FSNI Business Plan

2015/16

Impartial Forensic Science Supporting Faster Fairer Justice

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Foreword by the Chief Executive

The Forensic Services Strategy for Northern Ireland, led by the Department of Justice is the key focus for Business Planning for Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) for the 2015/16 year. Implementation of the actions deriving from the strategy require close collaborative working with criminal justice partners across Northern Ireland and FSNI is keen to play its part in delivering effective and efficient services to the criminal justice system. As a result, the objectives in this business plan are designed to support the objectives of the Minister and the Department, whilst implementing the activities falling to FSNI from the Forensic Services Strategy.

As with previous years, this Business Plan is also shaped by the environment in which the Agency operates e.g:-

- Ministerial and Departmental priorities;
- Funding pressures;
- The Forensic Science regulatory and quality landscape;
- Public Accountability;
- Maintenance of scientific excellence and an independent, objective scientific ethos;
- Legislative changes;
- Court precedents and directions;
- National and international forensic science developments; and
- European and International initiatives on quality standards.

FSNI's overarching purpose is to deliver an impartial and comprehensive service which efficiently and effectively meets the requirements of the NI Forensic Services Strategy and of the wider Northern Ireland Criminal Justice System.

These obligations being delivered in conjunction with the ongoing voluntary exit scheme and the current fiscal environment, drives the imperatives for efficiency and value for money across the Agency, whilst not compromising the very important quality of the science delivered.

The main challenges therefore, are in developing the agility required to enable the Agency to maintain and enhance the capacity, capability, speed and quality of casework, whilst driving process efficiency and delivering services with fewer resources.

The fruits of FSNI's Transformation Programme are now starting to be realised and will be shared with our customers this year through speedier and more cost effective products and services. Our new state-of-the-art laboratory is due to be structurally complete in the Autumn and will be fully accredited and operational by the end of March 2016. Systematic re-engineering of our scientific and administrative processes will continue across the Agency to ensure they are streamlined and waste-free. The first two components of Perseus - our new integrated software solution - namely the Laboratory Information System and the Quality Management System, will come on line in the Autumn, followed by their integration with the new Case Management System in March 2016. These investments will reinforce FSNI's position as a leader in the provision of integrated forensic science services and realising the benefits of the investment on behalf of the wider criminal justice system will be a key driver for the Agency in this and future years.

Finally, and key to all of this, are the staff who have continued to deliver core business during a period of significant change and uncertainty. Their ongoing support, commitment and professionalism, during what will be a busy and challenging year, is greatly appreciated.

Stan Brown

Chief Executive

1. Introduction

In common with all other public sector providers, Forensic Science Northern Ireland (FSNI) faces very significant challenges in the 2015/16 year with severe funding pressures set to impact the services we deliver. The importance of FSNI positioning itself to be able to deliver high quality forensic services, with fewer staff and less resources, means that our focus will be on making the organisation as agile and flexible as possible, whilst maintaining the highest quality services and improving our processes. Every aspect of this year's business planning is targeted to drive efficiencies, improve processes and deliver value for money.

As an Agency of the Department of Justice, FSNI is accountable for the public resources expended in delivery of our service. As a result, the Agency's standards of Governance and Financial Management will continue to be maintained at the highest level.

It is against this backdrop that FSNI is planning to meet the Minister's objectives in relation to faster, fairer, justice.

The business planning task for FSNI has two overarching imperatives:-

- (a) Delivering modern, integrated, timely, high quality products and services which meet the needs of the criminal justice system with reduced resources; and
- (b) Ensuring that the benefits realised through the Transformation Programme are passed on to customers.

