

## Executive Team – minutes

6 January 2022

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

### 1. Introductions and apologies

ET welcomed John Edwards to his first meeting. John thanked ET for the welcome that he had received from everyone throughout the ICO so far.

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Balakrishnan.

### 2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting had been approved by email. There were no outstanding actions.

### 4. Guidance development programme

Ian Hulme and Chris Taylor joined the meeting to provide a presentation regarding the ICO's guidance development programme. In the presentation they set out the approach to guidance production in the ICO, the current challenges, and the actions which had been identified to date for the short, medium and long-term to deliver continuous improvement.

ET welcomed the presentation and particularly discussed:

- The need for a higher level of consultation with the target audiences of guidance to ensure that it meets the need for guidance and provides helpful, straightforward, support to compliance. ET commented on the potential benefits of establishing a standing consultation panel to review guidance, potentially supplemented by specific expert panels for specialised guidance.
- The work of the guidance governance group to support guidance producers to a consistent tone, content and approach which ensured our guidance simplified and explained the law to users, in a proactive "how to" way. ET was given assurance that to date, the guidance governance process had been very beneficial to guidance producers

in providing support to ensure consistency. However, it was highlighted that it was vital that all guidance was fed into the guidance governance process from the earliest possible point, to ensure this consistency and support, and that there was clear direction of guidance development. The end-to-end efficiency of the guidance development process was also highlighted, minimising the need for rework as work passes through the necessary governance processes. Executive Team also discussed what training and development was needed to support staff producing guidance, so that they had the skills and experience to consistently draft guidance in line with the agreed approach and tone.

- The level of legal resources which would be needed to deliver the actions in the plan, which could potentially be met in the short-term through use of incoming secondees.
- The close links between the guidance action plan, the ICO plan and future priorities, and the ICO's work in response to legislative reform.

## 5. Update on the work of the Risk and Governance Board

Louise Byers joined the meeting to present a report setting out the work of the Risk and Governance Board (RGB), focusing on the areas of risk, governance, and compliance. This was the first of such reports from the SLT Boards, giving ET assurance of the work of the Boards and opportunity to provide a strategic steer to future work.

ET particularly discussed RGB's oversight of cybersecurity resilience (particularly in the supply chain), the need to continue to develop the maturity of the ICO's culture of governance and compliance as a much larger organisation, and organisational alignment to the risk appetite. ET also highlighted the importance of maturity in the escalation and de-escalation of risk between Directorate risk registers and the corporate risk register.

ET requested that they be provided with a brief update of any changes to the corporate risk register at each of its meetings.

ET welcomed these reports from the SLT Boards and agreed that they would be beneficial in giving ET more visibility of the work of the Boards. ET also agreed that the reports should be provided to the monthly Senior Leaders Forum meetings, so that all Directors and Department Heads were aware of the work of the Boards.

ET discussed the recovery plan for the work of our Information Access Team. John Edwards highlighted the importance of the ICO being on top

of our own FoI request responses if we are to hold public authorities to account for their own performance. ET would receive regular updates regarding the recovery plan until the service returned to steady state.

### Actions

**Louise Byers to provide a monthly update to ET on any changes to the Corporate Risk Register.** *(Due date: 3/2/22, then ongoing thereafter)*

**Chris Braithwaite to ensure that the updates from the SLT Boards are also provided for discussion at the monthly Senior Leaders Forum meetings.** *(Due date: 26/1/22, then ongoing thereafter)*

## 6. Any other business

### Operation Volta

Jen Green provided an update on the current number of COVID cases among ICO staff. She also assured ET that all Departmental Business Continuity plans were being reviewed this week, to ensure that they remained appropriate in the current context, while also remaining aligned to the ICO's statutory obligations and organisational priorities.

ET welcomed the update and commented that this was particularly important in the context of potential school closures, which could have a very significant impact on staff. ET also noted the importance of prioritising staff safety in this environment, while also ensuring that our offices remain available for those who need to use them, either for operational or wellbeing reasons.

### Legal secondment programme

Claudia Berg provided an update on the legal secondment programme. She explained that the programme had now been launched and would bring in additional legal talent to the organisation in the short-term, with a plan of two intakes of secondees per year.

## 7. Executive Team work programme

Chris Braithwaite presented a report setting out the work programme for future Executive Team meetings.

ET agreed that they should receive reports to future meetings on:

- potential future High Priority Investigations, to be considered by ET in February or early March.
- A forward look on how we will use research over the coming year to be as effective as possible, including outcomes from recent research.

- Information on plans to develop our capacity and capability in specialised areas (such as legal, economic analysis and cyber), to be considered by ET as soon as possible.
- Updates on the delivery of the change and transformation programme.
- Updates on the development of the ICO plan.

#### Action

**Chris Braithwaite to update the work programme (due date: 7/1/22)**

### 8. Key messages to staff

ET agreed that the key messages to staff from the meeting would include: the guidance governance programme and the importance of ensuring all guidance fed into this programme at the earliest possible stage; the new model of accountability from the SLT Boards to ET via the update reports; ET's interest in our own information access and FOI performance; and our commitment to ensuring offices are available for staff in the context of the evolving COVID situation.

#### Action

**Chris Braithwaite and John Kavanagh to liaise with internal comms to publicise the key messages for staff (due date: 7/1/22)**

## Attendance

### Members

Paul Arnold (Chair), Claudia Berg, James Dipple-Johnstone, Jen Green, John Edwards, Stephen Bonner, Steve Wood

### Attendees

John Kavanagh, Chris Taylor (for item 4), Ian Hulme (for item 4), Louise Byers (for item 5)

### Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite