and this also needs to be demonstrated in the conversations we have.

The Director of Corporate Services noted that members' concerns are understandable based on the information they currently have, however, there has

been a lot of work done and forward momentum since which has made us more comfortable with our current position.

AS and LM felt that everything discussed so far reinforces the need to have a 'state of the nation' view on everything for the Board in order to aid understanding and provide assurances. The Deputy Chief Executive has taken this as an action.

**Action/01/Dec:** Deputy Chief Executive to consider how to articulate a regular 'state of the nation' overview for the Board.

The Chief Executive suggested that this could also be incorporated in the Board away days.

The Head of Finance advised that the SBR has been submitted. Conversations are taking place with the centre regarding the increased ask next year.

Regarding contingencies, the Chief Executive advised that we have started work on contingency planning. We have a red, amber, and green arc and the more we deliver, the better we can understand our position.

The Interim Strategic Director – Digital Programme Delivery added that we have been considering contingencies for some time. We did not fully understand the detail previously, but we are bringing this together now. We need to map the service as-is, what we want it to be post-Act, and what needs to change. The Director is relatively comfortable in terms of how we could deliver but go/no go points are pencilled in with contingencies in place for these.

## **Item 6 – Public Service Reform Programme Strategic discussion**

The Chief Executive provided context on Public Service Reform for members. Reforming is viewed as essential for making progress on the three priorities set out in the 2023 to 2024 Scottish Budget:

- Reducing Child Poverty
- Supporting a just transition to Net Zero economy
- Delivering sustainable public services

The Chief Executive invited discussion on how Disclosure Scotland can add value in this space through demonstrating competency in finances, highlighting our capabilities, aligning to achieve government outcomes, collaborating with other organisations to achieve shared goals, while also ensuring that we keep business as usual running and safeguarding at the forefront.

KR noted that child poverty is an area we can demonstrate our added value. He highlighted how the organisation is being a proactive vehicle for people, getting people into work rather than being a barrier, and that our teams have valuable core skills that could be of broader usage. Improving our service also gets people into jobs faster and benefits the wider sector, so we should push these messages.

It was agreed that it is about demonstrating what we are good at, how we can improve, what our unique selling points are and how they can improve opportunities across the wider public sector.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that we also need to increase awareness about our policy capability. More widely, it is about making everyone more aware of Disclosure Scotland's capabilities and how we can contribute, for example, our role in Ukraine response and the success of this.

MM raised the external communication piece and how we can better leverage social media for example, to promote what Disclosure Scotland is achieving.

MG highlighted storytelling and how these good stories can contribute to getting the message out there.

MM suggested that our stakeholders could also share these stories.

The Chief Executive agreed that there is a need to think about how to best engage with our stakeholders and customers to send a clear message about Disclosure Scotland's capabilities, while being mindful of political acuity.

The Deputy Chief Executive noted that timing is important, but we must demonstrate our value. This is something for the Leadership Team to discuss in depth and bring some options back to the Board.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that we have opportunities to think about how we get that public impact through the marketing of basics for example.

The Director of Safeguarding added that our unique selling point is the service we provide and our holistic view. We need to share the learning and engage with the sector to assist with the prevention of harm.

LM was interested in the external focus but agreed with the need to consider timing given the current challenges.

The Chief Executive stated that we cannot achieve our goals without changing hearts and minds about who we are and what we do. We have an opportunity to reboot the organisation through Act implementation and have to iterate how we present this in collaboration with the Board.

It was proposed that everyone reflect on the discussion points today, and to bring this back to the Board at a future date to move the conversation forward. The Director of Corporate Services and Head of Communications will discuss communication opportunities.

**Action/02/December:** Director of Corporate Services and Head of Communications to discuss points raised and provide update on possibilities at a future Board meeting.



**Action/03/December:** Director of Corporate Services to share key narrative document with Board members.

### **Item 7 – Finance update**

The Head of Finance presented the Period 7 update paper.

Spring budget requests have been submitted, to support unfunded pressures.

The Head of Finance highlighted to Board members that a new finance and HR system is due to go live in April 2024.

Revenue expenditure is mostly what was expected, but with increased force enquires related to volumes of applications.

Income has been good this year, with our highest ever volumes.

In terms of capital, we are on track and spending what we need to spend.

KR asked whether we are expecting to receive the funding requested.

The Head of Finance advised that we have provided comprehensive reasoning and evidence for the funding requested and are engaging with the centre on this.

### **Item 8 – Change delivery and assurance update**

The Head of Change Management presented the Change Portfolio Report for October 2023.

This report goes to the newly established Change Portfolio Board (CPB) for scrutiny, challenge, and feedback. It will now go the CPB before it comes to the DS Board.

The Head of Change Management asked members to provide feedback on the information provided to determine if it is appropriate for the DS Board.

The Deputy Chief Executive, as chair of the Change Portfolio Board, feels that the report provides too much detail for this forum, and suggested that they will provide a chairs brief endorsed by the CPB to the Chief Executive. The report will then be adapted to a more targeted report for Board members to comment on.

The overall portfolio has moved to **red** due to on-going delays across all digital projects, and the requirement to re-baseline business cases – this work is nearing completion.

Once developed, a view of milestones past and upcoming will be presented.

KR noted that it was raised at the Change Portfolio Board that there needs to be more context in the report and detail on what will bring projects back from red.

The Chief Executive instructed that there should be a key or diagram to show optimism level.

**Action/04/December:** Head of Change Management to include indicator of optimism level and direction of travel in Change Portfolio Report.

MG raised concerns about PUCMS tracking over budget and the lack of go-live date.

For the Disclosure Act, The Head of Change Management has no concerns with only one project tracking amber.

Digital Infrastructure/BAU – the overall status is red due to timeline issues around the Platform Re-engineering project. Work is ongoing with an external resource to address this.

Enhancements to service - The programme status has changed to red due to ongoing delays occurring across all projects. Vetting – moved to red due to increment 1 taking longer than expected to deliver. The first sprint has been completed and was successful. The Delivery Manager has introduced new ways of working to improve efficiency and effectiveness and the benefits of this are hoping to be realised across the next reporting periods. Online accounts – remains red due to request to move Identity and Verification (ID&V) to the front of the application process. The business case will be updated to reflect, including new timelines and costs, and this will be presented to the Programme Board in the new year for endorsement. OM ORI (Ongoing Monitoring Other Relevant Information) – moved to red due to delays. Awaiting further feedback from Police Scotland (PS) on the connectivity design. This project is dependent on the approval of the connectivity design from PS as well as PS technical support to build the connectivity between Police Scotland and Disclosure Scotland. In the meantime, the Product Owner and Business Analyst have started work on business readiness.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted that the concerns raised are understandable but demonstrate the criticality of the Change Portfolio Board and the way information is provided within context. We have a due diligence to report things as they are, however, the projects of concern to members today are not Act-dependent and are at the end of their project life cycle. We are improving and progress is being made, as seen with the recent increase in our releases. The Deputy Chief Executive and the Interim Strategic Director – Digital Programme Delivery are working together to identify how projects can be seen in totality and show what the priorities and areas of concern are. This information will be provided to members once established.

The Head of Change Management added that we have also done a lot of work on business readiness to ensure the business is prepared to take on the functionality of these releases.

The Head of Change Management invited members to provide any further feedback via correspondence.

### **Item 9 – Key performance indicators update**

This item will be shared with members via correspondence.

The Head of Corporate Governance advised that there are two figures we are currently unable to report on, which is called out in the report, and invited members to request more information if required.

### **Item 10 – AOB**

The chair invited observers to provide feedback.

**Date of next meeting:** 31 January 2024

**New actions**

ID	Date Assigned	Assigned To	Description	Source	Status	Action Due Date
A12	Dec-23	Deputy Chief Executive	Deputy Chief Executive to consider how to regularly articulate a 'state of the nation' overview for the Board.	DS Board	New	Jan-24
A13	Dec-23	Director of Corporate Services	Director of Corporate Services and Head of Communications to discuss points raised and provide update on possibilities at a future Board meeting.	DS Board	New	Jan-24
A14	Dec-23	Director of Corporate Services	Director of Corporate Services to share key narrative document with Board members.	DS Board	New	Jan-24

ID	Date Assigned	Assigned To	Description	Source	Status	Action Due Date
A15	Dec-23	Head of Change Management	Head of Change Management to include indicator of optimism level and direction of travel in Change Portfolio Report.	Chief Executive	New	Jan-24