The main themes running through FSNI's business plan can be articulated under the following headings:

- Focussing on Customers and Stakeholders: by ensuring timely delivery of high
 quality services whilst remodelling internal processes, aligning with the wider
 criminal justice strategy on forensic services and improving the understanding of
 stakeholders of the value of forensic science.
- Implementing the NI Forensic Services Strategy: FSNI will continue to work with
 the police and other organisations across the criminal justice family to deliver the NI
 Forensic Services Strategy led by the Department of Justice.
- Driving Processes Efficiency: by reducing wastage across the business using the Lean 6 Sigma process re-engineering methodology, whilst developing innovative products to enhance service offerings.
- Improving the cost efficiency of Quality & Regulation: FSNI is accredited by the
 United Kingdom Accreditation Service and is advised by guidance from the UK
 Forensic Science Regulator and other authorities. During this year our focus will be
 on maintaining accreditation to ISO 17025,¹ and improving the cost efficiency of
 Quality Assurance.
- Investing in our people: As with all Departments in the NI Civil Service, FSNI expects to lose a number of staff during this year through the voluntary exit scheme. A key theme running through the whole business plan is the agility of the organisation to be able to respond to the needs of the criminal justice system with fewer staff. Besides improving our processes, our focus this year will be on better aligning capacity to demand and on cross-skilling our people to better respond to demand fluctuations across our separate scientific disciplines.
- Realising the benefits of the Transformation Programme: FSNI's new laboratory and case management and laboratory systems will come on line during this financial year. In parallel, FSNI is working through a number of process reengineering projects, all designed to streamline processes and improve speed and efficiency. We plan to share the tangible benefits of these initiatives with our customers and stakeholders at the earliest opportunity.

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¹ ISO 17025;2005 is a quality standard of the International Standards Organisation for Testing & Calibration Laboratories and is the adopted standard for Forensic Science providers in Europe, including

 Maintaining high standards of corporate governance, probity, asset management, procurement and information assurance: We are very conscious of our status as a public body and will continue to maintain the current high standards in corporate governance, which are central to our integrity and reputation.

UK and Ireland. Conformance to the standard is assessed by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) on their in-depth inspection and surveillance visits to providers' establishments.

FSNI Corporate Goal, Mission, Vision and Values

Corporate Goal

"To deliver an impartial and comprehensive service which efficiently meets the requirements of the NI Forensic Services Strategy."

Mission

"Impartial Forensic Science Supporting Faster, Fairer Justice".

Vision

"To be recognised as a Centre of Excellence of Integrated Forensic Science Services".

Values

FSNI values align with those of the Department whilst reflecting the Agency's status as an operationally independent scientific organisation. They underpin the vision of the organisation and describe how we behave as individuals and as part of a team to discharge our corporate and social responsibilities.

These values place emphasis on accountability, teamwork, integrity, professionalism, customer focus, innovation and recognition.

FSNI's Status

FSNI is an Executive Agency of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The Accounting Officer's responsibilities are delegated from the Department's Permanent Secretary to the Chief Executive who is accountable for:-

- the effective, efficient and economic use of resources;
- the propriety and regularity of expenditure;
- the safety and security of staff; and
- meeting the requirements of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

Performance against these objectives is monitored by the Department through quarterly Governance Review Meetings which are chaired by the Safer Communities Director.

FSNI's Chief Executive chairs and is supported by the Leadership Board, comprised of Executive Directors, the Corporate Secretary and two Non-Executive Directors.

Leadership Board meets monthly. It sets and oversees the strategic direction and performance of the Agency against the Corporate Balanced Scorecard targets and objectives.

Leadership Board is supported by an operational Delivery Team which focuses on the delivery of performance targets. This group is also responsible for day-to-day management of risk within FSNI.

FSNI's Role

FSNI's primary function is to support the Criminal Justice System by using fit for purpose and modern scientific methods and practices across a comprehensive range of specialist disciplines. The science involved must withstand the rigours of explanation and challenge within an adversarial courtroom and must therefore be 'world class' keeping abreast of innovation and development across the global forensic sector. Unlike most of the other criminal justice organisations, whose focus is on the individuals concerned with a case, FSNI deals with the recovery and objective scientific evaluation of all evidence it derives from the case and never considers itself to be in any way 'sided' with either Defence or Prosecution. Indeed the Agency's processes and its Quality Management System are specifically designed to eliminate as far as possible the risk of conscious or unconscious bias. This is particularly important given the pivotal role that forensic evidence can often play in criminal cases together with the increasing complexity of the science and, as a consequence, the difficulties jurors or others in the justice system may experience in fully understanding it.

