



The Planning Inspectorate

Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

FINAL

(14 October 2015)

Minutes

Title of meeting	PINS Board Meeting
Date	18 September 2015 Time 12.30am
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 Tony Thickett (TT) – Director, Wales Helen Adlard (HA) – Director, Knowledge and Professional Standards Jon Banks (JB) – Acting Director, Corporate Services Peter Schofield (PS) – Director General, DCLG
In attendance	Mark Southgate (MS) – Director, Major Application and Plans Peter Sloman (PSI) – Head of Finance & Commercial Lee Armitage (LA) – Head of Plans Mary Travers (MT) – Inspector Group Manager Stuart Campbell (SC) – Head of Communications Natasha Perrett (NP) – Board Secretary Tracy Hodgkiss (TH) – Director, People & Change
Apologies	

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 6 May meeting

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Steve Quartermain, Sean Canavan, Phil Hammond	Consider a set of targets for PINS Casework.	8a	By spending round

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 1 July meeting

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Steve Quartermain	Invite Brandon Lewis and SoS to PINS to discuss the charging regime.	7.14	In progress – SQ to discuss with Private Offices 7/8 Oct. Letter to be issued 12/13 Oct.

Part One

Schedule of Actions – 18 September meeting

	Owner	Action	Minutes	Timeframe
1.	Phil Hammond , Mark Southgate & Steve Quartermain	Closely monitor the average time it is taking to process cases and to make sure this continues to improve.	4.4	In progress – reporting taking place through fortnightly performance

				meetings.
2.	Mark Southgate & Phil Hammond	Ensure managers across the organisation understand the importance of delivering the work that is strategically imperative to PINS and the reputational risk.	4.5	Complete – MS presented the casework backlog to SMT on 23 September and called for additional resource. Some resource has been sourced and a further call for flexible resource was made in early October to assist casework recovery.
3.	Mark Southgate, Jon Banks & Steve Quartermain	Draft a Q4 narrative which shows PINS year end position and includes planning guarantee numbers, average times month by month and why this position is sustainable with a supporting trajectory and share with the Board before the next meeting. This should be discussed with PS and team.	4.6 & 5.2	Complete – included in the CEO report.
4.	Jon Banks	Amend the workload graph on page 3 of the scorecard to show the rolling mean on a monthly basis.	5.1	Complete – updated table included in the October scorecard.
5.	Debbie Moore	Add the responsible project owner to CIP8.	5.3	Complete – updated table included in the October scorecard.
6.	Tony Thickett	Look into PINS Wales performance – intake vs decisions.	5.5	Complete – TT explained that intake vs decisions data reported at the last meeting varied due to the point at which the data was captured. On review of the data PINS Wales is on track to meet targets.
7.	Tracy Hodgkiss	Add short, medium and longer term absence data to CIP11.	5.6	Complete – updated table included in the October scorecard.
8.	Jon Banks & Mark Southgate	To: • monitor the year-end position, we cannot underspend on	6.6	In progress – through the Operations Group

		<p>inspectors and admin staff and report that we have failed to deliver our service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor project delivery and the ability to deliver on what we have promised, we must pin savings into the budgets going forward • deliver the things which are in our gift. 		and Programme Management Office. Operations Group is focussing on inspector resourcing on a monthly basis. Recruitment is underway and non-salaried inspectors are providing their maximum capacity.
9.	Jon Banks & Peter Schofield	Discuss with PS changes to the Local Plan process and the impact this will have on PINS funding, JB to produce supporting figures.	6.9	Complete
10.	Lee Armitage	Write a note to Ministers setting out the work that has been done to address the governance issues arising out of Maldon and Durham	8.6	In progress – meeting scheduled for 12 October for MS, SQ and LA to discuss.
11.	Steve Quartermain & Mark Southgate	Agree a champion at director level to own the customer service interface.	9.2	Complete – SQ has appointed MS to take this forward.
12.	Jo Esson	Ensure improvements to the online service are made as quickly as possible, particularly where they do not require IT changes.	9.5	In progress - Detailed analysis of suggestions has started, with contact being made where necessary (and possible) to clarify some of the non-specific comments.
13.	Stuart Campbell	Lead on the communication of positive messages through HoS and GMs to highlight examples of where we are delivering a high quality service for our customers	9.6	In progress – survey results have been discussed with HoS and GMs. They have been tasked to discuss the positive elements with their teams. An article will be published on PINS net in October.
14.	Natasha Perrett	Make amendments to the forward planner, commission a paper for the October Board item on Casework as the top risk deep dive and add an additional item to the November agenda on fracking and the	10.1, 10.2 & 10.3	Complete

		additional South East runway.	
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Minutes

