



Minutes

Title of meeting	PINS Board Meeting
Date	14 January 2015 Time 12.30pm
Venue	PINS Boardroom, Temple Quay House
Chair	Sara Weller (SW) – Chairman
Present	Simon Ridley (SR) – Chief Executive Janet Goodland (JG) – Non Executive Director Jayne Erskine (JE) – Non Executive Director David Clements (DC) – Non Executive Director Jon Banks (JB) – Director (Acting), Corporate Services Tony Thickett (TT) – Director, Wales Peter Schofield (PS) – Director General, DCLG Simone Cowdery (SCo) – Board Secretary (Acting)
In attendance	Phil Hammond (PH) – Director, Casework (item 6) Sean Canavan (SC) – Head of Chart (item 6) Debbie Moore (DM) – Head of Strategy (item 7) Tracey Jones (TJ) – Strategy Section Manager (item 7) Helen Adlard (HA) – Head of People, Strategy & Change (item 8) Jo Esson (JEs) – Head of Quality & Governance (item 9)
Observer	Sarah Chilcott (SCh) – Deputy Director, Planning Portal
Apologies	Natasha Perrett (Board secretary)

Part One

Schedule of Actions – December minutes

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Janet Goodland and Jon Banks	To have a discussion about what Quality means to PINS, what measures are required and how to improve customer response rate.	3.9	Complete – paper to the February QPSC meeting re the Committees remit for discussion.
2.	Simon Ridley and Jon Banks	Draft a proposition for the QPSC to review the data requirements, improve customer service data and prioritise data requirements.	3.9	Complete – agenda item added to the February Committee meeting.

Part One

Schedule of Actions – January minutes

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Simon Ridley	CEO paper to include an update on the management of the appeals backlog.	4.8	Complete – included in the February update.
2.	Janet Goodland/ Ben Linscott	Review the data on SoS decisions presented in the KPI scorecard in relation to impact on PINS' reputation.	5b	On-going – action transferred from Jo Esson to Ben Linscott. BL to take this forward with JG with an update for March Board meeting.
3.	Natasha Perrett	To arrange meetings for JE to discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales KPI data with TT • A broader briefing on the KPI scorecard with SR. 	5c	Complete
4.	Jayne Erskine/ Tony Thickett	Inform the secretariat of the Wales data requirements.	5c	Complete
5.	Natasha Perrett	Add future targets to the PINS Board forward agenda.	6b	Complete
6.	Natasha Perrett	Amend the Audit Committee minutes to reflect the QPSC will review risk 5a, not 7a.	9.4	Complete
7.	Natasha Perrett	Forward planner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Resourcing to be moved to March • Local Plans to be added to May or June. 	9b, 10.1 & 10.4	Complete
8.	Natasha Perrett	To invite all Directors to the dinner to be held before the 11 March Board meeting.	10.3	Complete – diaries scheduled on 26 January.

Minutes

1.0	<p>Welcome and Declaration of Interests</p> <p>1.1 The Chair welcomed to JE, new Non-Executive Director to the Board meeting. PINS Board observer Sarah Chilcott was also welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 The Chair called for declarations of interest of which there were none.</p>
2.0	<p>Minutes of 9 December Board Meeting (Part One)</p> <p>2.1 No further comments were received on the accuracy of the December Board minutes.</p> <p>2.2 JG acknowledged that the first two actions will be discussed at the next Quality and Professional Standards Committee in February.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>2a) The minutes reflect a true and accurate record of the 9 December Board</p>
3.0	<p>Committee Chairs: Reports, Comments and Minutes</p> <p>(a) Audit and Risk Assurance committee (meeting 14 January)</p> <p>3.1 The Audit and Risk Assurance committee met on the morning of 14 January. A verbal update was provided by DC on what the committee had focused on.</p> <p>3.2 The Committee discussed getting a sharper focus from internal audit on tracking management progress against action from reports and the need for a strong IA plan for 2015-16. It also discussed the contract management report and the actions PINS will undertake to improve this function. Jan Ryan gave a presentation about IT resilience and business continuity plans.</p> <p>3.3 PS commented that the Secretary of State is interested in the resilience of all departments and will receive paper structured around DCLG. He thought that it would be beneficial for PINS to be included. SR acknowledged this and also pointed that out that we have specific systems that need to be looked at.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>4a) To note the Committee update.</p>
4.0	<p>Chief Executive's update</p> <p>4.1 Over the Christmas period it has been relatively quiet in terms of operations. A key issue was City Link going into administration. This was managed effectively by the commercial team without incident or disruption.</p> <p>4.2 There are still on-going discussions about budget position for 2015-2016 between JB, Peter Sloman and DCLG but it was clear greater savings will need to be made. The financial challenges will grow further beyond 2015-16 and it</p>

is important PINS prepares for the years ahead.

