

Executive Team (ET) minutes

29 January 2024

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

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Almond and Stephen Bonner.

2. Declarations of interests

- 2.1. All attendees apart from John Edwards declared an interest in the career banding framework (item 6), as they would be subject to the framework once approved.
- 2.2. Ellis Quinn also declared an interest in the draft workforce strategy (item 5) and career banding framework (item 6) as a member of the PCS Branch Executive Committee (BEC), as these items would be subject to consultation with the trade unions. She confirmed that she would not share any discussions from the meeting with the PCS BEC. ET confirmed that they were content for Ellis to remain in the meeting.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the previous meeting had been approved as a correct record.

Actions

- 3.2. The following updates regarding actions from previous meetings were provided:
 - Establishment Committee requests: these would be provided ahead of the next ET meeting.
 - Section 132 guidance: this had been delayed in production and had now been provided to Legal Services for review. The revised target was to complete this guidance ahead of the February meeting.
 - Communications approach for transitional regulatory posture: this action had been completed.

4. Finance update

- 4.1. Louise Byers provided an update on the current financial position, including an update on the future funding model and the current position on financial risks related to this.
- 4.2. ET discussed the timescale for introducing the future funding model and ways that this could be expedited, along with the areas of the business where vacancies were currently being held.

5. Draft Workforce Strategy

- 5.1. Vikki West and Jen Green presented a report setting out the proposed draft workforce strategy, which was due to be submitted to People Committee for discussion later in the week.
- 5.2. In discussing the report, ET particularly focused on:
 - the importance of clear messaging in sharing the draft strategy with the trade unions and staff. ET agreed that it was clear that the goal of the strategy was to support of staff in being part of the development of the ICO's workforce, but acknowledged that it could create concerns for staff in relation to the need for developing new skills, increased efficiency and flexibility.
 - the links to the Reward Strategy and Location Strategy, which had been identified as dependencies to the Workforce Strategy, as well as the importance of gaining insight and access to strong local labour markets for specific key skills.
 - the links between the Workforce Strategy and the regulatory risk review programme, particularly in relation to requirements for multiplex PACE teams, as well as the dependencies with the Enterprise Data Strategy. While the exact requirements and effects of this work were currently unknown, ET agreed that it was important to factor these in to development of the strategy.
- 5.3. ET also shared their experience of lessons learned from the implementation of similar strategies in other organisations.
- 5.4. ET members agreed that they would provide any detailed comments following this meeting.

ACTION: ET members to provide Jen Green and Vikki West with their detailed comments on the draft Workforce Strategy following the January ET meeting. Due date: 31/1/24

- 5.5. ET welcomed the level of ambition of the strategy and agreed that it was vital that this be maintained through the development and delivery of the strategy. ET also discussed whether it may be beneficial to divide the strategy into more composite parts rather than a single large strategy; this would require further consideration.
- 5.6. ET agreed that it was appropriate to share the draft Workforce Strategy with People Committee at this stage for the Committee's initial feedback.
- 5.7. ET agreed that the target should be to submit the final Workforce Strategy to Management Board's meeting in March 2024 for approval.

6. Career Banding Framework

- 6.1. Vikki West and Mark Graves presented a report setting out the proposed career banding framework to apply from the April 2024 career banding window, for discussion by ET ahead of consultation with the recognised trade unions.
- 6.2. In considering the framework, ET discussed:
 - Whether "impact" should be a standalone category within the framework, to further embed consideration of impact into all work, as well as being part of evidencing the delivery of the other values.
 - Making sure that there were clear links between individual development objectives and career banding.
 - Proposals to remove or replace the exception zone. While this could be replaced, it was important to ensure that there was an appropriate function in place to address exceptional cases.
 - The options for mitigating the transition to a single career banding window in order to avoid disadvantaging any staff.
 - How to address perceived equality concerns expressed by the focus groups, particularly in relation to people from ethnic minoritised backgrounds and for parents and carers, along with the role of managers in promoting career banding assessments.

Decision

- 6.3. ET agreed that further work was needed to update the framework to reflect ET's comments.

ACTION: Jen Green, Vikki West and Mark Graves to update the proposed career banding framework to reflect ET's comments and bring back to a future ET meeting for approval. Due date: 26/2/24

6.4. ET supported option 3 as set out in the report for moving to a single career banding window, once the framework is agreed.

7. Workplace investigation, disciplinary and grievance training

7.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out proposals to deliver mandatory workplace investigation, disciplinary and grievance training for all senior managers at Level G and above.

