



Veritau Limited

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors  
By Video Conference  
09.00 am - 1 March 2023**

**Attendees**

Cllr Gareth Dadd  
Cllr Andrew Waller  
Gary Fielding  
Debbie Mitchell (chair)  
Richard Smith  
Max Thomas

**Observers**

Cllr Katie Lomas (CYC)  
Cllr Cliff Lunn (NYCC)

- 1 Apologies, preliminaries, introductions and announcements  
No apologies received. Helen Swan (Assistant Director, Information Governance) was present to take the minutes.
- 2 Declarations of interests  
MT, RS, HS declared an interest in item 9 (annual leave entitlement)  
GD and CL declared an interest in item 8 (proposal to purchase shares in VNY).
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2022  
Agreed
- 4 Update on outstanding actions  
No outstanding actions
- 5 2022/23 finance and performance update report  
MT presented the regular update on finance, staffing, and operations.

Finance: MT noted that there hadn't been a great deal of change since the last Board meeting, and the Group was still expected to break even or make a small profit.

Staffing: There are currently two TUPE consultation exercises ongoing. These involve both the transfer of staff from CDC and HBC into Veritau Ltd as part of LGR, and VNY staff into Veritau Ltd.

Operations: MT highlighted recent business development activities.

## 6 2023/24 draft business plan

MT explained the key issues outlined in the business plan and the priorities identified. There is a recognition that there will be a lot of work needed to support NYC to integrate systems and ensure a smooth transition. Recruitment and retention of staff were identified as key risks for Veritau. The reliance on key members of staff for certain expertise also posed a resilience issue. The business plan also contained specific actions which will be required to develop the business and to ensure it remains sustainable and of value to its shareholders.

DM queried if staff were consulted in relation to the business plan. MT explained that involvement in the process is encouraged but engagement can be variable. There is also the opportunity for staff to comment on the draft plan prior to it being finalised.

## 7 2023/24 budget

MT noted that the Veritau Limited budget now includes the services previously provided by VNY to the NY district councils.

Fee rates will be increased to account for the expected 2023/24 pay award and to make up the short fall with the 2022/23 pay award. GD noted the pay award and how it had impacted the bottom pay bands.

GD queried the comparison with private sector pay and the competition this poses in terms of staff retention. MT/DM noted the difficulties around this but emphasised the ethos of Veritau and the benefits such as flexibility, that are key considerations for current and potential employees. AW queried if these other benefits offered were having the desired outcomes in terms of retaining staff, and if this is being tracked via exit interviews. This information could then influence any future policy decisions/changes. MT noted that exit interview feedback is obtained from leavers and more generally via annual staff surveys. The motivation of leavers is sometimes due to employees wanting more experience at an early stage of their career, but it was mainly due to pay rates. It was acknowledged that it is important to emphasise the benefits offered and to try to address the reasons for leaving where possible. GD reiterated that it is crucial to invest in creating the right culture as this will pay dividends further down the line.

## 8 Proposal to purchase shares in VNY

Veritau is a group of companies registered in England and Wales. Registered office: West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA.

Veritau Limited (06794890) is jointly owned by North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council. Veritau North Yorkshire Limited (07931990) is jointly owned by Ryedale District Council, Selby District Council, Richmondshire District Council, Hambleton District Council and Scarborough Borough Council. Veritau Tees Valley Limited (123636343) is jointly owned by Middlesbrough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council. For enquiries contact enquiries@veritau.co.uk

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MT explained the reasoning behind this proposal. VNY would become dormant but could then be used as a vehicle to admit new member councils in the future. The share purchase would also ensure that CYC and NYC remained equal partners in the wider group structure. The consideration for the shares is based on 50% of current distributable profits within VNY. The share purchase would also need the approval of both shareholders.

The Board approved the recommendation to purchase the remaining shares in VNY

#### 9 Annual leave entitlement

MT explained the reasons for increasing annual leave entitlement as set out in the report. Recruitment and retention issues remain a problem for the Group. Veritau's leave is not aligned with most of its member Councils and NYC's increased entitlement has further exacerbated this. Annual leave had also been identified as an issue by Unison during the TUPE process for HBC staff.

Two options had been considered, with option B recommended.

GD queried if this would create an issue in terms of billable days available and if there would be an increased rate for non-member clients. MT stated that the increased leave entitlement should improve productivity and this in turn would drive efficiencies. The change would therefore be absorbed.

MT, RS and HS left the meeting.

Option B was approved by the Board.

#### 10 AOB

None

### **Date of Next Meeting – TBC**