

CTSI Group Board

Minutes of Meeting held on 16 March 2022
Walbrook Wharf, 78-83 Upper Thames Street, London EC4R 3TD

Present S Ruddy – Chair, L Baxter, T Lindsay, W Potts, T Gass, P Ramsden, J Sampson, B Meredith, A Simpson, J Herriman, U Dholakia

In attendance: I Cottingham, J Guerreiro

Apologies: None

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Comments/Decisions</u>	<u>Action</u>
2200	Welcome and Declarations of Interest All were welcomed to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest in addition to what have already been declared.	
2201	Outstanding Actions and Minutes of meeting 1 December 2021 (Item 1a and 1b) The minutes of 1 December 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The outstanding actions were reviewed: (2175 ACTSO policy statements) to be circulated. (2178 Board papers) – a number of discussions had taken place relating the papers and their format, some improvements have been implemented based on these, this is a work in programme, feedback on structure would be welcomed. (2176 Spring Council meeting) invitation to be extended to members of the Board to attend. (2181 Bank mandates and purchase order limits) I Cottingham to discuss with the new Finance and Corporate Services Director after appointment. (2186 Forward plan) – this is being further reviewed and revised. Work is ongoing on the IT Digital Enabling Strategy, this will have Finance and Corporate Services Director oversight before coming back to the Board.	SR JG IC
2202	Chief Executive Update (Item 2) J Herriman went through his summary report of progress against the 2021 CTSI Delivery Plan. A number of key priorities had been identified including the delivery of Symposium which was a success; securing the International Consumer Centre grant for which BEIS had given assurances that this would be renewed; ADR contract which	

has now gone out to tender; the qualifications review which has started; the vision development for which discussions are going well; response to the Command Paper; and embedding new financial processes into the organisation. The Race and Equalities Working Group is making good progress but there is still work to do in this area.

Finance - The financial outturn saw a surplus of £272k after a £100k contribution was made to the pension deficit. There is still a financial risk around ICC and ADR until these are confirmed. The ADR bid is due in at the end of April, having been deferred from last September, with the service starting at the end of May. The ICC grant finished at the end of 2021 and a short-term extension has been given. The delays are due to the BEIS spending review process. The risk is around £35k to £40k per month.

The local authority products renewals budget was based on a financial reduction of 5% compared to last year, however the cancellations are close to 10%. The overheads work has now been done so true costs are now being reflected in all areas.

Human Resources – Staff have now returned to hybrid working, a staff meeting took place recently with 30 staff attending in person. All teams are working in the office two days per week. There are plans to ensure that teams are coming in for purposeful activity and more project type work. The building requirements will be reviewed later in the year alongside the implications for staff. Performance management has been re-established. There is still work to do in relation to the HR function, driving change will bring a level of capacity and capability via two new directors Duncan Stephenson on 19 April 2022 and Riyadh Islam on 6 June 2022. P Ramsden questioned the cost of HR now and asked for figures to be provided.

JH

EDI - A lot has been achieved but there is still a long way to go. The Race and Equalities Working Group met on 14 March 2022, £10k has been set aside in the 2022 budget for bespoke work. An EDI action plan is being worked on and will be signed off on 29 March.

I Cottingham questioned the contingency arrangements in relation to the Chief Executive and risk which should be added to the risk register.

JH

J Sampson reiterated that lessons can be learned from the pace of decisions which are a risk, highlighting the delay in the appointment of a Finance Director. The Board needs to be accountable for risk and more proactive in managing risks. S Ruddy, T Gass, R Ramsden and I Cottingham will be meeting to discuss risks and reporting.

I Cottingham suggested the anonymising of whistle-blowing.

Policy – The outcomes of the Command Paper consultation and Consumer Detriment Survey are expected to come out within the next two weeks.

Membership and governance – There has been good engagement with the branches and sections. A membership campaign had been undertaken at the beginning of the year, membership figures are static with renewals being tracked on a weekly basis. Some internal work is being done on membership categories which will then go to the Council meeting.

Comms and marketing – The clarity of overheads presents a challenge to the Conference budget. Whilst some improvements have been made to the website more are planned for May including being clearer about what we do as an Institute and as a profession.

Service delivery and business development – Leadership development, the Aspiring Leaders Programme with Closha has received very good feedback. J Herriman to provide take-up numbers to Board. A new approach to business development has been introduced incorporating the £3.4m worth of activity across the organisation in order to prioritise expansion and growth.

