

Executive Team minutes

Tuesday 28 May 2013

Members and other attendees present

Paul Arnold	Head of Customer Contact
Daniel Benjamin	Director of Corporate Services
Christopher Graham	Information Commissioner
David Smith	Deputy Commissioner and Director of Data Protection
Graham Smith	Deputy Commissioner and Director of Freedom of Information
Peter Bloomfield	Senior Corporate Governance Manager (secretariat)

1. Introductions and apologies

There were apologies from Simon Entwisle. Paul Arnold attended in his stead.

2. Draft minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

Action points 1 and 2 from the last meeting, for Andrew Cryer to build in a process for managers to sign off procurement card statements in the same way as expenses, and to include the reason for purchases on the cards when card data is published, is complete. Processes will be in place for the May statements.

There was discussion on departmental spending controls that the MOJ considered the ICO should follow. Further work on the ICO position is needed.

Action point 1: Daniel Benjamin to look further at the need to articulate the ICO position on spending restrictions.

Action point 3 was to arrange for discussion of the DPP conference workshops by the Leadership Group. It is considered more appropriate for the discussion to be had by Information Rights Committee. Secretariat is to amend the agenda.

Action point 4, for Rob Parker to invite the key note speaker to the next data protection conference, is outstanding. The timing of any requests was discussed.

Action point 7, for the new Corporate Services Heads of Department job descriptions to be drafted and evaluated, is ongoing. Job descriptions have been drafted but until agreed they cannot be evaluated. There was discussion at ET on the impact of the proposed changes and the reaction of staff to them.

3. Information Governance update

Issues: Lesley Bett attended the meeting to give an update on Information Governance work. The update covered the last quarter of the 2012/13 reporting year, during which the team had faced an annual 5% increase in information requests, clearing 98% within statutory time limits and generating only 55 requests for internal review.

There was discussion about the problems the team is facing now, with falling resources, complicated subject access requests and continuing work arising from the Motorman and Consulting Association investigations, all against a background of 120 to 130 information requests a month being received. In addition there were records to be transferred to The National Archives and ongoing work to ensure a secure transfer to the new IT service provider.

Action point 2: Daniel Benjamin to consider the grievance procedure and the extent to which it drove subject access requests of the ICO and to develop a plan for further investigating the issue and developing proposals for change.

Action point 3: Daniel Benjamin and Graham Smith to discuss action needed to meet the deadlines for providing information to The National Archives.

4. The London office

Issues: The ICO need for a London office was raised due to the earlier than expected move of the Local Government Ombudsman's office from Millbank Tower. Currently the ICO makes use of space at Millbank for two staff.

Decision: It was agreed that there is no longer a business need for London accommodation. The needs of the London based staff need to be considered further.

Action point 4: Daniel Benjamin to confirm with the MOJ the position on leasing new London premises.

Action point 5: Daniel Benjamin and Mike Collins to consider how best to communicate the decision to staff and to trade unions.

5. Any other urgent business

Update on ICE implementation

Paul Arnold provided an update on the implementation of the ICE system, which has recently replaced the old DUIS system as the means by which the ICO administered its notification register; the process has been reasonably smooth. A backlog did build up during the transition phase and clearing this is now the priority.

ET offered their thanks to those involved in the ICE Project for their hard work in making it a success.

ICO MOJ liaison

The transfer of a key ICO liaison contact at the MOJ was discussed.

Action point 6: Christopher Graham to discuss new contacts at the MOJ with the MOJ in the liaison meeting; scheduled for the 18 July down in London.

The cost of the proposed EU data protection regulation

Christopher Graham advised that he had written to the Secretary of state about the cost of the proposed regulation.

6. Review of decisions on publication of papers

ET agreed to proactively publish the previous minutes and actions and the Information Governance Quarterly dashboard.

7. Key messages

1. **Update on the work of the Information Governance Team:** Despite an annual 5% increase in information requests received by the office, clearance within the statutory time limits had been 98%. The team was thanked for their hard work. Increased pressures on the team were recognised and where action could be taken it would be.
2. **The future of a London office for the ICO:** Currently there are two ICO desks at Millbank. But due to the Local Government Ombudsman's office moving out at the end of August, decisions are needed now on whether or not a London based office was needed. ET considered that there was no business need for a London base, but further thought was needed on options.
3. **The ICE system:** The ICE system, replacing the DUIS system as the means for administering notifications to the Commissioner, had been successfully implemented with information being migrated to it. The focus now is on supporting staff as they continue to familiarise themselves with the new service and on clearing backlogs which had built up during the transition. All those involved were thanked for their hard work.