

People Committee minutes

5 July 2024

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

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies for absence were received from Angela Adimora, Fiona Simkiss, Louise Byers and Tracey Waltho.

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.

Actions

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

4. People aspects of the High Performance Strategy

- 4.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out progress on the People aspects of the High Performance Strategy (HPS) including output measures.
- 4.2. The Committee noted a number of measures rely on insight that will come from analysis of the results of the recently launched People Survey
- 4.3. The Committee discussed the opportunity to engage colleagues with the objective to "Ensure we have the right capabilities and professional skills at all levels of the ICO" through learning and development opportunities. Whilst the HPS may not explicitly refer to upskilling colleagues the aspiration to invest in skills development will be covered in more depth in the Workforce Strategy.
- 4.4. The Committee also discussed the importance of tracking the impact of inputs such as the leadership development programme. Although the PDR process can now be tracked, and shows a 90%

completion rate, quality assurance of the performance management process is needed to ensure meaningful conversations are taking place. Feedback from the People Survey will also contribute to understanding in these areas.

- 4.5. The Committee noted the amount of ongoing work in this area, highlighting the importance of focusing on the outcomes and benefits.

5. Parameters of pay remit and pay benchmarking

- 5.1. Vikki West provided an oral update on the recent developments with the pay remit, for which we are awaiting further information from DSIT, and the recent consultation with trade unions about the career banding framework. The next step will be an update on the pay remit and pay strategy at the Committee's November meeting.

6. Case reviews

- 6.1. Vikki West presented a report setting out the outcomes of a deep dive into Employee Relations (ER) by an external consultant, which was commissioned to understand potential emerging trends.
- 6.2. The Committee were grateful the report had been commissioned and noted that the review provided reassurance that bias was not evident in the cases analysed; but sets out recommendations and themes to develop an action plan.
- 6.3. The Committee particularly discussed early leavers, noting the importance of robust recruitment, onboarding and probation processes to ensure new employees are clear on expectations; and managers understand their responsibilities.
- 6.4. The Committee discussed of the level of ER and grievance cases in relation to the expected range for an organisation of the size of the ICO.

ACTION: Vikki West to provide benchmarking information in terms of the levels of ER cases relative to other similar sized organisations. Due date: 07/11/24

7. Delivery of the Workforce Planning index and update on Workforce Plan Framework

- 7.1. Jen Green presented a report providing an update on the progress of work on the Workforce Strategy implementation plan.
- 7.2. The Committee discussed staff engagement with the long-term shift towards increasing efficiency and resilience; and possible

resulting staff concerns. The Committee recommended that tracking the benefits and demonstrating where efficiency is being improved, and resources are being better utilised, may help bring the strategy to life. Listening to colleagues' concerns will also be key in understanding potential barriers to change.

8. Progress with the ICO People Survey

- 8.1. Vikki West provided an oral update on the People Survey which has reached a 56% completion rate and is due to close on 12 July. She explained that the launch of the People Survey had been delayed to allow robust accessibility testing to be completed.
- 8.2. The Committee was assured that colleagues are being strongly encouraged to complete the survey through regular reminders and a targeted approach. Feedback from colleagues is that typically the survey takes around 15 minutes to complete.
- 8.3. The Committee noted the next steps would be feedback on early results to ET in July; and more detailed feedback on the findings would be brought to the next meeting.

9. Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

- 9.1. Jen Green presented a report providing an update on the status of the work planned, as part of the Workforce Strategy implementation, relating to development of the Employee Value Proposition (EVP).
- 9.2. The Committee noted that previous discussion on the development of an EVP centred on candidate attraction; however a broader focus to create a 'total' value proposition encompassing performance and expected behaviours is now proposed. The Committee thought this was more balanced and supported this approach.

Decision

- 9.3. The Committee supported the suggested approach to expand the EVP to provide a total value proposition.

10. General election – people-related implications and risks

- 10.1. Jen Green provided an oral update about potential priorities for the new government that may impact the ICO: noting that the Management Board Strategy Day would include a more detailed discussion about the current landscape.

11. People-related risks and opportunities

11.1. Summary of people-related risks and opportunities

- 11.1.1. Vikki West presented a report outlining high-level people-related risks and their mitigations; including a detailed consideration of the ICO's ability to address the mitigation of personal stress (rather than work related stress).
- 11.1.2. The Committee noted an increase in the improving productivity risk (R08).