JH

The Board agreed progress against the objectives for 2021/22.

2203 **CTSI Delivery Plan 2022/23 (Item 3)**

The delivery plan for the 2022/23 year was presented; this had been built on the discussions at the September Board strategy day. The framework will be used to report to the Board with progress supported by KPIs which will be shared with the Board on a quarterly basis.

The vision to 2031 and four themes has been discussed with a wide range of groups; feedback has been positive and has included the suggestion that there should be more overt reference to EDI.

The operating model demonstrates that policy shapes everything we do with outputs, values and strategic outcomes. The business planning process shows how we operate, CTSI values and how they drive strategic outcomes.

The Board priorities for 2022-23 have been shaped by the management team with four clear strategic goals which are a strong policy voice, a compelling membership offer, business development success and inclusive and collaborative.

I Cottingham would welcome a RAG status against the themes in the 2022-23 delivery plan.

P Ramsden suggested a review of terminology – strategic outcomes, strategic goals. He also questioned whether the strategic goal should be a strong policy voice or influencing.

The next phase will be transitioning to key strategic KPIs for the Board to look at on a regular basis.

T Gass questioned how the Board will provide scrutiny on the goals, whether this will be distilled to various committees or a focus on a particular area at each Board meeting. J Herriman responded that the management team KPIs can be distilled to highlight how we are doing

against each area with a RAG and then focus on specific items by exception. A change programme board can be established internally to report against the plan with updates going to the relevant committee as appropriate.

The Board agreed the goals and deliverables.

2204 **Vision Development Update (Item 4)**

J Herriman gave an update on the vision engagement with branches and stakeholders to date. There is broad agreement to putting the consumer right at the heart of the vision.

There is a general consensus to broadening the church of membership although there are some tensions which need to be acknowledged. Another theme that is coming through is about not losing the centre of gravity being local authority trading standards with some strong views regarding trading standards functions outside of local authorities. There have also been discussions about the membership categories.

L Baxter and T Lindsay to be invited to the final Working Group meeting.

JG

2205 **Policy Update (Item 5)**

L Kane gave an update on policy. The focus has been improving outreach, influence and engaging with stakeholders. The overarching theme is the sustainability of the trading standards profession. The number one priority is to ensure that there are adequate resources, there is funding available for example for construction products from OPSS but no capacity to do this work. Ensuring diversity and inclusivity in the profession along with access to leadership opportunities is also high on the agenda

Other areas of work include legislative reforms – a response from the BEIS consultation is awaited. Expert trading standards views are being fed in at every opportunity. Consumer risk and vulnerability is an underpinning theme with the changes the way that consumers transact along with product safety risks. Consumer risk and vulnerability is included in all press outreach. An infographic had been prepared in relation to sustainability and greenwashing.

J Sampson requested that examples are included in the report to tell the whole story and outcomes with timelines.

B Meredith thanked L Kane for the comprehensive report and questioned whether the messages are being positioned in the right place to the right audience, adding that these need to be clear on what is needed as a lack of clarity is unhelpful. Driving the conversations alongside risk is important. What weight can we add to messaging with other organisations, pushing collaboration further. Lots of really good work has been undertaken, we need to be clear about where we go next and drive this.

J Herriman added that the Institute is on a policy journey, the narrative around risk has been changed.

P Ramsden felt that an activity column was missing as some outcomes are activities.

I Cottingham added that communication is important and that politicians have a focus on being re-elected and want to avoid the next scandal.

A Simpson added that this was a lot of good work but felt that that product safety reviews had not been included which fits with the construction product regulations and needing more resources.

T Gass felt that there was a lack of food labelling and health included, there are a lot of risks and impacts for business. L Kane advised that CTSI had respond to the FSA consultation this week, and these areas are included in the full framework spreadsheet.

J Sampson reminded everyone that John Bridgeman talked about the political agenda at the strategy day and the Paul Connolly reported about influencing, there is a need for closer alignment and being more joined up. J Herriman responded that the themes will be used to engage with the political parties to ensure that consumer protection is included in their manifestos, engagement is important.

T Lindsay suggested attendance at the party political conferences with themes being taken there.

