

Leadership Group minutes

Tuesday 28 October 2014

Members and other attendees present

Andy Laing	Head of Performance Improvement
Anne Jones	Assistant Commissioner (Wales)
Christopher Graham	Information Commissioner
Dave Wells	Head of IT
David Smith	Deputy Commissioner and Director of Data Protection
Jonathan Bamford	Head of Strategic Liaison
Ken Macdonald	Assistant commissioner (Scotland/NI)
Louise Byers	Head of Good Practice
Mike Collins	Head of Organisational Development
Paul Arnold	Head of Customer Contact
Peter Bloomfield	Senior Corporate Governance Manager (secretariat)

1. Introductions and apologies

There were apologies from Graham Smith, Robert Parker, Simon Entwisle, Steve Eckersley and Steve Wood.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Issues: Minutes had been agreed by correspondence and there were no actions outstanding.

There was discussion on the staff survey response rate to date.

3. Feedback on the recent Ministry of Justice liaison meeting and Management Board

Issues: Christopher Graham provided feedback from both the recent liaison meeting with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Management Board.

Key issues raised with the MOJ included the triennial review, funding for next year (2015/16), agreed (in principle) changes to the apportionment model and accommodation.

In respect of Management Board Christopher Graham noted that the Non-executive Directors were interested in the process for appointing the next Commissioner and in the privacy seals work.

Management Board had also been impressed by the impact of the recent changes to the registration process and the efficiencies made.

4. Terms and conditions of employment

Issues: Mike Collins and Andrew Laing presented a paper prompting discussion on changing some elements of staff terms and conditions and working practices, and seeking decisions on which of the options should be pursued further. The options had been discussed with PCS.

It was confirmed that any option to increase leave would have to be included in the pay agreement as a costed element, and would thus reduce the amount of money available for pay rises.

The differential impact of some of the options across the office was noted. For example changes to flexi time or core hours could have a larger impact on smaller teams. However the need (as now) for decisions on specific leave requests to take into account the needs of the business was affirmed; and it was recognised that differential impacts existed now under current rules.

The driver for making the changes was questioned. The options had arisen from the wish to make terms and conditions more flexible to help retain staff, but there was a need to consider the business requirement as well; eg in improving service to the public by extending contact time.

Decisions: It was agreed that there were knock on affects from some of the options on others, and on staff behaviour. There was also a need for further discussion at the next meeting.

Actions: Paul Arnold, Heather Dove, Andrew Laing, Michael Collins and Anne Jones to form a working-group and to bring proposals to the next meeting.

Paul Arnold to write a paper for Leadership Group outlining the potential benefits and risks of extending our hours of service over Christmas.

5. Employee voice – recognition work stream

Issues: Mike Collins and Andrew Laing introduced a paper detailing suggestions made by a focus group as to how best to recognise effort and achievement at the ICO.

Decisions: It was agreed to work up the options relating to:

- long service awards
- recognition within teams
- thank you letters and
- an ICO event.

Actions: Mike Collins and Andrew Laing to work up these five options and to advise managers as to what was proposed.

6. Equality and Diversity Committee terms of reference

Issues: Ken Macdonald, as joint chair of the Committee, introduced revised terms of reference for the Equality and Diversity Committee based on the standard template and integrating the work of the Committee with the ICO Plan aim 4.5 of “extending the ICO’s reach into all parts of the country and sections of society to achieve equality of access to information rights and ICO services”.

Comments related to the need to future proof the terms of reference in case the above ICO Plan aim changed, and to the fact that this aim was outward looking. Should there be a link with internal practices; ie to 6.7 of the ICO Plan relating to “embedding diversity and ICO values so that they are an everyday part of how we work and decision making”?

It was confirmed that the Committee was not a decision making group but was there primarily to champion equality and diversity but also to provide advice.

Actions: Ken Macdonald and Steve Eckersley to review the comments and bring revised terms of reference back to the Leadership Group for formal approval.

7. Risk Management

Given time constraints this item was to be taken forward outside of the meeting.

8. Any other business

There was no any other business.