

Executive Team – minutes

11 March 2021

Details of attendees are provided at the end of this note.

1. Introductions and apologies

All ET members were present.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting had been approved by email.

3. Proposed budget

Discussion

Paul Arnold presented a report setting out the proposed budget for 2021/22, ahead of this being considered by Management Board on 22 March 2021. The budget had previously been considered by the Resources Board and Senior Leadership Team. ET welcomed the quality of planning and narrative in the budget report.

In discussing the budget, ET focused on: the emphasise on the continued efficiency savings that the ICO was continuing to deliver, given the wider economic situation; the processes, organisational approach, and culture towards managing contingencies and existing priorities within the budget, to create resources to deal with additional demands or new priority activities as required; and the relatively limited scope for further fee income growth after 2021/22, given the proposed work in this area during 2021/22.

Decision

ET supported the proposed budget for submission to Management Board, subject to amendments to the language as discussed by ET.

Actions

Paul Arnold to update the budget for submission to Management Board (due date: 15/3/21).

4. Vision statement discussion

Discussion

Simon McDougall led a discussion on vision statements for ICO involvement in emerging aspects of regulation, following on from a discussion at a previous ET planning session, which also involved staff from relevant Directorates and Departments.

ET discussed the vision statements and some proposed amendments to these. ET also noted the benefits of these and similar vision statements in developing future ICO strategies.

ET agreed that it was vital to ensuring that these vision statements were beneficial to staff, particularly Directors and Department Heads, in delivering this work. ET agreed that these statements needed to be owned at that level of the organisation, to ensure that they were able to be adjusted appropriately as circumstances changed.

Decision

ET supported the draft vision statements, subject to further amendment, to be followed up with communication and engagement with staff.

Actions

Simon McDougall to coordinate updates of the vision statements, including a further informal discussion by Executive Team if required (due date: 1/4/21).

5. Civil Society Engagement Strategy

Discussion

Amanda Williams attended the meeting to present a report setting out the proposed Civil Society Engagement Strategy, which had previously been considered by the Communications and Engagement Board.

ET noted that it would be vital that there was understanding across the office of issues being raised in meeting with civil society organisations, and the important role which the Relationship Management Service played in coordinating outcomes from meetings to ensure this. ET also agreed that it would be important to establish relationships between operational ICO staff involved in casework (Directors, Department Heads and caseworkers) and staff within civil society organisations. This could have significant potential benefits for both parties to increase understanding of the positions and challenges of each party.

Decision

ET supported the proposals set out in the report, subject to amendments as discussed in the meeting.

ET agreed that a senior-level forum should take place with Civil Society, with Elizabeth Denham leading the forum, within the next few months.

Simon McDougall left the meeting at this point.

6. Operation Volta

Discussion

Jen Green presented a report setting out the proposed next steps for Operation Volta.

ET agreed that all comments from the consultation with staff would need to be considered thoroughly, rather than there being any preferred outcome. ET discussed the benefits of new ways of working which had been realised over the past year; the benefits of in-person working; the potential challenges of a blended/hybrid approach to meetings; and the various perspectives of staff.

James Dipple-Johnstone requested that communications to staff regarding next steps includes guidance for staff on official travel.

Decision

ET supported the proposals set out in the report.

7. Management Board work programme 2021/22

Discussion

Louise Byers attended the meeting to present a report setting out the draft Management Board work programme for 2021/22, which had previously been considered by the Risk and Governance Board.

Decision

ET supported the proposals set out in the report.

8. Internal Audit Plan 2021/22

Discussion

Louise Byers attended the meeting to present a report setting out the draft internal audit plan for 2021/22, which had previously been considered by the Risk and Governance Board.

Executive Team discussed the report and supported the proposed internal audit plan.

In discussing the report, Executive Team also identified two issues for further work internally, rather than as part of an internal audit

programme. These were: assurance that effective processes are in place for identification of training and development needs and opportunities (to be taken forward by the Resources Board); and optimising the ICO's focus on delivery (to be initially explored by Paul Arnold and referred back to ET for further discussion).

Decision

ET supported the proposed internal audit plan for submission to Audit Committee.

Actions

Chris Braithwaite to add an item to the Resources Board work programme regarding processes and procedures for identifying training needs (due date: 1/4/21).

Paul Arnold to explore options around optimising the ICO's focus on delivery, and facilitate a future ET discussion as appropriate (due date: not set).

9. Audit Committee work programme 2021/22

Discussion

Louise Byers attended the meeting to present a report setting out the draft Audit Committee work programme for 2021/22, which had previously been considered by the Risk and Governance Board.

Decision

ET supported the Audit Committee work programme for submission to Audit Committee.

10. Any other business

Corporate narrative

PA explained that the corporate narrative was due to be reviewed by the Communications and Engagement Board meeting in March.

Attendance

Members

Paul Arnold (Chair), Stephen Bonner, Elizabeth Denham, James Dipple-Johnstone, Jen Green, Simon McDougall, James Moss, Steve Wood

Attendees

Peter Hayes, Amanda Williams (for item 5), Louise Byers (for items 7-9)

Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite