

# Executive Team – for assurance

**Meeting agenda title:** Update on the work of the Resources Board

**Meeting date:** 3 February 2022

**Time required:** 15 minutes

**Presenter:** Angela Donaldson

**Approved by:** Paul Arnold

## 1. Objective and recommendation

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the work of the Resources Board and gives the Executive Team (ET) an opportunity to provide a strategic steer on future work.
- 1.2. The Resources Board is tasked with ensuring the ICO's people, financial, physical, and technical resources and infrastructure remain fit for purpose, are developed in line with the ICO's medium and long-term capacity and capability needs, and are deployed efficiently, effectively and with value for money.

## 2. Key Achievements over the last 6 months

The key achievements of the Resources Board over the last 6 months are:

- 2.1. Providing oversight and assurance of the ICO financial position, through reviewing the monthly management accounts and performance of both the Income and Expenditure. This also included a deep dive Q2 financial review where the Board approved funding for additional business cases. The Board will also recommend the Budget for approval via ET to Management Board (MB) in March.
- 2.2. Providing assurance of the Business planning and prioritisation of resources process in place. The Board received a review of lessons learned from the 2021/22 business planning process and agreed the process for 2022/23 business planning, with clearer focus on efficiency and value for money as its foundations and less emphasis on assumed growth/expansion.
- 2.3. The Board has received quarterly updates of the Digital and IT service and technical roadmap from an assurance perspective. In addition, the draft Digital and ICT Strategy for 2022-24 has been

brought to Resources Board for input in its development. This will be presented to ET and MB in March for consideration.

- 2.4. Providing assurance on the new People Services operating model which aim to support the mitigation of ICO's Capacity, Capability, and workforce planning risks.
- 2.5. Providing assurance on the new Communications operating model which aims to deliver a more sharply defined remit for communications, as well as an ambitious new Communications Strategy.
- 2.6. The Board has received updates on the following items for assurance purposes:
  - Health and Wellbeing updates, following staff surveys, giving assurance on positive changes in the survey results from the outset of the pandemic.
  - Operation Volta updates, providing assurance of the recommendations and protocols in place, including access to buildings, which have had to be flexed in line with governance restrictions, keeping staff safe throughout the pandemic.
  - The Our Ways of Working (OWOW) Programme Board, provides assurance of the progress being made in piloting our future ways of working.
  - Changes to Policies are reported to the Resources Board for assurance purposes and these have included a range of People Policies, including updates against the plan for reviewing the full suite of People related policies. Updates to further People Policies are due to be reported to the Board over the next 6 months.
  - Assurance of the compliance rates for mandatory training, agreeing the minimum expected compliance rates that are acceptable and taking assurance on the steps in place to ensure that key training mandatory to specific roles is being undertaken.
  - Pay progression updates in relation to career band reviews and equality data.
  - Capacity and Capability plan – the Board receives regular updates on the progress of the actions in the capacity and capability plan, ensuring satisfactory progress is being made and scrutinising/validating reasons for any slippage.

- 2.7. The Board undertook a review of how it was operating in September which resulted in a number of recommendations being agreed. These were mostly around bringing increased focus to reports and information brought to the board and ensuring operational accountability for delivery remained at directorate/department level, thus preserving the Resources Board's role to provide necessary strategic direction and to receive proportionate assurance. The challenge culture of the board also continues to develop positively.

### 3. Key Challenges over the last 6 months

- 3.1. In discharging its duties, the Resources Board is focused on the mitigation of some of the ICO's most significant risks. Ensuring the ICO has the right infrastructure in place to do this effectively has been a challenge during the past year. The investment in new operating models for People Services, Finance and Procurement as well as IT are important actions in the mitigation of these risks.
- 3.2. Ensuring SLT as a whole is able to appropriately contribute to Resources Board decisions and activities has also been challenging at times due to the cross-cutting nature of the board's work. A review in recent weeks to the board's approach to consultation across SLT is expected to make things smoother for the future.

### 4. Key Areas of Activity over the next 6-12 months

- 4.1 There are a number of strategic areas of focus for the Resources Board for the coming months:
- 4.2 Capacity and Capability - Oversight of the continued mitigation of the ICO's capacity and capability risks, with particular focus on the identification and efficient delivery of talent/recruitment pipelines in a challenging recruitment market for our most complex technical specialisms.
- 4.3 Procurement - Ensuring effective and compliant procurement pipelines are in place to mitigate the risk of budget underspend and bring new capability on stream smoothly when investing in year in new infrastructure / third party services.
- 4.4 Technology - Ensuring that the future Digital and IT Strategy takes maximum opportunity to be a catalyst for increased efficiency and productivity across the ICO.

- 4.5 Accommodation - Ensuring that our post covid ways of working make most appropriate use of our accommodation in line with an agreed medium to long term estates strategy.
- 4.6 Financial Planning and Performance - Continuing to develop our business planning and forecasting methodologies as our funding model continues to become more complex, ensuring we are able to gain maximum value for money from the resources available.

## 5. Areas for Challenge

- 5.1. ET may wish to consider whether the proposals for the role of the Resources Board would meet the level of assurance that the ET expect.
- 5.2. ET may also wish to consider whether the reporting from the Resources Board to Executive Team through to MB and Audit and Risk Committee (where relevant) is sufficient. These reports are outlined below:
  - For approval - substantive changes to the key strategies (IT Strategy, People Strategy, Accommodation Strategy) and the Annual Budget
  - For assurance - Financial Performance reports, Change & Transformation Delivery plan updates
- 5.3. Are there any areas of focus that ET would expect to see in the Board's future work which are not covered in this report?

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**List of Annexes:** None

**Publication decision:** Report can be published internally and externally without redactions