1.0	Welcome and Declaration of Interests 1.1 Apologies were received from TH. 1.2 The Chair called for declarations of interest of which there were none.
2.0	Minutes of 19 August Board Meeting (Part One) 2.1 No further amendments were received for the 19 August Board minutes. <u>Agreed:</u> 2a) The minutes reflect an accurate record of the August Board meeting.
3.0	Committee Chairs: updates (a) Quality & Professional Standards Committee (QPSC) (meeting of 18 September) 3.1 The QPSC discussed Jo Esson's work on the Customer Quality project and agreed quality is not just about the decision. It is about the whole process and the things which are important to the customer, such as timeliness and the ability to interact with the organisation. Cultural issues with a focus on Customer and Quality were discussed. It was agreed the QPSC and People Committee will have a joint meeting to bring these together. At the next QPSC meeting JG asked to see a project plan for the Customer Quality project with dates and activities prioritised. 3.2 The Committee also discussed the quality report, quality in the Casework directorate and the National Infrastructure (NI) customer survey results. The themes coming out of the NI survey will feed into the Customer Quality project. (b) Audit & Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) (meeting of 18 September) 3.3 The ARAC discussed the internal audit plan, the substantial overruns on some audits, the reasons and impact on the budget. In relation to the plan the Committee discussed the audits in the plan and the priorities. 3.4 The Committee reviewed the risk management framework and discussed the categories of risk which were agreed as operational, reputational and financial. The Committee discussed risk appetite in these areas and how the risks should be embedded in the organisation. The Committee wished to see greater attention to the mitigation measures. For risks we have agreed to

	<p>carry, plans should be in place to show how the risk is being managed to minimise its impact on the organisation.</p> <p>3.5 It was agreed that the PINS Board would review the Casework Directorate risk register at its next meeting as the risk has been reduced to such a granular level the Committee wasn't able to see the overall risk.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>3a) To note the update.</p>
4.0	<p>Chief Executive's update</p> <p>4.1 SR explained the backlog in the registry team has been cleared to normal working levels, but there has been a slowdown on the number of cases being started. This is due to flexible resource not being utilised. MS, PH and SR have had a discussion about the management structures in place. Whilst there has been a slow down in progress, with additional focus we are coming to a position where the admin backlog is clearing.</p> <p>4.2 A number of files have been checked and prepared for the new intake of inspectors. Through October and November the number of unstated cases will reduce in number as cases will be started and allocated to the new inspectors. By October the admin backlog in HAS casework will be cleared.</p> <p>4.3 The Board discussed the slowdown in performance and the availability of resource and asked why the resource had not been utilised. SR explained this is partly down to cultural issues and failure to understand the reputational risk. Tom Warth (TW) is working with PH to allocate the work to available resource. MS explained PH, TW and Steve Hall are working with identified teams to identify further flexible resource.</p> <p>4.4 SR explained we are making progress and issuing decisions on older casework, the addition of the new inspectors is also having a positive impact. Performance against the planning guarantee is getting better. Performance against enforcement casework is also improving. SR said we are reducing the average time it is taking to process cases and it is important that we track this performance.</p> <p>4.5 SW said it is important that managers understand what work is strategically imperative for PINS to deliver. Communication with middle managers must be clear.</p> <p>4.6 SW asked for a Q4 narrative which shows our year end position. SR agreed and said this needs to include our planning guarantee number, average times on a month by month basis to show what is being achieved. The narrative also needs to include why we believe it is sustainable.</p> <p>4.5 JE asked if people in the organisation are aware of the business focus. SR said everyone is aware, there are weekly charts which show our performance and these are made available online.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p>

	<p>4a) To note the update from the CEO.</p> <p>4b) PH, MS and SQ to closely monitor the average time it is taking to process cases and to make sure this continues to improve.</p> <p>4c) PH to ensure managers across the organisation understand the importance of delivering the work that is strategically imperative to PINS and the reputational risk.</p> <p>4d) MS and JB to draft a Q4 narrative which shows PINS year end position and includes planning guarantee numbers, average times month by month and why this position is sustainable with a supporting trajectory.</p>
5.0	<p>Monitoring Performance – KPI Scorecard</p> <p>5.1 The Board discussed the workload – number of received v. closed appeals graph (page 3) and agreed it would be more helpful if the rolling year mean line followed the pattern on a monthly basis. This would help the Board to track the history and progress. JB agreed to take this forward.</p> <p>5.2 PS asked for performance against the planning guarantee to be presented in a graph showing the average by month. A narrative around why we think this performance is sustainable should also be included. SR agreed and suggested a conversation with PS and team should take place. SW asked if these graphs could be included in the CEO report or scorecard.</p> <p>5.3 CIP 8 – Major Change Project Deliver Benefits is showing that two thirds are running late. SW said benefits tracking and project delivery is critical, we have made commitments to deliver benefits and we must deliver. SR said there is a lot we can learn from the planning of our projects. Work is underway to tighten up the project work streams and milestones, Tracy Jones holds a more detailed plan. Visibility of this at the Board may be helpful.</p> <p>5.4 SW asked for the name of the responsible person to be added to the table of projects as this will heighten responsibility and said we need to get better at delivering what we promise if we are to continue to build confidence in Ministers.</p> <p>5.5 In relation to Wales performance, PS asked why intake was up and decisions were down, are there issues around timing? TT – said he believed this was an issue of phasing but that he would look into this.</p> <p>5.6 JG said staff sickness (page 25) appeared to be rising, SW asked for short, medium and longer term absence periods to be shown, as the Board are not able to see the trends.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>5a) MS and JB to produce a graph which shows performance against the planning guarantee showing the average by month and share with the Board before the next meeting. A narrative around why we think this performance is sustainable should be included and discussed with PS and team.</p> <p>5b) JB to amend the workload graph on page 3 of the scorecard to show the rolling mean on a monthly basis.</p> <p>5c) Debbie Moore to add the responsible project owner to CIP8.</p> <p>5d) TT to look into PINS Wales performance – intake vs decisions.</p>

