

Minutes of the Fiftieth Meeting of the Office for Legal Complaints

Remuneration and Nomination Committee

16 April 2020 – By Video Conference

Present:

Dr Jane Martin, Chair
Rod Bulmer
Elisabeth Bellamy

In attendance:

Elisabeth Davies, OLC Chair (Observing)
Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman (CO)
Brendan Arnold, Director of Corporate Services (DCS)
Marcus Passant, Head of HR
Mariette Hughes, Head Ombudsman
Steve Pearson, Head Ombudsman
Kerensa Scott, Executive Assistant to the CO

Board Secretary:

Kay Kershaw

Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and conflict of interest

1. The Chair welcomed those present and introductions took place.
2. There were no apologies.
3. There were no declarations of interest reported.

Item 2 – People Plan and Delivery Plan

4. The Head of HR presented the People Plan and Delivery Plan, reporting that:
 - Delivery Plan had been aligned to the three priorities set out in the People Plan: Employee Proposition; Leadership Capability and Excellent Performance.
 - Some of the HR ‘business as usual’ items had been removed from the Delivery Plan and items that would help to deliver the people agenda in the operational transformation workstream have been included.
5. RemCo **noted** the implications of the standstill budget and COVID-19 on the delivery of the People Plan.
6. The Head of HR invited RemCo to discuss the Delivery Plan and provide guidance on prioritising the actions set out in the plan.
7. The Committee felt that good progress had been made on developing the Delivery Plan, commenting on how it was well aligned to the priorities set out in the People Plan and how it provided a useful link back to the original source of evidence that identified the need for some of the actions.

8. It was suggested that there might be an opportunity to raise staff awareness of the OLC's Vision and Strategy through the Delivery Plan.
9. Concerns were raised about the number of actions in the Delivery Plan and questions were asked about whether all the actions would be achievable within the 12-month timeframe to the quality and standard needed to make a difference. It was **recommended** that those actions that were critical and important to the delivery of the People Plan were identified for prioritisation.

ACTION: Head of HR to prioritise those actions that would be critical and important to the delivery of the People Plan.

10. Overall, RemCo felt that the actions listed in columns 1 and 2 of the Delivery Plan and the measurement of those actions needed more clarity and specificity, **recommending** that:
 - The actions listed in column 1 needed to be 'unpacked' to explain exactly what was meant by each of them.
 - The actions listed in column 2 needed to be more focussed and to explain why they were relevant to those listed in column 1.
 - The language used to describe the actions needed to be more focussed and specific.
 - The measurement of the impact of the actions needed to be better defined.

ACTION: Head of HR working with the Executive to update the Delivery Plan to ensure more clarity on the actions listed in columns 1 and 2 and how they will be measured.

11. RemCo asked the Executive to update the Delivery Plan as discussed and conduct one further review of the pace, priority and specificity of actions before it is presented at the next meeting for further review.

ACTION: Board Secretary to add the further reviewed Delivery Plan to the agenda for the next meeting.

12. The DCS reported that the Delivery Plan will be delivered through to project management approach and some of the issues around clarity and measurability of actions would be unpacked through this work.
13. RemCo encouraged the Executive to appoint a Senior Responsible Officer to ensure accountability and provide assurance to the Board.

Item 3 – Update on COVID-19 and its impact on the Delivery Plan.

14. The CO reported on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on staffing.
15. As a result of caring responsibilities, a reduction in the number of available hours across the staffing cohort has been seen, although only a very small number of staff are unable to work at all. Overall, this equates to a reduction of 20 FTE across the business.
16. Work was underway to gain a detailed understanding of the number of hours that individuals were able to provide and what they would be able to achieve in those hours.

17. LeO was following MoJ rules on paid leave for staff with caring responsibilities, therefore no financial savings were being made as a result of staff working reduced hours.
18. Underlying productivity levels of those staff that are working are in line with levels seen in March 2020.
19. RemCo was advised that delivering some of the Operational Transformation activities in the People Plan would be challenging in the current climate because they required a considerable amount of staff engagement. With staff working remotely and more flexibly because of caring responsibilities, it would be necessary for LeO to change the way it engaged with staff and it was envisaged any changes may be more resource, energy and time intensive for all involved.
20. Despite these challenges, the Executive stressed that it would be important to press on with the delivering the actions set out in the Delivery Plan, and with the current high levels of staff engagement, positive feedback, dedication and goodwill it would be a positive opportunity to do so.
21. RemCo stressed that those actions that could be delivered in the remote environment should be delivered.
22. The Executive reported that a COVID-19 exit strategy was being considered and any plans would incorporate the lessons learnt from remote working. This might lead to opportunities for LeO to operate in a different way in the future which could help to address some of the recruitment challenges the organisation has experienced in the past.

Item 4 - AoB

23. RemCo suggested that it might be beneficial to conduct a one-off Pulse Survey.