Information Commissioner's Office

Minutes of meeting between Paul Arnold and Non-Executive Directors

27 March 2026

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

1. Introductions and apologies

Apologies for absence were received from John Edwards, Jeannette Lichner and Ranil Boteju.

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interests were made.

3. Transformation update and priorities/delivery plan for next year's portfolio

Paul Arnold introduced a report providing an update on progress with the 2025/26 transformation portfolio, implementation of the transformation and delivery target operating model, the transformation priorities set out in the new draft corporate strategy, and proposed delivery arrangements and governance for 2026/27.

This report had also been considered by Shadow Board earlier in the week. The key points raised by Shadow Board were:

- assessing the extent to which the activities delivered in 2025/26 had achieved their intended outcomes and delivered the anticipated benefits;
- the expected timeframes for next steps; and
- the transformation portfolio's focus on delivering efficiencies and cost savings.

The Board discussed:

- understanding the benefits of the transformation work delivered so far, both cashable and non-cashable, recognising that some of these savings had been redirected internally to deal with increased casework demand;
- options for managing the increasing demand, including the Data Protection Transformation programme and automation; and

- the use of the transformation programme savings to bring in additional resources to Customer Services to address demand levels, and the decision-making process in reallocating this resource.

The Board agreed the following actions:

- Rob Holtom to share further details on transformation benefits realisation, in particular the process for reinvestment of benefits. **To be completed by 30/4/26**

4. Budget 2026/27

Ruby Qayyum introduced a report setting out the proposed budget for 2026/27.

This report had also been considered by Shadow Board earlier in the week. The Shadow Board's recommendation was that Management Board approve the proposed 2026/27 budget. In coming to this recommendation, Shadow Board considered the following matters, amongst others:

- the forecast for DP Fee income in 2026/27;
- the 2026/27 Grant in Aid settlement; and
- the approach to managing fine retention income for 2026/27.

The Board discussed:

- the relationship between the budget and the workforce strategy. In particular, the Board explored how the budget aligned with the ambition within the workforce strategy to re-shape the organisation and reduce the proportion of costs spent on staffing, and the impact of the additional resources to deal with demand on this ambition;
- the budget development process, the staffing numbers in the medium term financial plan and how to drive efficiencies across the organisation, in particular managing growth in line with the workforce strategy commitments.
- predicted casework demand and the impact on the budget;
- the maturity of the organisation in its ability to allocate resources effectively; and
- the impact of wider macroeconomic trends on forecasting.

The Board made the following decisions:

- The Board recommended that the Budget is approved for 2026/27.

The Board agreed the following actions:

- Rob Holtom to share further information on forecasted FOIA casework for 2026/27. **To be completed by 30/4/26.**
- Ruby Qayyum to develop budget scenario plans reflecting macroeconomic uncertainties. **To be completed by 30/4/26.**

There were no items of other business.

Meeting attendance

Members

Ailsa Beaton OBE	Non-executive Director
David Cooke	Non-executive Director
Jane McCall	Non-executive Director
Nicola Wood MBE (Chair)	Senior Independent Director
Paul Arnold MBE	Chief Executive Officer
Tracey Waltho	Non-executive Director

Attendees

Louise Byers	Director of Risk & Governance
Ruby Qayyum	Director of Finance (interim) (for item 4)