

Executive Team minutes

Monday 18 March

Members and other attendees present

Christopher Graham	Information Commissioner
Daniel Benjamin	Director of Corporate Services
David Smith	Deputy Commissioner and Director of Data Protection
Graham Smith	Deputy Commissioner and Director of Freedom of Information
Simon Entwisle	Director of Operations
Jonathan Bamford	Head of Strategic Liaison
Peter Bloomfield	Senior Corporate Governance Manager
Robert Parker	Acting Head of Corporate Affairs
Steven Montgomery	Temporary Online Editor
Hannah Cutler	Corporate Governance Officer (secretariat)

1. Introductions and apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Draft minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed as accurate.

Agreement to re-launch 'coffee and cake' sessions in AOB was noted as an action for the staff survey action plan.

Action point 5, to schedule six monthly procurement unit reviews, from 25 February is now complete.

Action point four, to enquire launching the Annual Report on the 20 June, from 11 February is now complete. The Annual Report will be launched on 20 June.

Action point nine, to review the costs so far from the Consulting Association work, outstanding from 11 February

will be completed shortly. ET were also updated on the Consulting Association work and the forth coming meeting with Vince Cable MP.

3. Finance Report

Issues: The February finance report was presented. ET were asked to agree changes to the budget. UK travel costs are higher than expected; this is explained by the increase in the number of activities which require travel. The apportionment of overseas travel costs was questioned, as foreign travel costs are rarely incurred for FOI work.

Decisions: The budget changes were agreed.

Action point 1: Daniel Benjamin to review the apportionment of overseas travel and to amend as appropriate to reflect that there is no overseas travel for FOI work.

4. ICO Website Homepage

Issues: The homepage redesign was presented. The design has been informed by analytics results and user testing. The new design is flexible and links can be changed according to popularity or promotion. The current cookies banner is unchanged. The change is scheduled for 17 April. Staff and users will be informed before the change.

Decisions: ET approved the latest version of the redesign.

5. Developing ICO clear communications

Issues: Proposals were presented to create a new project group to support the development of plain and consistent written communications across the ICO.

Decisions: ET agreed the proposals and authorised to go ahead with the launch of a project group.

6. Internal Audit Plan 2013/14

Issues: The internal audit plan for 2013/14 was presented. The cost is slightly above this year's due to the higher seniority of staff being used. The audit manager for this forthcoming year will be Howard Munson.

Decisions: No further changes were suggested and ET agreed to go ahead with the plan.

7. Strategic Liaison departmental focus and Organisational review of Strategic Liaison

Issues: Jonathan Bamford attended the meeting to present an outline of the work of Strategic Liaison to ET together with an organisational review of the department. ET recognised that the Department's work is complex and demanding and acknowledged that the department plays a vital role in maintaining and developing the ICO's effectiveness and reputation as a regulator.

Decisions: ET agreed to add two level E posts and one level C post subject to a review of the apportionment model for Strategic Liaison and to ensure that as the posts are required to deliver additional data protection work they do not give rise to additional FoI costs. ET noted that there are constraints on the issues the Strategic Liaison can engage with and that a more robust risk based approach will need to be applied to Strategic Liaison's future workload to match the availability of resources to demand.

Organisational changes were announced: the Technology team is to move to Policy Delivery; the International Team will report directly to David Smith, the FOI Appeals Team in Policy Delivery will report directly to Graham Smith.

Action point 2: Daniel Benjamin and Graham Smith to liaise with Andy Cryer to review the apportionment model for Policy Delivery and Strategic Liaison for 2013/14.

8. Any other urgent business

- PCS have confirmed strike action is scheduled for 20 March.
- The "go live" date for the ICE project date has been moved to 13 May.
- Simon Entwisle recently visited the new Belfast Office after their move to new premises.
- Graham Smith noted that recent local government feedback about the ICO's Good Practice Audits has been very positive.
- This is the first ET meeting since the Data Protection Officer (DPO) conference. ET expressed their gratitude to all those involved for the efforts they made to ensure that the event was a resounding success.

Action point 3: Secretariat to put delegate feedback from the DPO conference on the April ET agenda.

9. Review of decisions on publication of papers

ET agreed to proactively publish the previous meeting's minutes and actions, Finance Report, website home page, "Developing ICO Clear Communications" paper and Strategic Liaison organisational review papers.

10. Key messages

1. Thank you to all those involved in making the Data Protection Officer conference such a success. ET would like to express their gratitude for the hard work of colleagues involved.
2. The website homepage has been through a redesign process and at ET today the final design was approved. Further information on the change will be communicated soon.
3. A project group is being formed, led by Paul Arnold, to improve consistency of written communications across the ICO.
4. A review of Strategic Liaison has been completed. Since "Project Evolve" its tasks and workloads have increased. To support this developing function ET have agreed to additional resources for the department. Three additional posts will be created.
5. This month's finance report show that UK travel is higher than expected. This travel is necessary for the work of the ICO. However it is important, where possible, to look at other options to save the cost and time of the journey, such as video conferencing or the ICO offices.