The vast majority of FSNI staff are directly involved in the delivery of a comprehensive range of scientific specialisms which can be integrated to provide the best opportunity for evidence recovery. FSNI is a leader in such an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach and has one of the widest single-site ranges of capabilities of any provider internationally. Our core purpose of serving the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland is met by our scientists' commitment to objectivity and independence, delivered with integrity and professionalism through their expert witness to Courts and supported by Quality Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 – 2005.

FSNI provides added value services to the Criminal Justice System ranging from crime scene examinations and evidence recovery (in support of the police investigation) to laboratory based recovery and analysis and onwards through to writing detailed reports and giving evidence in Court. A key FSNI strength is the ability to plan and sequence the recovery of multiple evidence types from submitted exhibits, so that the evidence and its integrity are both optimised. The new laboratory and Perseus are both designed to enhance that capability.

FSNI Organisational Structure

The diagram at Annex B provides detail of the organisational structure as we approach the 2015/16 business year. However, in tandem with all processes in FSNI, this structure is constantly under review to ensure that FSNI is positioned to meet the challenges of the years ahead.

Directorate of Reporting Services (DORS)

In support of the routine crime scene services provided by PSNI's own CSI staff, the Agency's Reporting Officers often attend scenes of crime (most commonly serious crimes) where they provide a range of specialist evidence recovery and evaluation services. Reporting Officers advise on investigative forensic strategies, commission analyses from FSNI's laboratories, evaluate results, issue reports, advise the Public Prosecution Service, facilitate the Defence and provide Expert Witness in Court. Reporting Services also provides bench science services in highly specialist or niche areas such as Road Traffic Collisions, Microchemistry and Firearms as well as support to stakeholders in respect of legacy investigations or inquests.

Directorate of Laboratory Services (DOLS)

The Laboratory Services Director has responsibility for the service delivery of the bench science which includes the recovery and analysis of a wide variety of evidence types. This work is commissioned by Reporting Services and delivered to a probative standard. Laboratory services has responsibility for the management and maintenance of the NI DNA Database and associated interactions with the National DNA Database and also provides a range of specialist support in the field of digital crime and road traffic policing. Digital Electronic Forensics in particular is a DOLS service used by a wide range of statutory authorities.

Transformation Directorate (TD)

The Transformation Directorate has responsibility for the co-ordination and delivery of FSNI's Transformation Programme. This includes:-

- FSNI's new laboratory accommodation known as the "Locard Building"². The building is expected to be structurally completed in Autumn 2015 and fully accredited and operational by late March 2016;
- the new integrated Case Management, Laboratory Information Management and Quality Management software system (Perseus), the first components of which will come on-line in Autumn 2015, with completion by March 2016;
- the Services Improvement Project, (SIP) continuing to deliver process reengineering across all business areas;
- the DNA Database Reconfiguration Initiative (DRI) which is redesigning the Northern Ireland DNA database; and
- the coordination of the development and launch of the new Integrated Multiplex Upgrade Project (IMUP) using "DNA17" technology, which supersedes the previous SGM Plus and Low Copy Number DNA technologies. (This project has already been successfully completed, with the exception of the final Expert System component, being implemented this year, which is designed to support the statistical "crunching" and interpretation of "mixed" and "partial" DNA profiles.)

Quality and ICT Directorate (Q&ICT)

The Quality and ICT Director is responsible for the maintenance and development of FSNI's highly detailed and extremely important Quality Management System, its accreditation to the ISO17025 standard and for compliance with the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice and other international guidance. The Q&ICT Director is also responsible for Customer Services (including exhibit reception and storage), Information Strategy and Business Continuity and manages the interface with the Department's Information Systems Division in relation to ICT.

Corporate Services Directorate (CSD)

The Corporate Service Director has responsibility for the corporate structures which support the Agency, e.g. Facilities, Health & Safety, Security, Finance, Procurement, Contract Management, Business Development and for the management of the interfaces with the shared services of the Department and the wider NICS, e.g. on Human Resources.

3. The Strategic Planning Context

The DOJ is responsible for the resourcing and the legislative and policy framework of the justice system in Northern Ireland and for the delivery of justice services through its agencies and arm's length bodies. As a full cost recovery Executive Agency, FSNI is required to recover the majority of its costs from revenue derived from paying customers. Whilst the PSNI account - under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) - for over 90% of FSNI's revenue, (as part of the annual budget allocation to the PSNI from the DOJ), FSNI also charge for services provided to other key customers such as the State Pathologist's Department (SPD), the Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI (OPONI), HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) the National Crime Agency (NCA), as well as solicitors and other private customers.

