

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Board Meeting of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)

Friday 13 March 2020

12:30 – 13:30

Present:

Wanda Goldwag, Chair
Lis Bellamy (by telephone)
Rod Bulmer
Shrinivas Honap
Annette Lovell
Jane Martin
Rebecca Hilsenrath

In attendance:

Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman (by telephone)
Brendan Arnold, Director of Corporate Services
Mariette Hughes, Head Ombudsman

Board Secretary:

Kay Kershaw

Preliminary issues:

The Board meeting was quorate.

Welcome, apologies and declaration of conflict of interest:

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. There were no apologies.
3. There were no conflicts of interest reported.
4. This meeting was held by conference call.

Purpose of the meeting:

5. This extraordinary Board meeting was convened to review and approve the OLC's updated 2020/21 budget application and a suite of supporting documents, comprising:
 - OLC Strategy 2020/23
 - Road Map to Green
 - Business Plan 2020/21
 - People Plan 2020/21
6. These documents had been updated following feedback from the LSB and Board Members at the Board meeting held on the 4 March 2020.

Discussion – 2020/21 Budget application

7. Board Members were broadly content with the improvements that had been made to the 2020/21 budget application.
8. They noted its improved narrative, providing more clarity and detail, and the inclusion of information setting out what would be deliverable if a lower percentage of the budget increase were to be received.
9. Had there been more time, Board Members would have recommended further improvements, particularly in regard to strengthening the risk section, but accepted that, with limited time available, this would not be possible.
10. Board Members stressed that they had not checked the financial data within this budget application and that they had accepted it as being accurate.
11. The Chair of ARAC had provided feedback on the budget in an email to Board Members. He agreed to forward this email to the Executive so that they could incorporate the amendments he suggested into the final budget application.

ACTION: Chair of ARAC to forward his email to the Executive so that the amendments suggested could be incorporated into the final budget application.

ACTION: DCS to make the amendments recommended by the Chair of ARAC before the budget application is submitted to the LSB.

12. When submitting this budget application, Board Members instructed the Executive to make the LSB aware that the budget had been finalised by the Board without consideration to the impact of COVID-19 and that the organisation was actively creating business continuity plans to address this.

ACTION: DCS to ensure that the LSB is made aware that the proposed budget proposals had been finalised by the Board without consideration to the impact of COVID-19 and that the organisation was actively using its business continuity arrangements - to deal with the situation.

13. The Board expressed concern that if the OLC were to receive a smaller budget than requested, it would be unable to deliver all business improvements required to address the issues around organisational performance and delivery.

Discussion – People Plan

14. The Chair of RemCo reported on the progress that had been made on developing the People Plan over the last few months and aligning it to other key corporate documents.
15. She reported on further amendments that had been requested to this document that needed to be completed before it could be submitted to the LSB.
16. The Board was assured that RemCo would continue to have close oversight of the People Plan and the development of the delivery plan that sits beneath it.

Conclusion:

- 17.** Following discussion, and subject to the amendments recommended by the Chair of ARAC in his email to the Board and Executive, the Board approved the OLC's 2020/21 Budget to be submitted to the LSB, along with the supporting documents.
- 18.** The Board delegated approval for the final sign off of the People Plan to the Chair of RemCo. Once signed off, the People Plan is to be submitted to the LSB with the other documents supporting the budget application.
- 19.** The Board and the Executive agreed that both should reflect, after submission to the LSB, on learning opportunities from the process.