	5e) TH to add short, medium and longer term absence data to CIP11.
6.0	<p>2015/16 Budget</p> <p>6.1 PSI explained the change in approach to budget monitoring has led to improved transparency and is picking up issues which have not been picked up before. There is more work to do on monitoring budgets and getting decision making around budgets right.</p> <p>6.2 SR said at present we are showing an overspend, but there are areas where there are underspends due to forecasts against budgets and areas where we can stop funding if necessary.</p>

6.3 PSI explained we are planning for the medium term which is looking across the whole organisation and how we need to commit and work together. This is the first time we have shown this joined up approach. Further sessions are being held at the next Senior Management Team meeting to look at what the spending round looks like for PINS.

6.4 PS referred to 8.1 of the paper and asked if systems are holding back the flexible approach. PSI confirmed the systems do hinder PINS at the moment and the ability to report accurately as we are not able to move budgets around. The finance team is working with FSSD and DCLG to look at options. This work is key and will enable reporting to the Board to be more transparent.

6.5 PS said financial and management accountability are not aligned in the organisation as we are using agency staff. JB explained we agreed to deliver on the operation rather than focus solely on the financials. HA said we should be operating more flexibly in directorates as well as across directorates.

6.6 SW said we need focus on:

- the year-end position, we cannot underspend on inspectors and admin staff and report that we have failed to deliver our service
- project delivery and the ability to deliver on what we have promised, we must pin savings into the budgets going forward
- delivering the things which are in our gift to deliver, such as the 2% vacancy management target.

6.7 JE said the Board is supporting a number of good ideas, but we must focus and deliver on the key things. JB said we are faced with a number of challenges which will impact on project delivery and agreed that we may need to scale back delivery plans in some areas.

6.8 There was some discussion around the uncertainty of income around NI projects falling away and changes to the Local Plan process and the impact this has on PINS demand and income. This is an area of financial risk for PINS.

6.9 PS said the financial impact of Local Plans Policy work has not been flagged up, is there any data available? JB did not have any formal figures available, PS and JB agreed to discuss further with supporting figures.

6.10 The Board discussed concerns around budget ownership and those making commitments and failing to deliver. PSI assured the Board that the medium-term financial plan does hold people to account and requires them to deliver savings for the investment made.

6.11 JB said business cases are rigorously challenged by the Finance Group. SW said the business cases must deliver benefits.

Agreed:

6a) MS, SQ and JB to monitor:

- the year-end position, we cannot underspend on inspectors and admin

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff and report that we have failed to deliver our service • project delivery and the ability to deliver on what we have promised, we must pin savings into the budgets going forward • delivering the things which are in our gift to deliver, such as the 2% vacancy management target. <p>6b) PS and JB to discuss changes to the Local Plan process and the impact this will have on PINS funding, JB to produce supporting figures.</p>
7.0	<p>Service & revenue combinations in the spending round context - RESTRICTED</p>
8.0	<p>Local Plans</p> <p>8.1 LA explained the paper focussed on the work following the interim findings on the Durham and Maldon Local Plans and the operational impact including a fall in work load and income.</p> <p>8.2 Following the findings of the Durham and Maldon Local Plans PINS has taken forward a number of work streams which focus on quality assurance, guidance, inspector appointments and notification letters. A narrative on how we allocate inspectors to cases and the work streams as a package will provide Ministers with assurance around the Local Plans process. Whilst these steps can be taken to improve consistency and so provide assurance, inspectors are bound to work within the statutory framework. Ministers wish to see them taking a partnership approach with the council.</p> <p>8.3 PS said LA and MT have done a great job to address the issues and provide assurance to Ministers on the process and how inspectors are allocated to plans.</p> <p>8.4 SW asked how do we know if the steps at 4.4 of the paper are right and sufficient. LA explained significant engagement with inspectors and professional leads has taken place. SR said we have been addressing the issues which took place and the steps taken will reduce the risk of this happening again, although the independence of Inspectors' judgments mean that it is impossible to close down all possibility of reoccurrence.</p> <p>8.5 MT explained the Secretary of State is looking at the terms of reference for Maldon, there are points of national policy which will become clearer and will further help.</p> <p>8.6 SW said it is important for SQ and PS to be clear about national policy to close the risk. PS asked what would PINS would do if the issues were to emerge again. LA said we are much better placed to scenario plan and spot early warning signs. PS asked LA to write a note to Ministers setting out the work PINS has done over the summer to provide reassurance that steps have been taken to address the governance issues that have arisen.</p> <p>8.7 LA explained the Government's Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) on Local Plans, sets out that where no local plan has been produced there will be intervention in early 2017 by the Government to arrange for a plan to be written. 62 councils are yet to publish a strategic plan; 58 of these have said</p>