Given the increasing focus on forensic science and its potential impact on supporting the priorities of the Minister of Justice in delivering faster, fairer justice, it is important that forensic science services are robust, responsive and flexible to meet the current and future needs of the criminal justice system. To deliver this, the Department has established a Forensic Services Strategy Group (FSSG) comprising key representatives from the relevant criminal justice organisations across Northern Ireland. The aim of the group is to provide a strategic programme function to support the justice system and a forum for discussion on strategic issues impacting the delivery of forensic services. FSNI is a key member of this group and is working with partners to implement the action plan developed as a result of the strategy. The strategy and plan is a key driver influencing the priorities set by FSNI in this business plan and will continue to shape business planning in forthcoming years. Chief amongst the issues this year for the FSSG to consider will be the option of bringing the currently separate forensic services

² Named after Edmond Locard the "father" of Forensic Science and author of the phrase, "Every contact leaves a trace".

provided by PSNI and FSNI under a unified "crime scene to court" model as in Scotland – a recommendation of the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJINI).

In addition to the local and national considerations, FSNI's scientific knowledge base is informed directly by international developments and we work in close co-operation with our counterparts in Great Britain and Ireland as well as across all of Europe. As a scientific organisation, FSNI is subject to strict quality management standards and protocols which help to ensure the objectivity and integrity of our work and the expert witness we provide to the courts.

FSNI's Strategy Map (Annex A), a frontispiece of the Balanced Scorecard, integrates the agency's key themes and objectives.

4. What We Plan To Do

The purpose of this Business Plan is to translate the priorities set by the Minister, the Department and the Forensic Services Strategy Group into objectives to be achieved by the Agency. This also supports the Corporate Plan which was developed during 2014/15.

In delivering its business plan, the Agency deploys Balanced Scorecard methodology as the business planning and monitoring tool. A Corporate Balanced Scorecard is developed and from this, a balanced scorecard is developed by each of the Directorates. Performance Agreements and Personal Development Plans are then linked to the objectives set by Directorates, and, thus the objectives of each member of staff are clearly linked to the objectives of respective Directorates, the organisation and the Department.

The Corporate Balanced Scorecard is reviewed monthly by FSNI's Leadership Board and Delivery Team, published targets are endorsed by the Minister and performance is reviewed quarterly by the Department.

A formal assessment of performance against targets is provided in the Annual Report provided by FSNI each year.

FSNI Key Objectives

This section outlines the objectives, measures and targets under the four quadrants of the FSNI's Corporate Balanced Scorecard:-

- · Customer Focus,
- Key Business Processes,
- Learning, Development & Growth, and
- Finance.

It is important to note that further, detailed targets are agreed in the Service Level Agreements between FSNI and its major customers and performance against these is reported to those customers on a regular basis.

Customer Focus

C1. Ensure timely delivery of high quality products and services.

The key focus of this objective is to ensure the timely delivery of high quality products and services with a focus on reducing the Agency's average time to issue reports by 10% as measured against Q4 outturn performance in 2014/15 and 2015/16 business years therefore contributing to the Minister's objective of faster, fairer justice.

C2. Ensure a modern, integrated, Forensic Science Service to meet the needs of Criminal Justice.

This objective ensures FSNI's alignment with the wider Forensic Science Services Strategy and requires FSNI to deliver against any related actions agreed for the Agency in the 2015/16 year.

C3. Promote the understanding of the value of Forensic Science to the Criminal Justice System and Stakeholders.

Given the current financial situation, the ability to demonstrate the value that forensic science brings to the criminal justice system has never been greater. FSNI will deliver against the in-year activities of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan to improve stakeholder understanding and demonstrate value for money.

Key Business Processes Perspective

P1. Drive process efficiency.