7.2. ET discussed whether there were any specific causes for the trend of increased employee relations cases. ET was informed that increase was in line with national trends but may be exacerbated in the ICO due to a more proactive approach being taken to performance management over the last year.

7.3. ET also highlighted the importance of ensuring that there was sufficient diversity within the pool of senior managers at Level G and above to ensure that there was sufficient diversity to consider employee relations cases. People Services was exploring options to mitigate this risk in the short term, along with longer-term recruitment ambitions.

7.4. ET also highlighted the benefits for managers in gaining this expertise to bring it to bear in their own local management role.

Decision

7.5. ET agreed the proposed approach set out in the report.

8. Leadership development programme

8.1. Jen Green and Vikki West presented a report providing ET with information regarding plans to launch the leadership development programme.

8.2. ET discussed the links with other items on the agenda, particularly the Workforce Strategy and employee relations cases. ET also highlighted the importance of translating the training into consistent action by leaders. ET also discussed the importance of striking the right balance between internal and external training provision.

9. People Services priorities – Q4 2023/24

- 9.1. Jen Green and Vikki West presented a report providing ET with information of the key priorities for People Services during the current quarter.
- 9.2. ET received assurance that increasing diversity in recruitment practices was a priority action within the EDI Action Plan, so was a key part of the Q1 priorities.

10. Penalty setting guidance – public consultation update

- 10.1. Claudia Berg and Tim Capel presented a report providing ET with information of key themes emerging from the recent public consultation on penalty setting guidance. Overall, while there were a wide range of comments, the feedback from the consultation was supportive.
- 10.2. ET discussed the importance of ensuring that future reporting highlighted the changes which were being made as a result of the consultation.
- 10.3. ET thanked Tim Capel and his team for the excellent progress with this work.

11. Doing it Differently – decision-making culture transformation update

- 11.1. Louise Byers presented a report updating ET on progress and next steps with the decision-making culture transformation project.
- 11.2. ET discussed the links and alignment between this work and the Regulatory Risk Review programme, as well as the processes and toolkits which would be provided to managers to support the structural changes.

12. Monthly cyber security dashboard

- 12.1. Rob Holtom presented a report setting out the monthly cyber security dashboard.
- 12.2. ET discussed the priority roles within the DDaT structure and the upcoming cyber workshops.

13. Executive Team work programme

- 13.1. ET noted the work programme for future meetings.

14. Any other business

Supply Chain assurance report

14.1. Emily Keaney commented that the supply chain assurance report (within the background papers to the meeting) may give opportunities to test future guidance for businesses for completing data risk assessments, which would replace Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) as part of the Data Protection and Digital Information (DPDI) Bill.

ACTION: Rob Holtom and Emily Keaney to arrange for their teams to use current supply chain activities to test future guidance for data risk assessments. Due date: 25/3/24

15. Key messages to staff

15.1. ET agreed that the key messages to staff from the meeting would be published.

ACTION: Laura Tomkinson to publish the key messages on Iris. Due date: 2/2/24

Attendance

Members

Angela Balakrishnan	Executive Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs
Claudia Berg	General Counsel
Emily Keaney	Deputy Commissioner (Regulatory Policy)
Jen Green	Executive Director, Strategy and Resources
John Edwards	Information Commissioner
Louise Locke	Executive Director, Customer Service
Paul Arnold MBE (Chair)	Deputy Commissioner (Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer)
Rob Holtom	Executive Director, Digital, Data, Technology (DDaT), Transformation and Delivery

Attendees

Andrew Rimmer	Private Secretary to John Edwards
Catherine Heverin	Private Secretary to Louise Locke
David Squires	Private Secretary to Stephen Almond
Ellis Quinn	Private Secretary to Angela Balakrishnan
Farhana Ahmed	Private Secretary to Rob Holtom
Fiona Simkiss	Private Secretary to Jen Green
Izy Jude	Private Secretary to Stephen Bonner
Jacob Harris	Private Secretary to John Edwards
Laura Tomkinson	Group Manager, Corporate Governance
Louise Byers	Director of Risk and Governance, Acting Director of Finance (for items 4 and 11)

Mariam Boakye-Dankwa	Head of Commissioner's Private Office
Mark Graves	Head of Reward and Performance (for item 6)
Rebecca Bradbury	Private Secretary to Paul Arnold
Sarah Delahunty	Private Secretary to Emily Keaney
Tim Capel	Director of Legal Services (for item 10)
Tom Parkman	Private Secretary to Claudia Berg
Vikki West	Acting Director of People Services (for items 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)

Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite	Corporate Governance Manager
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