11.2. Deep dive: Staff Wellbeing

- Vikki West presented a report focusing on risks related to staff wellbeing.
- The Committee discussed the potential links between wellbeing and staff engagement with the delivery of ICO25; including an concerns about the programme. The Committee agreed that effective communication is a key factor in engaging colleagues positively with the change process and should be a focus for the next deep dive.

ACTION: Vikki West to carry out a deep dive on the productivity, wellbeing and engagement risks. Due date: 07/11/24

12. People-related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- 12.1. Vikki West presented a report on the key performance metrics as previously agreed.
- 12.2. The Committee was pleased to see an increase in disability disclosure rates from 15% to 36% following a campaign in the spring. The Committee discussed the limitations of the recording system; and staff concerns about sharing disability information, noting that further work in this area is planned and demographic data will be gathered from the People Survey. The Committee noted that other organisations face similar challenges in improving disclosure rates.
- 12.3. Jen Green provided a summary of her discussion about EDI with the Committee's independent non-executive director:
 - 12.3.1. The conversation had provided reassurance around the actions taken (such as including an EDI objective in all PDRs); and further actions planned. Whilst these actions

will help EDI considerations flow through all aspects of the business it may take some time to see the impact.

12.3..2. The conversation had also provided challenge, for example around the need for more advocates' voices to be heard in support of EDI.

12.3..3. There was discussion about the use of 'pulse surveys' to gain feedback from colleagues on a core question at regular intervals and also cover other ad-hoc topics.

12.4. The Committee reflected on previous discussions about considering performance related pay, and the need to be clear on the reasons why this was being considered by the Committee in order to understand all potential options, and recommended that the metrics required to support meaningful performance related pay also be considered.

13. Modern Slavery Statement

13.1. Vikki West presented the ICO Modern Slavery Statement for review and comment, noting that the statement had been reviewed by both People Services and the Procurement Team.

13.2. The Committee discussed the level of standardisation that could be applied whilst also maintaining a focus on aspects relevant to the nature of the business.

Decision

13.3. The Committee approved the Modern Slavery Statement and agreed that it should be presented to Management Board for final approval.

14. Progress on People aspects of Governance Transition

14.1. The Committee noted that the programme had been suspended until there is more clarity about future plans for the ICO.

15. People Committee effectiveness review – progress update

15.1. The Committee noted the report.

16. People Committee Work Programme

16.1. The Committee noted the work programme for future meetings.

17. Any other business

17.1. The Committee noted the background paper on the updated Lone Working Policy and suggested the inclusion of check-in procedures

for colleagues in the event of a localised incident (as set out in the Business Continuity Plan and Incident Management Procedure).

ACTION: Corporate Governance to contact Health and Safety Team and suggest the addition of check-in procedures in the event of a localised incident within the Lone Working Policy. Due date: 07/11/24

- 17.2. The Committee noted the background paper on the People Services Business Plan and discussed the large number of objectives included and queried whether it might be more effective to prioritise specific areas.
- 17.3. Jen Green provided an update on the recruitment of a Director of People Services. Thanks were extended to Vikki West, Interim Director of People Services, for her support.

18. Messages for Management Board

- 18.1. The Committee agreed that the key messages for Management Board were
 - People Committee were pleased to track progress made against the High-Performance Strategy (HPS). They reflected on the links between the HPS work plan and work around wellbeing; noting that the amount of change for the organisation, as well as for People Services to deliver, is significant. The Committee requested that People Services are appropriately prioritising and ensuring inputs are effective in supporting the delivery of ICO25.
 - It was suggested that further work, as part of a Total Value Proposition highlights the benefits and opportunities, as well as the expectations for colleagues across the organisation. It was noted that this work would start in the later phases of the workforce implementation plan.
 - An update on the external review of Employee Relations cases was shared. The Committee noted the important reassurance provided, and highlighted with positivity the organisational maturity demonstrated by undertaking work such as this. They agree with the proposed action plan based on the recommendations and themes.
 - Feedback from the EDI discussion with our independent non-executive director which has provided valuable insight and challenge for our EDI strategy implementation.

Attendance

Members

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

Attendees

Jen Green	Executive Director, Strategy and Resources
John Edwards	Information Commissioner
Vikki West	Interim Director of People Services

Observer

Aiden Pacey	UKRN Next Gen NEDs programme
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Secretariat

Kate Jackson	Business Support Team Manager
Fiona Wilcock	Corporate Governance Officer