

# People Committee minutes

2 May 2024

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

## 1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Tracey Waltho.

## 2. Declarations of interests

- 2.1. Members of ICO staff present at the meeting declared an interest in the pay items on the agenda.

## 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 Committee noted the outstanding actions from previous meetings.

## 4. Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan

- 4.1. Jen Green presented a report setting out the Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan, noting that some engagement has been completed but that work is ongoing.
- 4.2. The Committee congratulated the team on a comprehensive paper and suggested some small amendments, particularly: whether more emphasis was needed on future skills and behaviours; underlining that not all productivity or efficiency improvements relate to technology; and emphasising the importance of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP).

**ACTION: Jen Green to update the Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan to make the intention around future skills and behaviours and the EVP clearer.  
Due date: 5/7/24**

- 4.3. The Committee also discussed how the strategy would be used to leverage opportunities to create new career and development pathways for existing staff. The Committee also discussed

succession planning opportunities for staff to step up into their next role. The Committee also highlighted the importance of clear link to the ICO's Target Operating Model (TOM).

**ACTION: Jen Green to update the Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan to make the link with the ICO's TOM explicit, and to include details of succession planning. Due date: 5/7/24**

- 4.4. The Committee discussed the intrinsic importance of EDI in the implementation strategy, and the need to ensure it is included in the implementation plan.

**ACTION: Jen Green to ensure that the EDI thread in the Workforce Strategy is retained in the implementation and delivery plan. Due date: 5/7/24**

- 4.5. The Committee discussed the communication plan, including the need for senior leadership to feel equipped and supported to deliver the message to their teams. The Committee noted that a simplified version of the implementation and delivery plan has been developed for sharing throughout the organisation.

**ACTION: Jen Green to share the simplified Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan with the Committee. Due date: 20/5/24**

- 4.6. The Committee noted the internal audit recommendation that the Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan should be delivered within a project management framework, noting that the project timeline and milestones will determine the frequency of the Committee keeping sight of progress. The Committee noted that this approach is already being taken based on the plans shared with them to date.

**ACTION: Jen Green and Vikki West to provide updates to the Committee as necessary on delivery of the Workforce Strategy implementation and delivery plan. Due date: 7/11/24 and ongoing thereafter**

## 5. Pay Strategy

- 5.1. Mark Graves presented a report setting out the proposed pay strategy, including priorities which had previously been agreed with ET, prior to the start of consultation with trade unions.

- 5.2. The Committee noted that it had had a good conversation about the principles of the pay strategy in November and commented that the current proposal is well balanced.
- 5.3. The Committee discussed the concept of performance related bonuses, particularly focusing on how this could be used effectively for all staff. The Committee noted that further work is needed to understand what would work best for the ICO, particularly in relation to the existing career banding and ensuring fairness across roles. The Committee requested that once the strategy has been developed it is brought back to the Committee with the implementation plan. The Committee also discussed the next stage of developing a position and consulting with trade Unions.

**ACTION: Corporate Governance to update the Committee's work programme to include consideration of the pay strategy and implementation plan. Due date: 9/5/24**

- 5.4. The Committee discussed the holistic EVP, and emphasised the importance of benchmarking the value of working for the ICO against wider criteria than just salary. The Committee also discussed the value of working from home for staff, and the ICO's requirement for efficient use of resources.
- 5.5. The Committee noted that the next steps for the pay strategy will be consideration by ET, with feedback to the Committee.

## 6. [ICO people survey](#)

- 6.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out progress with the ICO people survey, which will provide a baseline for future surveys, and plans for following up on any points raised.
- 6.2. The Committee discussed the length of the survey, noting the need to allow people time to complete it and to provide adjustments to assist staff in completing it if required. The Committee also discussed the grouping of questions and the relative focus on wellbeing, work, performance and productivity. The Committee asked whether the order of the questionnaire can be reviewed to ensure that operationally important questions are answered by as many people as possible, if surveys are only part-completed.

**ACTION: Vikki West to confirm with the survey supplier whether answers will be recorded if the survey is only part-completed. Due date: 20/5/24**

- 6.3. The Committee discussed the communications which will accompany the questionnaire, commenting that it would be useful to explain that it will help the ICO to understand more about the workforce and gain insights which will drive change and continuous improvement. The Committee also discussed the need for anonymity in the survey, and how that will be protected by ensuring that no member of staff will receive the full data set. Information about how this was being ensured should also be shared with staff to maximise return rates.
- 6.4. The Committee also discussed the analysis of response rates and plans for sharing results and addressing the main low-scoring areas with action plans. The Committee was informed that individual directors will have access to results from their areas and will develop directorate action plans, in addition to the organisational analysis of results.
- 6.5. The Committee discussed plans for other shorter surveys on a more regular basis. A new contract is under consideration, and the Committee welcomed the opportunity for future surveys focused on specific elements of the organisational priorities.

