

People Committee minutes

Extraordinary meeting

4 September 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, Ranil Boteju, Louise Byers, Aidan Pacey and Tracey Waltho.
- 1.2. The Committee noted that Angela Adimora had provided views on the paper to Jane McCall in advance of the meeting.
- 1.3. The Committee also noted that its role was to provide advice on remuneration and reward to the Commissioner, in his role as Chief Operating Officer of the ICO.

2. [Declarations of interests](#)

- 2.1. All ICO staff declared an interest in the Pay Remit (item 4).

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 six outstanding actions which were in progress.

4. [Pay award 2025](#)

- 4.1. Jen Green and Mark Graves presented a report setting out options for the 2024/25 ICO pay award, for consideration by the Committee. Jen Green also outlined the ICO's financial situation, noting that the detailed position would be presented to the September Management Board meeting, and summarised associated conversations with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).
- 4.2. The ICO's original forecast deficit had been amended for additional costs caused by the general election and the subsequent delay to

the fee review. Cost reductions identified by the ICO and anticipated increases in fee and fine income have also been included, resulting in a revised forecast deficit. Estimated increases arising from the fee optimisation work were not included yet, as they are currently less certain - although the Committee noted that this income could be sufficient to cover the deficit.

- 4.3. The ICO submitted a business case for the current predicted deficit to DSIT on 21 August which, at their request, included the full 5% pay remit. Confirmation from DSIT on the Business Case is awaited.
- 4.4. In parallel, DSIT has changed the categorisation of the ICO's funding model, which could allow access to additional support if needed, and His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) has confirmed that the cost arising from delays caused by the general election will be covered.
- 4.5. Conversations with DSIT have indicated the full 5% pay remit is expected to be awarded, in line with other similar bodies. DSIT has provided assurances that this represents appropriate management of ICO finances, and asked that it is noted as a pressure, given that some of the deficit is caused by factors outside the ICO's control.
- 4.6. The Committee noted that a 5% pay award would only be affordable if DSIT provided confirmation about the ICO's business case, and that management cannot enter into negotiations with Trade Unions promising something that cannot be afforded. The Committee also noted that whilst cost pressures are in-year, the pay remit is an ongoing liability which can be budgeted.
- 4.7. The Committee discussed the implications of recommending a 5% pay increase without DSIT approval of the business case, resulting in a potentially significant deficit at year end. The Committee was satisfied that this risk had been mitigated to within 95-99% confidence, and congratulated ICO management on reaching this position.
- 4.8. The Committee discussed the cost of career banding, and requested that the most recent career banding summary report be re-circulated to the Committee for information.

ACTION: Corporate Governance to circulate the most recent career banding summary report to Committee members.

Due date: 11/9/24

- 4.9. The Committee also discussed the equity of a flat percentage rate increase - where low performing staff are rewarded at the same rate as those who are performing well, and staff on higher grades receive a larger cash amount than those on lower grades - noting that the pay strategy discussions at the Committee's November meeting would consider pay flexibility.

DECISION: The Committee agreed that there was compelling evidence for a 5% pay award, and supported a flat award of 5% for all employees that matches the directed award for the senior grades, with effect from the usual settlement date of 1 July.

- 4.10. The Committee discussed the alignment of senior staff to Senior Civil Service (SCS) pay grades. In particular, the Committee discussed the link between performance and pay for senior leaders, and the value of shared organisational objectives, as well as personal objectives.
- 4.11. The Committee was keen to explore a more sophisticated, nuanced approach to senior pay awards as part of its consideration of the pay strategy at the Committee's November meeting.

DECISION: The Committee recommended that the ICO should align to the SCS pay guidance for G2 and H grades this year.

- 4.12. The Committee discussed Trade Union expectations and national positions, noting that if agreement cannot be reached then the ICO would need to impose a pay award.

5. [People Committee work programme](#)

- 5.1. Jane McCall presented a report setting out the Committee's work programme for future meetings, noting that the results of the staff survey would be provided as part of the risk deep dive into staff productivity, engagement and wellbeing.
- 5.2. The Committee was keen to ensure that the agenda item would be given sufficient time, and suggested that it would be helpful to circulate the survey results as soon as they were available, so that Committee members could consider them in detail.

**ACTION: Jen Green to circulate the staff survey results to Committee members as soon as they are available, to allow for a detailed consideration before the November meeting.
Due date: 31/10/24**

6. Any other business

6.1. No points were raised.

7. Messages for Management Board

7.1. The Committee agreed that the key message for Management Board was the guidance and recommendation to the Commissioner relating to the pay award.

Attendance

Members

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

Attendees

Fiona Simkiss	Private Secretary to Jen Green
Jen Green	Executive Director, Strategy and Resources
John Edwards	Information Commissioner
Mark Graves	Head of Pay and Reward

Secretariat

Claire Churchill	Corporate Governance and Secretariat Group Manager
Fiona Wilcock	Corporate Governance Officer