

**Minutes of the fifty-third meeting of the**

**Office for Legal complaints (OLC)**

**Monday 24 March 2014**

**11.30am – 13:15pm**

**Baskerville House, Birmingham**

**Present:**

Elizabeth France, Chair  
Tony Foster, member  
David Thomas, member  
Professor Mary Seneviratne, member  
Margaret Doyle, member  
Rosemary Carter, member  
Karen Silcock, member  
Maureen Vevers, member

**In attendance:**

Adam Sampson, Chief Ombudsman  
Rob Hezel, Chief Operating Officer  
Alison Robinson, Head of Policy and Communications  
Freda Sharkey, General Counsel

**Apologies:**

None

**Board Secretary:**

Helen White

**Preliminary issues:**

The quorum requirements for the Board meeting were met.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Item 1 - Welcome and apologies**

1. The Chair welcomed and thanked those in attendance.

### **Item 2 - Minutes of the previous meeting**

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2014 were approved.

#### **ACTION:**

- The Board Secretary to publish the approved minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2014.

### **Item 3 - Matters arising and outstanding action points**

3. The outstanding action points were discussed. A revised version is to be circulated by the Board Secretary.

#### **ACTION:**

- The Board Secretary to recirculate the outstanding action points with the minutes.
4. The Chair reported that a further anonymous set of allegations have been received by the Legal Services Board who forwarded them to the OLC Chair, OLC Chair Designate and the Chair of Audit and Risk. It had been agreed that the Chair of Audit and Risk would coordinate consideration of the points raised and as part of that process KPMG were conducting an investigation, the results of which would be reported through the Audit and Risk Committee.
  5. General Counsel reported that an FOI request had been received asking for the number of whistle blowing cases received by the organisation; a reply was being prepared.

### **Item 4 - Comments received regarding items presented for information**

6. The items presented for information were noted. No comments had been received in advance of the meeting for circulation.

#### **Chief Ombudsman's Report**

7. The Chief Ombudsman updated the meeting on the business process transformation programme. The Chair requested a paper setting out clearly where the involvement of OLC members was planned, either at the OLC Board or RemCo. The Chief Ombudsman to present this at the next meeting.

#### **ACTION:**

- The Chief Ombudsman to present a clear plan for the transformation programme at showing OLC involvement, at the April meeting.

The Chief Ombudsman updated the meeting on the recruitment for the quality lead position and the potential to source specialised support on knowledge management from outside the organisation. The Chief Ombudsman has the first draft of the internal Knowledge Strategy which will be shared once reviewed, in the meantime, Northumbria will continue to provide specialist legal training and support.

8. The next step was to move forward with the recruitment for the Lead Ombudsman. This is an OLC appointment the process for which would be considered by RemCo.

### **Chief Operating Officer's report**

9. The COO would provide the operational business plan for information at the next OLC meeting.

#### **ACTION:**

- The COO to share the Operational Business Plan with the OLC.
10. The COO reported that discussions are still ongoing to finalise the Disaster Recovery solution for the new Case Management system.

### **Board Members Expenses**

11. The Board Secretary to check that the figures reported are correct.

#### **ACTION:**

- The Board Secretary to check the figures reported are correct.

### **Finance report**

12. The CEO reported that the NAO have raised an issue around the treatment of funds. This is an accounting technicality and it was agreed that the COO would circulate the background to the Chair of Audit and Risk.

#### **ACTION:**

- The COO to circulate the correspondence relating to the NAO query around the treatment of funds to the Chair of Audit and Risk.

## **KPI Dashboard**

13. Members noted the monthly KPI report and requested that the CEO pass on their thanks to the team for their hard work.

## **Item 5 – RemCo Update**

14. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee provided members with an oral update:
- The RemCo ToR and Self-Assessment Form were discussed and updated.
  - The recruitment of a replacement Lead Ombudsman was discussed and the Committee supported the proposal from the CEO and COO that recruitment proceed on a like for like basis.
  - It was agreed that recruitment of assessors and investigators go ahead. These positions are to replace natural attrition.
  - Changes to several HR policies were reviewed and accepted; more substantially changed HR policies are to go to the next RemCo meeting.
  - The Chairs of RemCo and Audit and Risk agreed to work together on areas where there is a crossover.
  - Succession Planning was discussed with the CEO and COO roles being added to the Succession Plan.
  - The Chair of RemCo is to discuss Succession Planning with the OLC Chair Designate.
  - The Staff Satisfaction Survey is to be discussed in more detail at the July meeting once the focus group feedback is available.
  - The Committee requested the COO update the OLC Chair and OLC Chair Designate on the recognition payment proposal; this had been done.

## **Item 6 – Claims Management**

15. The Head of Finance joined the meeting to discuss the cost modelling estimates
16. The Head of Policy and Communications reported that progress had been made with the MoJ. The MoJ had requested that the OLC review the modelling of numbers and finances to check the assumptions were still sound.

## **Item 7 – OLC Annual Report**

17. The Head of Policy and Communications updated the members on the high level timetable for the OLC Annual Report. As in previous years, the report would be discussed in more detail at the April and May OLC Board Meetings.

**18.** General Counsel was requested to check the statement on Page 7 of the draft Board Members' report regarding the appointment term for members of the OLC.

**ACTION:**

- General Counsel to check the statement on Page 7 of the draft Board Members' report regarding the appointment term for members of the OLC.

**19.** Members requested that the Head of P&C ensure the Annual Report stipulates clearly that the Chief Ombudsman and the CEO are the same person.

**ACTION:**

- Members requested that the Head of P&C ensure the Annual Report stipulates clearly that the Chief Ombudsman and the CEO are the same person.

**Item 8 - Any Other Business**

**20.** As her term ends on 31 March the OLC Chair took the opportunity to record her thanks to the executive team and her fellow Members, both those who have now also reached the end of their terms and those who are to remain on the OLC for their support and counsel since the inception of the OLC.

**Next meeting**

**21.** The next OLC meeting will be held at 11.30 am on 14 April 2014 at Baskerville House, Birmingham.