The Service Improvement Project, rolling out across FSNI, is driving work in relation to process efficiency and the elimination of waste. This Project, delivered as part of FSNI's wider Transformation Programme, is due to close in March 2016 when business improvement will become part of business as usual processes in FSNI. In the run up to March 2016, FSNI will continue to deliver against the 2015/16 Service Improvement Plan and will continue the drive to embed the Lean 6 Sigma Lean methodology into business as usual (BAU) processes.

P2. Reconfigure Reports to align with the recommendations of the Indictable Cases Pilot.

In delivering its services, FSNI interacts with numerous stakeholders across the criminal justice family (e.g. the Investigating Authority, the Public Prosecution Service, Defence Lawyers, State Pathologist and the Courts). FSNI is working as part of a pilot project (The Indictable Cases Project) to develop a model for speeding up the process between crime scene to court. This objective focuses on the alignment of reports and reporting formats to meet the needs of the criminal justice system as defined by this project and a separate thematic project on Proportionate Forensic Reporting due to conclude with recommendations in time for the introduction of the Criminal Justice Bill in the autumn. The overall aim is to improve the timeliness and appropriateness of the information provided thereby releasing efficiencies to be redeployed into other investigations.

P3. Improve the cost efficiency of Quality Assurance.

It is essential that the Agency maintains its accreditation to ISO17025:2005, however whilst it is recognised that quality management requires formalised systems and procedures, it is also acknowledged that maintaining FSNI's Quality Management System is a significant overhead. In order to improve the cost efficiency of Quality Assurance, FSNI aims to develop a "Cost of Quality Reduction Strategy and Action Plan" by May 2015 to set out activities to be delivered by March 2016 to reduce process wastage in the quality management process.

P4. Develop and implement a Programme of Research and Development which aligns with the needs of the Criminal Justice System.

As a scientific organisation, it is important that FSNI keeps abreast of emerging changes in technology, scientific developments and the changing requirements of customers. FSNI has developed a strategy for and a programme of research and development (R&D) and during the 2015/16 year plans to deliver projects which will improve processes and support the work of customers. FSNI will continue to work collaboratively with academia and will seek opportunities to source opportunities for European funding.

Learning, Development & Growth Perspective

L1. An agile organisation supporting a range of capabilities.

In a similar manner to all other Government Departments, FSNI is faced with a challenging year in relation to maintaining the scope and capability of the organisation in the face of the ongoing voluntary exit scheme and funding cuts. This objective seeks to ensure that the broad range of scientific disciplines offered by the Agency is maintained whilst positioning the organisation to be responsive and agile to mitigate the impact of the expected reduction in staff numbers.

With reducing levels of absenteeism across the NICS is a key focus, FSNI will continue to monitor and manage absenteeism through its Leadership Board and other Governance meetings in order to maintain its existing low absence rates. Absenteeism is monitored monthly by the Leadership Board and reported quarterly through the Quarterly Governance Review Meeting with the Department.

L2. Develop effective Line of Business and Management Information systems. (MIS)

During this year, FSNI is working towards the implementation of its new Case Management, Quality Management and Laboratory Information Management Software systems (Perseus) which will significantly enhance the management information available to support the business and aid case progression in the interests of timeliness. The focus of this objective is to complete the implementation of Perseus by 31 March 2016.

L3. New laboratory operational by March 2016.

The structural completion of the new high care laboratory "Locard" is due in Autumn 2015 and it will be accredited and fully operational by March 2016.

Finance Perspective

F1. Manage key resources to meet budgetary requirements.

This objective is about securing adequate funding from customer revenues to support delivery of forensic science for NI, whilst ensuring that governance, probity and prioritisation is applied in the management of both resource and capital funding.

Resource management will be reported on, monthly, at Leadership Board meetings. FSNI will respond to quarterly monitoring rounds.

Directorate and corporate risk registers are updated regularly and reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee quarterly. Each Directorate completes a stewardship statement at 6 and 12 month intervals in support of the Chief Executive's Stewardship Statement. In addition we have a programme for internal audit inspections. It is expected that up to seven reports will be brought to the Leadership Board in the next year.

F2. Realise the benefits of the Transformation Programme.