4.3 DC commented on the issue of charging now coming into focus. SR confirmed that a comprehensive piece of work is being carried out with DCLG ahead of the next spending round so that we are in the position to offer choices.

4.4 There has been a good response to the latest recruitment. Sifting of applications is complete and the quality received seems to be very good. This is a big undertaking and it needs to be looked at dynamically due to the number of internal applicants. Band 3 is an area that needs looking at in detail due to the introduction of band 3 field inspectors, which is a new role.

4.5 SR mentioned the newly appointed Permanent Secretary, Melanie Dawes. SW added that Melanie may well have a different approach to issues from her predecessor, particularly about how planning reform might support housing objectives. SR confirmed that he will ensure PINS can engage with her early.

4.6 Casework has had a good few weeks over Christmas in which they have reduced the backlog of older cases.

4.7 DC raised the question on the issuing of apology letters on delayed cases. SR confirmed that we will send more once we know which cases we can chart before the end of the financial year.

4.8 JG asked if the taskforce for dealing with the backlog had been set up, to which SR confirmed that it is being set up as a project and is in the process of being developed. This will play into next year's targets and help to get us into a more sustainable position. It is also an important opportunity to test new ways of doing things. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Agreed:

4a) To note the CEO's update

4b) CEO paper to include an update on the management of the appeals backlog.

5.0

Monitoring Performance – KPI Scorecard

5.1 An additional paper was tabled showing latest data on Secretary of State Decisions. This data, along with the commentary, is being collected to help keep inspectors informed of the decisions the SoS is making.

5.2 SW acknowledged that the Quality and Professional Standards Committee should look at this in more detail as this could have an impact on our reputation. SR confirmed that it would be good to have a longer discussion with NEDs on this to help understand the position, possible implications and how we are handling it.

5.3 SR discussed performance against S78 planning appeals. This is getting better but as we are increasingly working through the backlog, this will dip in February. Enforcement appeals are also not improving and there continues to

be concern that this may become a reputational challenge.

5.4 PS was concerned on the resourcing for local plan examinations and looking ahead. BL confirmed that we are receiving more complicated cases which have the full plan and there are breaks during the examination. SR confirmed that there is no indication we are taking longer but it is taking more time overall to get the local plan in place. This has raised questions on the process of plan making to make it quicker and easier. Mary Travers attended a meeting with Brandon Lewis MP to look into this.

5.5 JE asked for more information on Wales's data, it was agreed that she should talk to TT in more detail as part of her continued induction. Arrangements also will be made for JE to have a broader briefing on the scorecard with SR.

Agreed:

5a) The Board agreed that it was good to have the SoS information and to explore the implications further with it coming to a forum at a later date.

5b) The Quality and Professional Standards Committee should review the data on SoS decisions presented in the KPI scorecard in relation to the impact on PINS' reputation.

5c) JE to discuss Wales's data with TT and have a broader briefing in the scorecard data with SR.

6.0

Future Targets

6.1 PH produced a paper which builds on the previous paper presented to Board in December. This has bought into focus how we might achieve a better balance of resources and customer needs in new targets for future years.

6.2 SW agreed that what PINS needs to do is balance time, quality and cost within planning. As an applicant you want appropriate quality along with time but we also have to balance that with the cost element. JG also pointed out that if we got the quality wrong then that would have an impact on both time and cost.

6.3 There was discussion around different approaches and, in particular the possible advantages of an average time target rather than a threshold, looking at scope to prioritise cases that will have impact on more customers, and looking at how to support best parties wanting to 'stop the clock' on an appeal. SR said more detailed thinking is underway and that interaction with any changes on charging will be important.

6.4 SW agreed that if we charge for an appeal then we have to make sure that the service we deliver is what people are willing to pay for.

6.5 It was agreed that when looking ahead to the budget we have to be mindful of targets. PH explained that he was talking further with DCLG to work on more of an analysis which he will bring back to the Board at a later date.

