

Senior Management Team minutes

Monday 23 November 2015

Members and other attendees present

Christopher Graham	Information Commissioner (chair)
Andy Laing	Head of Performance Improvement
Anne Jones	Assistant Commissioner – Wales
Heather Dove	Head of Finance
Jonathan Bamford	Head of Strategic Liaison
Kenneth Macdonald	Assistant Commissioner - Scotland and Northern Ireland
Louise Byers	Head of Good Practice
Michael Collins	Head of Organisational Development
Paul Arnold	Head of Customer and Business Services
Robert Parker	Head of Corporate Affairs
Steve Eckersley	Head of Enforcement
Steve Wood	Head of Policy Delivery
Simon Entwisle	Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Commissioner
Andy Curry	Enforcement Group Manager (item 5)
Peter Bloomfield	Senior Corporate Governance Manager (items 8 and 9)
Neil Bostock	Corporate Governance Officer (secretariat)

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Heather Dove.
- 1.2. Andy Curry, Enforcement Group Manager, joined the meeting for the Operation Spruce update and Peter Bloomfield, Senior Corporate Governance Manager, joined for the final two items.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Minutes

- 2.1. The minutes from the last formal meeting were approved without amendment.

Action points and decision log

- 2.2 The action point relating to reward and recognition had been cleared by way of a manager's brief the previous week.
- 2.3 The action for Stephen Eckersley to provide an update on Operation Spruce was also cleared
- 2.4 The August decisions to proceed with the Performance Improvement recruitment proposal and to recruit a new Level D post to the International Team were both complete.

3. October finance report.

Issue

- 3.1. The October 2015 income and expenditure report was considered. The main points of note were:
 - 3.1.1.1. Fee income was less than expected but remained within the level of budget tolerance and was not considered a risk.
 - 3.1.1.2. Current recruitment is expected to shortly bring the office above complement which would bring the staff recruitment budget up to profile by the end of November.
 - 3.1.1.3. Capital spend – planning has begun with DCMS on a capital programme mapping out plans for the next four years.

4. 2016/17 Budget

Issue

- 4.1. It is planned for the 2016/17 budget to be submitted to DCMS before Christmas. Senior Management Team (SMT) members were asked to consider the proposed budget and discuss any required changes with Heather Dove as soon as possible.
- 4.2. The ICO continues to deliver better for less and it was agreed that this should be reflected in the budget.

- 4.3. The budget reflected an expected reduction in grant in aid for freedom of information work which could be accommodated without too great an impact on operational work.

Decisions

- 4.4. The Commissioner thanked those involved in developing the budget for their work in doing so at a time of uncertainty and reductions in public spending.

5. Operation Spruce update

Issue

- 5.1. Stephen Eckersley and Andy Curry provided an update on Operation Spruce; a criminal investigation supported by the National Crime Agency, into potential section 55 offences by a number of organisations who may have tasked private investigators to unlawfully obtain personal data.
- 5.2. After two years the investigation had entered into a key stage with interviews of witnesses and suspects taking place.
- 5.3. This update was part of an ongoing action to brief the Senior Management Team, and previously the Executive Team, on progress.

Decisions

- 5.4. The Commissioner wanted to put on record his thanks to the Enforcement Team for a very professional piece of work.

6. ICO digital and ICT plan

Issue

- 6.1. The Digital and ICT Steering Group had produced the ICO Digital and ICT plan to help guide and support the development of digital and ICT services for the next few years. The plan was brought to SMT for agreement.

Decisions

- 6.6 It was decided that the risks identified within the plan would form part of an IT risk register and would be included into the corporate risk register in due course if necessary.

7. IT contract break point

Issue

- 7.1 SMT was asked to approve a proposal to continue with the IT hosting contract with Northgate until the summer of 2017, rather than exercise the option to terminate the contract in June 2016.

Decisions

7.3 SMT approved the decision to extend the contract.

8. Business continuity plan – critical work priorities

Issue

8.1 SMT was asked to consider whether or not the ICO's key work priorities as detailed in the Business Continuity Plan are still correct.

Decisions

8.3 It was agreed that the current critical work priorities remained the correct ones.

9. Preparation for Audit Committee on 7 December

Issue

9.1 This agenda item was an opportunity to advise SMT members about the upcoming Audit Committee. There would be two audit reports to be considered on performance management, and on the benefits realisation of the new finance system. In addition the meeting was an opportunity to update the Committee on the move from the Ministry of Justice to the Department for Culture, media and Sport, and the implications for funding arrangements.

Decisions

9.3 There were no decisions required. This paper was for information purposes only.

10. Any other business

The tender has been published for a staff survey to take place in the spring of 2016. There will be discussion with the trade unions and there would be an opportunity for further SMT discussion at the informal SMT meeting on 30 November.

Louise Byers informed colleagues that the annual Information Security training for all staff was imminent. An email would be sent to managers shortly with full details.

Mike Collins briefed SMT on the plans to create a Business Learning Involvement Network. This network will be made up of managers with the aim of structuring training requirements more efficiently.