As the financial climate is predicted to remain very challenging for forthcoming years and financial planning has identified the need to generate additional revenue in order to relieve budgetary pressures; this objective directly relates to the reduction of expenditure and the release of benefits to customers as soon as practically possible as a result of Transformation Programme. A focus will be placed on realising efficiency savings through the Benefits Realisation Plan and passing these on to customers to meet additional or new demands. Opportunities for revenue generation from outside the NI Block Vote will be examined for their feasibility.

FSNI Key Performance Targets 2015/16

Customer Focus Perspective

Corporate Objective	Measures of Success	Targets
C1. Ensure timely delivery of high quality products and services	Improved turnaround times.	By 31 March 2016 to have reduced the Agency's average time to issue reports (excluding DNA Criminal Justice Samples) by 10% against a baseline of March 2015. (70.4 days)

C2. Ensure a modern integrated forensic science service to meet the needs of Criminal Justice	Alignment with wider CJS strategy on Forensic Science.	By 31 March 2016 to have delivered against the agreed in-year FSNI components of the Forensic Science Services Strategy Action Plan
C3. Promote the understanding of the value of Forensic Science to CJS Stakeholders	Improve Stakeholder Understanding.	By 31 March 2016 to have delivered against the in-year targets of the agreed Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Key Business Processes Perspective

Corporate Objective	Measures of Success	Targets
P1. Drive Process Efficiency	Process improvement through Lean 6 Sigma.	By 31 March 2016 to have delivered the 2015/16 actions within the strategic improvement plan for process reengineering.
P2. Reconfigure reports to align with recommendations of the Indictable Cases Pilot	Alignment of reports to CJS needs with regard to timeliness and appropriateness.	By 31 March 2016 to have developed a suite of reporting formats configured to meet agreed needs as defined by the Indictable Cases Pilot.
P3. Improve the cost efficiency of Quality Assurance	Reduction of process wastage.	By 31 May 2015 to have developed a Cost of Quality Reduction Strategy; and By 31 March 2016 to have delivered the in year actions of the Cost of Quality Reduction Plan

P4. Develop and	An effective R&D	By 31 March 2016 to have delivered the in-
implement a	programme which	year action plans of the individual projects
Programme of R&D	ensures products are	comprising the Programme of R&D and
which aligns with	launched and updated,	launched related products and/or updated
CJS needs.	processes improved	related processes as appropriate
	and evidential	
	evaluations enhanced.	

Learning, Development and Growth Perspective

Corporate Objective	Measures of Success	Targets
L1. An agile organisation supporting a range of capabilities	Maintain scope of capabilities as agreed through FSSG in light of the Voluntary Exit Scheme and funding cuts.	By 30 July 2015 to have developed a Business Impact Mitigation Plan. By 31 March 2016 to have delivered the actions agreed for the 2015/16 year in the Business Impact Mitigation Plan.
	Sickness Absence Rates.	Throughout the year, to monitor and manage sickness absence levels monthly to maintain the level below the DOJ target for the Agency.
L2. Develop effective line of business and MIS systems	Fit for purpose business management systems in place.	By 31 March 2016 to have completed the implementation of Perseus.
L3. New Laboratory operational by March 2016	Product output capability in place across all building sections.	By 30 November 2015 to have completed construction of the Locard Building.
		By 31 March 2016 to have production operational within every section of the Locard building.

Finance Perspective

Corporate Objective	Measures of Success	Targets
F1. Manage key resources to meet budgetary	Ensure adequate funding to support delivery of forensic science for NI	By 31 March 2016 to have maintained annual resource costs at less than or equal to agreed budgets
requirements		By 31 March 2016 to have maintained annual capital costs less than or equal to agreed budgets
F2. Realise the benefits of the Transformation Programme	Cash expenditure directly avoided and/or released to customers and FSNI by Transformation	By 31 March 2016 to have delivered against in- year actions agreed in the Transformation Benefits Realisation Plan

Strategy Map 2015 - 2016

Vision: To be recognised as a Centre of Excellence of Integrated Forensic Science Services

Accountability

Teamwork

Integrity

Customer Focus

Professionalism

Innovation

Mission: Impartial Forensic Science Supporting Faster Fairer Justice

Corporate Goal: To deliver an impartial and comprehensive service which efficiently meets the requirements of the NI Forensic Services Strategy