	<p><u>Agreed:</u> 6a) To note the review of the Planning Appeal casework targets. 6b) Add future targets to the PINS Board forward agenda.</p>
7.0	<p>PINS Improvement Programme</p> <p>7.1 The Board focussed on and discussed benefits tracking. PINS are working hard to re-establish an investment appraisal process for projects/change initiatives which is linked to benefits tracking and monitoring.</p> <p>7.2 SW agreed that in thinking of the challenges ahead and the greater focus on efficiency, this is fundamental in the way forward. There should be a collective ownership of management goals and programme owners. It is essential that expected savings are removed from budgets to ensure that costs can be reduced as planned.</p> <p>7.3 TJ confirmed that she has met with Peter Sloman, to discuss and devise a process that is streamlined and simple but robust.</p> <p>7.4 The Board fully support this and agreed that it is important to encourage high expectations to get the right rigour and robustness. The Board agreed that they should be informed of any issues.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u> 7a) The board agreed with the benefits tracking process and the set out proposals.</p>
8.0	<p>PINS 3 year strategy</p> <p>8.1 HA provided an update to the board on the process so far involving workshops with Heads of Service and staff engagement. It was noted that the plan is at a high level and more work is underway to detail the key projects that will be carried out to meet the objectives of the plan. .</p> <p>8.2 The board agreed that the plan had much in it that was good and would help shape PINS into the future. The plan should, however, have a much clearer focus and that in their view this needed to start from the imperative for PINS to maintain the quality of its services while carrying them out for less money to meet the pressures on public spending. In general the plan needed greater focus on commercial discipline. In addition a balance needed to be struck between being ambitious on the changes needed to meet the likely financial and political challenges and being clear how current business would be maintain without undue risk.</p> <p>8.3 A number of other issues were mentioned including the need for flexibility, working across teams, how we monitor and measure progress against our goals, how we are handling risk, clear communication and a genuine focus on customers. There is an extent to which the plan felt too inward looking to the Board. It was discussed that when looking at the next stage it would be beneficial to take a step back and have a look from the top</p>

	<p>down.</p> <p>8.4 SR agreed that more thinking is to be done on this but individual comments have been helpful to pull it into a tighter focus.</p> <p>8.5 HA informed the board that the business plan will be coming to the board meeting in February and March and ahead of this decisions need to be made about what the priority aspects are of this.</p> <p>8.6 SW agreed that before the March board meeting it would be good for it to come back with the context of progress towards identifying the profile and expectations from the biggest projects. PS emphasised the importance of this thinking to inform the next spending review in government.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>8a) The Strategic direction needs to be looked at in more detail but it was noted that this is a work in progress.</p>
9.0	<p>Strategic Risk Register – Top risks</p> <p>9.1 The main area of focus on the Strategic Risk Register was the political risk. PS noted that there were a number of items in this which could drive the organisation in a number of ways. He advised that liaising with colleagues at DCLG would help to cover all of the different outcomes.</p> <p>9.2 SR confirmed that we are working closely with DCLG with issues and information being fed both ways. There is also a planned meeting with DCLG colleagues at the end of the month to focus on these aspects. SR confirmed that Rachael Pipkin would be our main focus point for all policy related issues in the run up to the election.</p> <p>9.3 SW noted that resourcing was an area that should be looked into in either February or March as this was a core priority and any risks about next year's budget needed to be considered in future versions.</p> <p>9.4 JG noted that the Quality Committee should pick up point 5a of the risk register and not 7a as stated in the Audit Committee minutes.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>9a) To note the updated Strategic Risk Register.</p> <p>9b) Add future resourcing to the forward planner for either the February or March PINS Board meeting.</p>
10	<p>Review of the meeting and forward agenda</p> <p>10.1 The Board agreed to move Future Resourcing to the March Agenda.</p> <p>10.2 The Board agreed that Stakeholder Engagement was important in February ahead of the PINS Annual Conference in March.</p> <p>10.3 The Board agreed that all Directors are involved in the dinner the night</p>

before the March Board meeting. This is to be an informal dinner sharing views and perspectives.

10.4 The Board agreed that Local Plans should be an agenda item in either May or June.

Agreed:

10a) To the amendments to the PINS Board forward agenda.

Next meeting: 12 February 2015, 12.30pm – 3.30pm (CARDIFF)