

**Minutes of the 113th Meeting of the
Office for Legal Complaints (OLC)**

Monday 31 March 2021: 11:40 – 16:20, by video call

<p>Present: Elisabeth Davies, Chair Lis Bellamy Rod Bulmer Annette Lovell Jane Martin Hari Punchihewa (items 9-19)</p> <p>Apologies: Rebecca Hilsenrath</p> <p>Board Secretary Kay Kershaw</p>	<p>In attendance: Paul McFadden, Chief Ombudsman Sandra Strinati, Chief Operating Officer Steve Pearson, Head of Complex Casework and Deputy Chief Ombudsman Michael Letters, Head of Finance Laura Stroppolo, Business Planning Manager (item 6 and 7) Petrina Hoggan, Head of Organisational Development and People Strategy (items 8 to 12). Alex Moore, External Affairs Team Leader (item 7 and 13).</p>
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Preliminary issues:

The Board meeting was quorate.

Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

1. The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.
2. Apologies were **noted** from Hari Punchihewa who was not able to join the Board meeting until 2p.m
3. Apologies were **noted** from Rebecca Hilsenrath.
4. Having temporarily stepped aside from Board duties after four years of service, Rebecca Hilsenrath had formally resigned from the OLC Board with immediate effect. The Chair expressed sincere thanks to Rebecca on behalf of the OLC Board for her service and commitment.
5. There were no declarations of interest reported.

Item 2 – Previous Minutes

6. The minutes of the OLC Board meeting held on 28 January 2021 were **approved** for accuracy and **approved** for publication.
7. The minutes of the ARAC meetings held on 23 November 2020 were approved for publication.
8. The minutes of the RemCo meeting held on 18 November 2020 were approved for publication.

ACTION: Board Secretary to publish the minutes of the OLC Board meeting held on 28 January 2021, the minutes of the ARAC meeting held on 23 November 2020 and the minutes of the RemCo meeting held on 18 November 2020.

9. The Board Secretary reported on capacity issues within the Executive Support Team and the implications of this on the timely production of Board and Committee meeting minutes, advising that steps were being taken to address this.

Item 3 – Matters arising and outstanding actions from previous meetings

10. Now that the 2021/22 Budget and Business Plan had been agreed, the Chair reported that the focus for the OLC and LeO would be on delivery and pace.
11. The Chair reported on the Board Development session that had taken place in February, advising that a further session involving the Executive Team would be taking place in June.
12. The Board **ratified** a decision made out of committee in March when 6 of the 7 Board Members agreed to a recommendation made by the recruitment panel to award a one-year contract to a new Independent Service Complaint Adjudicator. The Board **noted** that Rebecca Hilsenrath had temporarily stepped aside from OLC Board duties at the time that Board Members had been asked to make this decision.
13. The Head of Finance provided a further update on action 5, para 19 arising from the January Board meeting, reporting that updates had been provided to the Chair of ARAC on the extent of budgetary changes that had been made since the additional budget had been sought and the budgetary process that had since been followed and that a meeting was to be set up between the Chair of ARAC, the Chief Ombudsman (CO) and Head of Finance to agree an approach to ensuring that ARAC had financial assurance going forward.
14. The Chair explained that future agendas would continue to ensure adequate attention was paid to those who 'experience LeO', including customers and staff.
15. The Board **noted** the update on outstanding actions from previous meetings.

Item 4 – Executive report

16. The Chief Ombudsman (CO) presented the Executive report, drawing the Board's attention to the following key points:
 - The approval of the 2021/22 OLC Budget had enabled the Executive to progress plans for the delivery of the 2021/22 Business Plan.

