

Senior Leadership Team – minutes

27 July 2020

Details of attendees are provided at the end of the minutes.

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Tom Reynolds and Ali Shah.

2. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

Actions and decisions

The action board was presented for update and completion of actions where possible.

3. Priority Projects – Operation Picard update

Discussion

Emily Keaney presented an update report on Operation Picard and highlighted the work currently being carried out to submit bids into the Spending Review.

Concerns were raised regarding the burden on individuals to put the bids together. It was confirmed that the majority of the work will be completed within Picard and only going out to Directors for input when necessary. The bids are also being prioritised to ones that have the highest chance of success.

Emily Keaney confirmed that work is in progress to merge Operation Picard and Operation Vern.

4. Wellbeing Survey Results

Discussion

Jen Green presented the findings of the recent staff wellbeing survey. She noted the good response rate from staff to the survey and the broadly positive results. In particular, staff mental health was holding up well, staff felt supported by their managers and staff felt they had received the right level of support from the organisation. Staff also continued to show

high levels of pride in working for the ICO. However, while the results demonstrated that the majority of staff were coping well, there was a small number who were finding it difficult. SLT agreed that it was important not to lose sight of the struggles of those staff and to assist them however possible.

Jen Green reported that, so far, the only findings relating to protected characteristics related to age and gender.

SLT discussed the theme of Grade F staff appearing to be struggling more on average than other grades, particularly in terms of workload and control. Jen Green explained that further analysis would be done of the challenges this grade was experiencing when the open text comments were available.

Jen Green reported that the results at Team level were expected to be available this week. Corporate Comms would share the corporate-level messages with all staff later this week. Planning for the next steps would take place through Volta over the rest of the summer and this would also be communicated throughout the organisation.

5. Q1 Budget Update

Discussion

Andrew Hubert presented the budget position at the end of Q1. He reported that income continued to be the highest risk part of the budget. He explained that he had made an assumption of a modest increase in the data protection fee renewal rate for the remainder of the year, due to the easing of lockdown. He also reported that we will recommence the work to contact companies who had not renewed their registrations over the first quarter. We would also recommence contacting organisations that have not previously registered to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities regarding Data Protection and potential need to be registered.

Overall, income was therefore projected to reach the forecasted levels, but all aspects of the income work would be closely monitored.

He noted that there was an underspend in project spend, and therefore recommended that up to £60k be allocated to implement the Intelligence Database.

Andrew Hubert confirmed that he had also reviewed the vacancies prioritised for recruitment with the lead areas; some slight slippage in recruitment start dates and the more positive financial position meant that we are now able to bring forward recruitment of some roles such as

the senior policy officers in High Priority Investigations and the International Transfers Team Lawyer vacancy.

Decision

SLT approved the proposals.

Action

Andrew Hubert to repeat this budget review process each quarter.

6. Project Management Office Function

Discussion

Emma Deen presented a report setting out proposals to consolidate the ICO's project management approach.

SLT welcomed the report and agreed on the importance of consistent project management throughout the ICO.

Decision

SLT approved the proposals.

7. Governance infrastructure

Discussion

Louise Byers presented the paper outlining the governance infrastructure to support SLT, particularly to ensure consistency of the groups reporting in to SLT. To deliver this be referred to as Boards, and were largely made up from the various existing groups.

SLT noted the importance of clarity of the inter-relationships between the Boards which this rebranding would provide, the links with the current work on regulatory decision making governance, and the links into the various groups below the formal corporate governance structure level.

SLT agreed it would be important to have clear communication of the changes to the rest of the office to ensure that there was clarity about where decisions were made. SLT also noted the importance of clarity in terms of how decisions made by each of these Boards will be communicated, both to SLT and to the wider office.

Decision

SLT approved the proposals set out within the report.

Actions

Louise Byers and Chris Braithwaite to develop terms of reference for each of the Boards.

Louise Byers and Chris Braithwaite to meet with the chairs of the various Boards during August to begin to implement the changes.

Louise Byers and Jen Green to communicate the new governance structure to the wider office in September.

8. EU Withdrawal

Discussion

Paula Hothersall provided a verbal update of the EU Withdrawal and the work carried out for the four key streams; end of transition preparedness, EU adequacy, regulatory co-operation and UK adequacy.

9. Record of reports considered by email

Discussion

The Group noted the report sent via email relating to business continuity workstreams and return to the office.

10. Any other business

Discussion

Emily Keaney confirmed that the Age Appropriate Design Code has now passed the parliamentary scrutiny process. The Economic Impact Assessment has been placed in House libraries and the ICO website. The Code will be issued on 12 August, the 12 month transition period will start from 2 September and the Code will come into force in September 2021.

SLT congratulated the team on the excellent work on the AADC.

James Dipple-Johnstone suggested that key lines to take should be provided to SLT and ET to ensure that there was consistent messaging throughout the ICO.

Action

Emily Keaney to provide lines to take on AADC.

Key Messages for staff

Key messages from the meeting were:

- Findings of the Wellbeing Survey
- Communication of the governance structure
- Update on priority projects; particularly noting Kepler/Foresight merger, close working between Vern and Picard and Tycho coming towards conclusions but also revised TOR and resource allocations

- Statement on progress with EU exit and Schrems II.

Attendance

Members

Paul Arnold (Chair)	Deputy Chief Executive Officer & Chief Operation Officer
James Dipple-Johnstone	Deputy Commissioner & Chief Regulatory Officer
Emma Bate	Director of Legal Services (Regulatory Advice and Commercial)
Louise Bogle	Acting Director of Legal Services (Regulatory Enforcement)
Louise Byers	Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance
Steve Eckersley	Director of Investigations
Mike Fitzgerald	Director of Digital, IT and Business Services
Suzanne Gordon	Director of Public Advice, FOI and Data Protection Complaints Service
Jennifer Green	Director of Corporate Communications
Andrew Hubert	Director of Resources
Paula Hothersall	Director of Regulatory Strategy (International)
Ian Hulme	Director of Regulatory Assurance
Emily Keaney	Director of Regulatory Strategy (Domestic)
Andy White	Director of High Priority Investigations and Intelligence
Amanda Williams	Director of Regulatory Strategy (Parliament and Government Affairs)

Attendees

Emma Deem	Head of Digital & IT Services (item 6)
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Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite	Senior Corporate Governance Manager
Caroline Robinson	Corporate Governance Officer