

People Committee minutes

1 February 2024

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

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from John Edwards and Jeannette Lichner.
- 1.2. The Committee welcomed Angela Adimora as an observer. Once pre-employment checks have been completed, she will join the Committee as an Independent NED.
- 1.3. The Committee also welcomed Aiden Pacey who will be observing the Committee over the next year, as part of the UKRN Next Gen NEDs programme.

2. Declarations of interests

- 2.1. No declarations of interests were made.

3. Matters arising from the previous meeting

Minutes

- 3.1. The minutes of the previous meeting had been approved as a correct record. The Committee agreed to raise two additional actions:

ACTION: Louise Byers to ask the internal auditors to include the Conflicts of Interest policy (relevant to all staff) in the 2024/25 internal audit programme. Due date: 31/3/24

ACTION: Vikki West to ensure that the 2024 update to the Social Media Policy includes reference to staff being able to express opinions on social media, but bearing in mind any reputational impact on the ICO when doing so. Due date: 2/5/24

Actions

- 3.2. The Committee noted the outstanding actions from previous meetings.

4. Workforce Development Plan

- 4.1. Jen Green presented a report setting out the draft Workforce Strategy which will guide the work, noting that a more detailed

Implementation Plan will follow on from the Strategy. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to provide input at an early stage, and discussed the future integration of workforce planning with several other project strands.

- 4.2. The Committee congratulated Vikki West and her team on the significant progress made to date, noting that the link to ICO 25 is clear throughout the report. As the ICO is working in a space which will be significantly disrupted, the Committee supported the ICO being bold in its workforce planning; noting that not being bold is a risk in itself.
- 4.3. The Committee discussed the critical skills which will be important to the ICO in the future, and requested the Implementation Plan includes more clarity on the specific skills that will be needed, along with a benchmarking of the ICO's current position to identify the skills gap.
- 4.4. The Committee also discussed the general uplift of data literacy (which is a wider requirement, common to all organisations currently, to establish a base level of understanding amongst staff) suggesting that the report also includes links to the Enterprise Data Strategy and an assessment for every job family across the ICO. The Committee also asked for further detail to be added on collective leadership.
- 4.5. The Committee discussed future reporting, and requested that People Committee is sighted on the Workforce Development Plan, and the Implementation Plan, with any developing risks also highlighted to the Committee.

ACTION: Jen Green to circulate the Workforce Development Plan to the Committee for comment, before it is considered at the Management Board meeting in March. Due date: 22/2/24

ACTION: Jen Green and Vikki West to bring the Workforce Strategy Implementation Plan to the next People Committee meeting. Due date: 2/5/24

5. [People-related risks and opportunities](#)

5.1. **Summary of people-related risks and opportunities**

- 5.1.1. Vikki West presented a report which gave the Committee a high-level overview of people-related risks, noting that the

previous quarter's position had been included for comparison.

- 5.1.2. The Committee discussed the staff wellbeing risk - especially the balance between working environment and non-salary benefits, compared to management expectations.
- 5.1.3. The Committee particularly discussed the level of staff working from home, noting the benefits of office-working for collaboration but equally recognising that by offering home working the ICO can reach out across the UK to bring in talent regardless of proximity to an ICO office. The Committee discussed the approach taken by other regulators, and plans to encourage staff to make use of ICO offices.

ACTION: Corporate Governance to add a discussion about the Employee Value Proposition to the Committee's work programme. Due date: 8/2/24

ACTION: Jen Green to meet with Angela Adimora once her appointment has been confirmed, to discuss her knowledge of other organisations' home-working experiences. Due date: 2/5/24

5.2. **Deep dive: capability and capacity risk scoring**

- 5.2.1. Vikki West presented a report providing the Committee with a deep dive into the scoring of the capability and capacity risks and mitigations.
- 5.2.2. The Committee discussed the implications of a significant number of recent staff appointments at grades above CB0, noting that this is driven in part by particular sectors where market forces make it challenging to attract specific skills.
- 5.2.3. The Committee also discussed the strategy for addressing changes to the skill requirements over the next three to five years, noting the potential for reskilling existing staff.
- 5.2.4. The Committee discussed the priorities arising from the report, along with the Employee Value Proposition, the Pay Strategy, the Regulatory Risk Review Project and the Workforce Strategy which will all have an impact on capability and capacity.

6. [Doing It Differently programme update, including Listen In series](#)

- 6.1. Andy Laing presented a report setting out progress on the Doing it Differently (DID) programme of work, including the findings of the Listen In Series to date. He noted that the report pulls together the aims and messaging of the programme, but that internal comms and engagement plans will help staff to understand the initiatives without being overwhelmed by change.
- 6.2. The Committee discussed staff engagement – particularly to ensure a whole organisation approach, to ensure the programme reaches the people who would most benefit. The Committee noted that the Listen In series introduces the programme from the bottom up, ensuring that as many voices as possible are heard.
- 6.3. The Committee noted the success criteria, suggesting that productivity and effectiveness should be added, but that the list should also be simplified. The Committee discussed the importance of ensuring that the differences are targeted to achieve greatest impact, and heard feedback from an example where the programme has provided a positive advantage.

ACTION: Andy Laing to incorporate the Committee’s suggestions in future versions of the Doing It Differently report. Due date: 2/5/23

- 6.4. The Committee supported the programme and its timeframes - noting that organisational and cultural changes are not quick fixes, and will require ongoing work. The Committee noted that a programme update can be provided to one of its future meetings if required.

