

Senior Management Team minutes

Monday 14 December 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 Entwistle	Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Commissioner
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. Peter Bloomfield, Senior Corporate Governance Manager joined for items 8, 9 and 10.

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 It was agreed that all decisions and action points were either cleared or on track.

3. November finance report.

Issue

- 3.1 The November income and expenditure report was presented for information. The key points included:
 - The DCMS have confirmed that the ICO will receive FOI Grant in Aid this year of £3.75m.
 - Discussion is ongoing with the DCMS on moving to an accruals basis for decisions on any handback of unspent funds at year end. The amount of money not spent at year end is heavily dependent on how much fee income is collected.
 - The number of civil monetary penalties issued has increased so far this year with penalties issued totalling £1.6m to-date. In the whole of 2014-15 penalties of £1.1m were issued.

4. E&D questionnaire

Issue

- 4.1. After the E&D presentation at the last informal SMT meeting on 30 November, members were asked to focus on the questions relating to progress on E&D matters.

Actions

- 4.2 SMT members were asked to review the questions and feedback their answers to Mike Collins by end of January.
- 4.3 Mike Collins was asked to establish a routine, and suitably confidential, mechanism for seeking feedback about the working experience at the ICO from staff who have voluntarily described themselves to HR as having rights under the Equality Act.

5. Responsibility Allowances and People Strategy

Issue

- 5.1. The draft Responsibility Allowances policy, and draft People Strategy were brought back to SMT for further discussion.
- 5.2. The initial draft allowances policy had been circulated to the Trade Unions and the FDA was willing to have membership on the Senior Allowance panel. The updated version is to be provided to them for consultation after the SMT.
- 5.3. The People Strategy was brought to SMT with a decision needed on how to take it forward.

Decisions

- 5.4. The current draft of the Responsibility Allowance policy was agreed as the version upon which to base consultation with the unions. It was agreed that the final policy would be subject to sign off by the Management Board.
- 5.5. SMT will have a group session at the informal SMT on 11 January 2016 to develop outline plans for implementing the actions needed to fulfil the strategic aims of the People Strategy, before it goes more widely to staff for their ideas and views.

6. Customer and Business Services resourcing

Issue

- 6.1. The Head of Customer and Business Services brought a paper that outlined proposals to increase resource for the Advice Service, the Information Access team and for Business Development.
- 6.2. SMT were asked to consider each business case in isolation and to approve or reject each in turn.

Decisions

- 6.3 SMT approved each proposal.

7. Consumer Reference Panel

Issue

- 7.1 The Head of Corporate Affairs presented a proposal to create a reference panel which would provide the ICO with views from consumers on matters relating to the broad information rights landscape.

Decisions

- 7.2 The proposal was agreed with the caveat that the name was changed to Citizen Reference Panel.

Actions

7.3 Robert Parker will ask for input from SMT on ideas for topics for the first panel, in the New Year.

8. Plan 2016-2019 and budget 2016/17 for sending to DCMS

Issue

8.1 The draft ICO Plan 2016-19 and the Budget 2016/17 were presented for information and to have any changes agreed before submitting both reports to the DCMS before Christmas.

Decisions

8.2 It was decided that the General Data Protection Regulation needs a more prominent mention in Section 1.

Actions

8.3 Peter Bloomfield will review the wording and circulate the draft to relevant SMT members with a deadline of Thursday 17 December for feedback.

9. Feedback from Audit Committee on 7 December

Issue

9.1 The draft minutes from the recent Audit Committee were presented for information.

9.2 The minutes had been circulated ahead of the meeting and will be formally adopted after the feedback deadline of 8 January 2016.

10. Preparation for Management Board in January

Issue

10.1 SMT members were asked to contribute ideas for the next quarterly Management Board on 25 January 2016.

10.2 The deadline for papers is Thursday 14 January and ideas for the theme at the Non-Executive Director briefing, and agenda items should be submitted before then.

Decisions

10.3 A decision on which members of SMT should be invited to Management Board will be taken after the agenda has been finalised.

11. Feedback from Information Rights Committee (IRC) on 16 November

Issue

11.1 The minutes from the final IRC in November were presented for formal adoption by SMT, ahead of publishing.

Decisions

11.2 It was agreed that the regular discussion areas at IRC meetings would be addressed at quarterly SMT meetings.

12. Any other business

The ICO evidence for the Investigatory Powers Bill was soon to be submitted. Christopher Graham and Jonathan Bamford will be giving evidence in person at the select committee on 6 January. The draft evidence will be circulated around SMT members for comments, before the final version will be submitted by Friday 18 December.

The invitation for expressions of interest for the Data Protection Practitioners' Conference has received over 1600 names. The Freedom of Information conference the following day is also oversubscribed.

Anne Jones reminded colleagues to consider sustainability when formulating their departmental plans. She also asked them to remind staff to complete the travel spreadsheet – as we are required to report against this.

It was agreed that a reminder of Bomb Alert procedures should be provided to staff.