## 7. [EDI objectives and action plan](#)

- 7.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out progress in delivering the Year 1 EDI objectives through the EDI action plan.
- 7.2. The Committee welcomed the new layout of the report, and commended the team for some of the actions already taken, such as the removal of the requirement for a university degree for job applicants. The Committee also discussed the current rates of apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships.
- 7.3. The Committee was concerned at the low number of green ratings, noting that although there had been progress, the ICO needed to move faster. The Committee also noted that six of the 15 measures are based on People Survey results, so although the work has been done, the impact cannot yet be assessed. The Committee highlighted the importance of clarity in the measurements set out in the action plan dashboard.

**ACTION: Angela Adimora to meet with Jen Green and Vikki West to complete a deep dive into the EDI action plan, including the pace of progress and the clarity of measurements. Due date: 5/7/24**

**ACTION: Corporate Governance to update the Committee's work programme for further consideration of progress with the EDI action plan in six months. Due date: 9/5/24**

- 7.4. The Committee discussed ways in which the Commissioner can gain independent assurance about how the ICO compares in EDI matters with other public sector organisations or other regulators, and where further work needs to be done. The Committee noted that an external consultant's review has recently previously been provided as a background paper. The Committee also welcomed the perspective and constructive challenge from Angela Adimora in her independent role, which provided good assurance.

**ACTION: Angela Adimora to suggest HR Professionals within other organisations, which the ICO might approach to discuss different solutions. Due date: 5/7/24**

- 7.5. The Committee discussed the evaluation of the staff network groups, and success measurements.
- 7.6. The Committee particularly discussed the percentage of senior staff from ethnic minoritised backgrounds. The Committee was informed that these figures are being monitored and will be addressed through a combination of recruitment and opportunities for career development. The Committee requested further details about the breakdown of black heritage backgrounds, if this was available.

**ACTION: Jen Vikki West to provide an update to the Committee on the black heritage representation across the ICO. Due date: 5/7/24**

**ACTION: Jeannette Lichner to share with the Committee the Chartered Management Institute's report on inclusion. Due date 5/7/24**

## 8. [Summary of people-related risks and opportunities, including Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#)

- 8.1. Vikki West presented a report providing a high-level overview of people-related risks and their mitigations, and information about the monitoring of key metrics.
- 8.2. The Committee particularly discussed the wellbeing risk, and whether the risk or risk appetite should be articulated in a different way in order to take account of the difficulty in addressing non-work related stress. The Committee noted that the People Survey

results will be important in identifying opportunities to further address the risk.

- 8.3. The Committee also discussed the absence KPI, noting that the measure has increased but is still within acceptable parameters. The Committee discussed the more detailed absence trends which might lie beneath the overall measurement, but felt that the overall position was acceptable.

**ACTION: Angela Adimora and Vikki West to discuss absence trends in more detail. Due date: 5/7/24**

## 9. [Annual Report and Accounts – people related sections](#)

- 9.1. Louise Byers presented a report setting out the draft people-related sections of the Annual Report and explained that since the papers were circulated some of the detail has been removed in line with reporting best practice. She confirmed that those items which are required by the Financial Reporting Manual had been retained.

**ACTION: Jeannette Lichner to provide feedback on the draft people related sections to Louise Byers and Vikki West offline. Due date: 9/5/24**

## 10. [Governance transition implications for people](#)

- 10.1. Louise Byers gave an oral update about the implications for ICO staff of the upcoming governance transition arising from the DPDI Bill, which fall into three categories: Board, CEO and staff transfer.

- 10.2. The Committee was informed that DSIT is responsible for appointing new NEDs to the statutory Board and has launched a recruitment campaign, with interviews planned for September. Committee members were asked to promote the advertising campaign for new NEDs within their professional networks

**ACTION: NEDs to widen the NED recruitment advertising by making their networks aware of the DSIT recruitment campaign. Due date: 24/6/24**

- 10.3. The interim CEO role will be recruited via an external agency, and should be concluded before the summer. The Committee noted that the procurement process for the recruitment agency to be used is in its final stages.

- 10.4. The Committee was informed that engagement with Trade Unions is ongoing regarding staff transfers to the new organisation under a statutory staff transfer scheme.

10.5. The Board discussed recent and future communications with staff about the three elements, noting that there are a number of parliamentary developments which could impact on delivery.

## 11. People Committee work programme

11.1. The Board noted the Committee's work programme for future meetings.

## 12. Any other business

12.1. No items were raised.

## 13. Messages for Management Board

13.1. The Committee agreed that the key topics to be reported to Management Board were the Committee's consideration of:

- Updated workforce improvement plan.
- Pay strategy.
- Staff survey.
- EDI action plan.

## Attendance

### Members

Jane McCall (Chair)	Non-Executive Director
Angela Adimora	Independent Non-Executive Director
Jeannette Lichner	Non-Executive Director
Ranil Boteju	Non-Executive Director

### Attendees

Fiona Simkiss	Private Secretary to Jen Green
Jen Green	Executive Director, Strategy and Resources
John Edwards	Information Commissioner
Louise Byers	Director of Risk & Governance
Vikki West	Interim Director of People Services

### Observer

Aiden Pacey	UKRN Next Gen NEDs programme
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### Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite	Senior Corporate Governance Manager
Fiona Wilcock	Corporate Governance Manager