- A positive improvement in performance has been seen in terms of case closures, which had exceeded assumptions over the first three months of the year.
 - Reducing the Pre-Assessment Pool (PAP) backlog was a critical priority. Close engagement with operational staff was taking place to develop plans to address this.
 - Planning was underway for re-opening the office once Government restrictions are lifted in June. This was being undertaken as a project and was taking into account office capacity, the implications for social distancing and the safety measures required, in addition to wider planning on future ways of working. Links were being made with other Ombudsman schemes and MoJ to determine best practice.
 - Regarding the wider planning on future ways of working, consideration would be given to how LeO leads and manages its people and a full assessment of how any changes might impact performance and delivery against the Business Plan would be undertaken.
 - The Board would receive further updates on post-Covid planning in due course.
 - An update had been shared with the Board out of committee on the CO's emerging thoughts for the Executive Team structure and proposals for addressing gaps in the wider Management Team.
 - Careful consideration was being given to managing strategic risks associated with attrition and the loss of knowledge and expertise. The Board would receive a further update on this at the May Board meeting.
 - A Risk Manager was now in post and was working on developing the risk assurance framework.
 - A draft Internal Audit report giving a moderate rating for the audit on Financial Management had been received by the Executive for comment. The final audit report would be shared with ARAC once it had been finalised.
 - A key focus for the Executive was on continuing to build relationships and confidence with stakeholders in the months ahead.
- 17.** Considering future ways of working, the Board stressed the importance of ensuring that any decisions made struck the right balance between staff engagement and performance delivery; a fundamental part of this would be for the organisation to have a clear sense of its objectives and what needed to be achieved.
- 18.** The Board agreed with the Executive's approach to supporting and managing staff through any changes in ways of working; it was hoped that this would mitigate strategic risks on attrition. The CO confirmed that full staff engagement on any changes to ways of working would be undertaken and that initial discussions had already taken place with Staff Council.
- 19.** The Board sought to understand the reasons for the recent resignation of a small number of managers and whether there was any sense that this was related to changes at the Executive level. In response, the CO explained that the managers had indicated in discussions that they were leaving for a range of reasons but primarily opportunities in terms of career progression and on terms that LeO could not match. There was no suggestion that their departure was due to changes at the Executive level.
- 20.** The CO confirmed that full disclosure would be provided to RemCo and ARAC regarding developments on the senior structure and any associated risks as they evolved.

21. The Board **noted** the Executive report.

Item 5 – Finance report

22. The Head of Finance reported on the financial position at the end of month 11 and updated the Board on an anticipated year-end underspend of £99,000, which accounted for 0.74% of the OLC expenditure budget. The following key points on the underspend were made:
- Primarily the underspend had occurred because of an accrual of holiday pay. This had been identified as an emerging issue in September 2020 as a result of changes that had been introduced because of the pandemic to the amount of annual leave that staff would be permitted to carry forward into the 2021/22.
 - The interim budget submission to the LSB had included a request for additional budget to address an increase in carried forward holiday pay. Since then, staff had taken more leave than expected, resulting in a change in the position on holiday pay leading to an underspend. The LSB had been made aware of this and discussions on the underspend had taken place at the ARAC meeting in February. The CO confirmed that further contact would be made with the LSB to ensure that there was a clear understanding of the factors that had caused the underspend and to provide assurance that the issues were being addressed.
 - Lessons had been learned from this: contact had been made with the MoJ and other ALBs to establish best practice for the future and the Head of Finance had committed to looking at the position on annual leave accrual on a monthly basis from October to year-end and any emerging underspends or overspends would be reported promptly so that mitigating action could be considered.
23. In discussion, the Executive was urged to take mitigating action to redirect the underspend to ensure that as much of the money as possible was spent on directly improving the customer experience.
24. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) reported that a plan of targeted actions was to be put in place to mitigate any future underspends; this would ensure that funds could be quickly switched to other activities if underspends were to emerge.
25. Case fees income was forecast to be £326,000 under budget, reflecting operational performance through the year; this had increased the final levy invoiced in February.
26. £12.1m of levy funding had been received in March.
27. Aged debts had fallen from £276,000 at the start of the year to £62,000. £64,000 of aged debts had been written off. The Head of Finance reported that there was now better control of aged debts than there had been at the same time last year.
28. Questions from the Chair of ARAC on the detail of financial processes had been sent to the Head of Finance ahead of the meeting and would be responded to separately out of committee.
29. The Board **noted** the update on finance.