L Baxter added that the CTSI policy is joined up with ACTSO and NTS but there is a need for future proofing and to ensure all parties are having conversations to keep the relationship going as all are representing trading standards.

2206 **Conference 2022 (Item 6)**

The overheads and staff costs have now been attributed to all budget areas to understand the real cost of running the business. Whilst the costs had previously been incurred they had not been included in the budget. P Ramsden was thanked for pursuing this along with previous members of the AFC.

The original budget that had been agreed with £219k income showed a small profit of £2.6k. Once estimated staff costs and allocation of overheads are included this leads to a significant loss of £134k. There is still some work ongoing to deliver sales but it was acknowledged that the event will be run at a loss.

J Herriman advised that Conference Steering Group is working well. The theme for this year's event is "A changing profession for a changing world".

I Cottingham to put forward a suggestion for a speaker who will give an international context.

J Sampson questioned how many members attend and how representative this is of the profession. J Herriman to review last year's figures.

IC

JH

P Ramsden added that now there is a more accurate picture of costs of the event is there an opportunity to look at expenses and other income opportunities? How do we evaluate loss in relation to value? J Herriman added that the income is continuing to be looked at and the event will be evaluated in the normal way afterwards.

S Ruddy added that we need to look at the learning and feedback from this year's event in time for the next event.

B Meredith added that there was a need to take any decisions in context of other considerations including other events and membership views, reiterating that the decision should not be based on cost.

J Herriman added that the Minister had committed to attend the Conference in Bristol, there will be more profile for external groups, more around students and recruitment of members, as well as building on the EDI work from last year and offering a blended hybrid delivery.

It was agreed to amend the recommendation and accept the projected shortfall.

2207 **Qualifications Review Working Group Update (Item 7)**

The Group had taken longer to establish group than anticipated. It is an agile and focused group to review the evidence gathered the previous year. The Group has a clear plan to deliver against timelines. There has been additional resource capacity required from head office which had not been anticipated. There have been some learnings coming out from the work. There have been no concerns externally flagged about the qualifications review. L Baxter was thanked for stepping in to support the review process and provide structure. L Baxter to share the timelines.

LB

A review of the contractors and lessons learned to be carried out upon completion.

J Sampson suggested that John Bridgeman should report his findings to the Board. L Baxter clarified that this is the intention and that a special meeting will need to be arranged.

2208 **Race and Equalities Working Group Update (Item 8)**

T Lindsay provided an update on the work of the Race and Equalities Working Group which has included recruitment processes - doing things in a way to promote EDI positively, measuring recruitment and capturing data. Giles Spied is representing the Group on the ACTSO mentoring programme. ACTSO recently arranged for an external speaker to talk about positive recruitment with 120 heads of service which was well received. T Lindsay is working with other branches to set up their own Race and Equality groups and looking at leadership programme sponsorship for those from a diverse background. The group will be holding a seminar session at the Conference again this year.

L Baxter stressed the importance of ensuring that all equality issues and characteristics are included especially those highlighted in the survey last year such as ageism etc.

The Working Group has created a draft action plan with a list of actions to focus on in the future. A meeting will be taking place on 29 March and an update provided to Council in May.

2209 **Chair of the Audit & Finance Committee Report (Item 9)**

T Gass provided a summary of the last AFC meeting, highlighting the surplus from 2021 and progress that has been made in relation to budgeting, more accurate forecasting, resource planning, and future work on the reserves' strategy, and long-term plan to reduce the pension deficit.

The risk register needs to be reviewed as to how risks are presented to the Board. There are a lot of risks which J Herriman uses as a management tool. Consideration to be given to whether we are concentrating on the right risks and focusing on these to address them. P Ramsden added that the risk register has grown into a useful tool for the Executive but the role of the Board needs to be understood, which is looking at strategic risks. I Cottingham added that it is about the probability of the risk and the mitigation.

The interim external audit report had been presented to the AFC; there were some minor issues but overall it was a really good interim report. A lot of work had taken place on the finance manual which had made a huge difference along with the newly implemented internal audits.

2210 **Chair of the Remuneration & Appointments Committee Report (Item 10)**

The minutes of 1 December 2021 were agreed.

There is more work to be done on recruitment processes, a report has been provided which will be updated for the next RAC meeting and will then go to the Board for information.

The AFC is looking at affordability of the pay award which was agreed in principal and consideration given to timing.

2211 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.