	<p>they intend to publish a plan by end of March 2017.</p> <p>8.8 LA explained it would cost between £3 and £20 million if we intervene (dependent on the stage reached and scope intervention) in the plan process for 20 of the 62 councils that do not have a strategic plan in place. SW asked what is being done to get the plans in place. LA explained 10 inspectors are being trained to conduct advisory work. SW suggested PINS should start to work with 3 or 4 councils of the pool that are already indicating they are unlikely to have a plan in place by 2017, rather than wait until 2017, particularly if the plans are considered to be complex. LA said that joint coordinated working is underway with DCLG and PAS to determine which authorities would be targeted for engagement and by whom, but clearly the 4 councils that do not expect to publish by the end of March 2017 should be a priority</p> <p>8.9 HA said the financial implications for PINS are big in terms of training and workforce planning, we need to be planning for this work now.</p>
9.0	<p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>8a) LA to write a note to Ministers setting out the work that has been done to address the governance issues arising out of Maldon and Durham.</p> <p>Stakeholder engagement – survey results</p> <p>9.1 SC updated the Board on the results of the reputation survey and the subsequent action being taken to address the issues which were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC has spoken to PH. As the Board is aware, work is already underway to address the backlog in the Casework directorate. • SC has spoken to HA about the issues raised around the consistency of decisions. This is being addressed through the Virtuous Circle project. • SC has spoken to Jo Esson about user expectation and communicating what the ACP is for. There may be operational changes which can be made rather than making changes to the system. <p>9.2 The Board discussed the ownership of the customer service interface through the ACP and agreed a champion at director level should own and direct this work.</p> <p>9.3 Thanks have been given to those that took part in the survey and SC and team have followed up on specific feedback. How we are using customer feedback to make operational and business improvements will be published.</p> <p>9.4 JG suggested SC link this survey with Jo Esson's survey to gain direct customer feedback. JE suggested SC bring in customers to help prioritise changes, SC said this is an option if there is a business need.</p> <p>9.5 Where suggestions for improvements have been made, SW said it is important to progress them quickly if possible. Some improvements may not require an IT change, but could be implemented through a simple process change. MS agreed and said we should action improvements as soon as possible.</p>

	<p>9.6 The Board agreed with SC's recommendation that the survey, in some form, be repeated annually, as to do so any sooner would risk survey fatigue and not give the organisation sufficient opportunity to respond in the highlighted areas.</p> <p>9.7 The Board was delighted with the response rate to the survey and said the outcomes should be shared with staff to highlight examples of where we are delivering a high quality service for our customers. There are a number of positive messages and these should be communicated to all across the organisation.</p>
10.0	<p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>9a) MS & SQ to agree a champion at director level to own the customer service interface.</p> <p>9b) Jo Esson to ensure improvements to the online service are made as quickly as possible, particularly where they do not require IT changes.</p> <p>9c) SC to lead on the communication of positive messages through HoS and GMs to highlight examples of where we are delivering a high quality service for our customers.</p> <p>Forward agenda & AOB</p> <p>10.1 Amendments are required to the forward agenda to transfer standing items from SR to Steve Quartermain.</p> <p>10.2 The October agenda items were agreed, the Board asked for the item on top risk to focus on Casework developing the discussion about the Directorate Risk Register.</p> <p>10.3 The November agenda should also include a paper on fracking or the additional South East England runway, as an exercise in forward planning on major risks.</p> <p><u>Agreed:</u></p> <p>10a) NP to make amendments to the forward planner, commission a paper for the October Board item on Casework as the top risk deep dive and add an additional item to the November agenda on fracking and the additional South East runway.</p>

Next meeting: 14 October, 12.30 – 3.30, Directors Boardroom