7. [People Committee effectiveness review](#)

- 7.1. Louise Byers presented a report setting out the outcomes from the Committee’s annual review of effectiveness, which highlighted areas of good practice and identified areas for further action.
- 7.2. The Committee particularly discussed whether its name should be changed to reflect the importance of both IT and People in the High Performance Strategy. It was agreed this will be considered as part of the Governance Transition project.

ACTION: Louise Byers to include a consideration of the future name of the equivalent of the People Committee in the Governance Transition work. Due date: 2/5/24

- 7.3. The Committee also discussed how the actions arising from the review would be tracked.

ACTION: Corporate Governance to update the work programme for a six-monthly review of actions arising from the effectiveness questionnaire. Due date: 8/2/24

8. [People Committee Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#)

- 8.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out an analysis of people-related KPIs.
- 8.2. The Committee particularly discussed the turnover of staff in customer-facing roles, noting that some of the “leavers” actually transferred to other roles within the ICO. The Committee asked for a comparison of this figure in similar customer-facing organisations eg. ombudsmen and call-centres. The Committee also discussed the turnover of all staff in comparison to other UK regulators.
- 8.3. The Committee discussed the number of Employment Tribunals, suggesting that it would be useful to identify any key themes in future reports.

ACTION: Vikki West to incorporate the points raised by the Committee into future KPI reports. Due date: 2/5/24

ACTION: Vikki West to speak to Jeannette Lichner to gain insight into a request for information on tenure and time in post. Due date: 2/5/24

9. [Career banding outcomes and pay data \(October window\)](#)

- 9.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out the outcomes and trends from the October career banding window for staff in Bands B-G. The Committee noted that career banding is a positive benefit in the Employee Value Proposition.
- 9.2. The Committee discussed the disability figures, which could not be analysed due to low declaration rates, noting an ongoing campaign to improve disclosure rates in the new WorkDay system.
- 9.3. The Committee also discussed the number of staff progressing by two or three career bands in the October window which indicates the high level of capability of existing staff. The Committee commented on the importance of strong links between career banding and the future capability report, which identified future needs. The realignment of the career banding framework to ICO

values will help to clarify expectations and improve consistency of career band progression across the organisation.

10. People Committee work programme

- 10.1. Louise Byers presented a report setting out the Committee's work programme for future meetings. The Committee noted that some areas had been highlighted during the meeting, including: a discussion around the Employee Value Proposition; a six-monthly review of the effectiveness outcomes; and sharing the Workforce Development Plan with Management Board in March.
- 10.2. The Committee also suggested that Management Board Strategy Day could explore the intersection of technology and people in future strategies.

ACTION: Louise Byers to include an exploration of the intersection of technology and people to the discussions about topics to cover at the Management Board Strategy Day. Due date: 8/2/24

11. Any other business

Executive Director of Regulatory Risk role

- 11.1. Jen Green presented a paper which had previously been considered by the Executive Team regarding the role of Executive Director of Regulatory Risk.
- 11.2. The Committee was supportive of the recommendation in principle, as it is clear that the role is required, but queried whether the proposal was truly cost neutral. Although a role was removed from the budget last year, there will be a cost implication in making the role permanent now.
- 11.3. The Committee discussed the duplication highlighted in the report, particularly focusing on how quickly this can be addressed, and whether the duplication was distorted by recent unusual levels of ET absence. The Committee also discussed the plan for transition to the longer term skills needed at ET level.

Decision

The Committee recommended Option 3 to the Commissioner in principle, subject to clarification that it is cost neutral and requested he considers how to capture the transitional nature of the work.

ACTION: Jen Green to ensure that the Committee's recommendation is relayed to the Commissioner. Due date: 8/2/24

ACTION: Jen Green to discuss the duplications mentioned in the report with Tracey Waltho. Due date: 2/5/24

11.4. No other items were raised.

12. [Messages for Management Board](#)

12.1. The Committee agreed that the key messages for Management Board arising from the meeting were:

- The Workforce Development Plan is a critical piece of work and the Committee were pleased to see its progress, reflecting the Committee's previous discussions. Given the significance of the plan to the future of the ICO, the Committee recommended that the plan be shared with the Board at its March meeting.
- The Committee noted the deep dive around staff capability and capacity and discussed the links between the people and technology aspects of the High Performance strategy, recommending that this could be a useful area of discussion for the upcoming Management Board strategy day
- The Committee received an update about the Doing It Differently Programme and the Listening In series.
- As part of the discussion around pay and career banding, the Committee commissioned further work for a future meeting on the Employee Value Proposition.
- The Committee reviewed the outcomes of its recent 'light touch' effectiveness review. The review was very positive overall, and the Committee agreed several changes to the work programme to reflect areas for continuous improvement.

[Attendance](#)

Members

Jane McCall (Chair)	Non-Executive Director
Tracey Waltho	Non-Executive Director
Ranil Boteju	Non-Executive Director

Attendees

Andy Laing	Director of Strategy and Planning (Item 6)
Fiona Simkiss	Private Secretary to Jen Green
Jen Green	Executive Director, Strategy and Resources
Louise Byers	Director of Risk & Governance
Vikki West	Interim Director of People Services

Observers

Angela Adimora	Observer
Aiden Pacey	UKRN Next Gen NEDs programme

Secretariat

Chris Braithwaite	Senior Corporate Governance Manager
Fiona Wilcock	Corporate Governance Manager