Item 6 – The outcome of the 2021/22 Budget and Business Plan application to the LSB and review of the business planning process

30. The Board **ratified** a decision made out of committee in March by 6 of the 7 Board Members to approve the 2021/22 Business Plan. The Board noted that Rebecca Hilsenrath had temporarily stepped aside from OLC Board duties at the time that Board Members had been asked to make this decision.
31. The Chair formally thanked the Business Planning Manager for their critical role in the Budget and Business Planning process.
32. The CO reported that the positive outcome of the 2021/22 Budget and Business Plan application had been a significant milestone for LeO, confirming that staff were aware that the emphasis was now on delivery and pace.
33. A project management approach was being undertaken to deliver the Business Plan; initial priorities included the approach to managing the Pre-Assessment Pool backlog, setting up a Stakeholder Advisory Group and initiating recruitment, including managing risks around that recruitment. Delivery against the Business Plan had already commenced, ahead of the official Q1 start date.
34. Lessons learned from the Business Planning process were being collated and would be shared with Board Members at the May Board meeting along with an update on completed milestones against the plan.

ACTION: Board Secretary to update the Board forward plan to include an update on lessons learned from the 2021/22 Business Planning process and an update on completed milestones.

35. Board Members were invited to provide feedback to support LeO's continued improvement journey, the following comments were made:
 - Ensure that Board Members had sufficient time to review, debate and discuss key documents and information.
 - Plan for a range of different scenarios at the start of the budget and business planning process.
 - Ensure that the activities that inform the budget and business plan were properly aligned.
 - Ensure that the business plan was evidence based and underpinned by good data.
 - Consider external messaging throughout the process.
 - Ensure that stakeholders received a mid-point update on the progress made against the delivery of the business plan.
 - Consider appointing a Lead Board Member to assist with business planning.
 - Be alive to new challenges as there was a risk of missing new opportunities by continuing to address historic problems.
36. The CO advised that the two-year focus of the business plan and greater transparency through, for example the Stakeholder Advisory Group and the mid-year review, would help to ensure that planning was better aligned for future years and provide stakeholders with more clarity on the direction of travel.

37. The CO reported that the LSB was supportive of bringing forward discussions on changes to the Scheme Rules which could provide opportunities for LeO to be more innovative and work in different ways in the future. This would be a key focus through discussions of the Stakeholder Advisory Group.
38. The Head of Finance reported that the LSB's Head of Finance was supportive of the OLC continuing to pursue its reserve funds. The Chair advised that access to reserve funds would be pursued earlier in the next Budget and Business Planning cycle.
39. The Board discussed the role of the Stakeholder Advisory Group and how it might evolve, including, for example, to focus more holistically on wider system complaints handling improvements at a later stage.

Item 7 – Annual Report and Accounts timetable and planning

40. The Head of External Affairs presented a paper setting out the timetable and planning for 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts (the report).
41. A project management approach for producing the report had been adopted, with the Head of External Affairs leading on content.
42. The structure and format of the report would be different to last year's, with less text, a greater use of infographics and a separate Annual Report and Overview of Complaints section.
43. Considering the lessons learned from the previous year, this year's report is to include better alignment between strategic objectives and key business plan priorities to ensure a clearer understanding of performance and risks. It would also highlight achievements; acknowledge challenges and set out forward plans for the 2021/22 business priorities.
44. The Auditors would be considering the draft narrative alongside their review of the accounts.
45. A first draft of the report would be presented to the Board in May, with sign off anticipated on 1 July. A provisional laying date of 8 July has been set. Tight timescales necessitate the report being submitted to the Comptroller and the external printer simultaneously.
46. The Chair of RemCo commented on how People and Engagement had been key priorities during 2020/21 and recommended that this should be reflected in the report.
47. The Chair stated that narrative should be consistent with the Business Plan and other key documents and that it should clearly differentiate between the OLC and LeO.
48. The Board **noted** the timetable and planning for the 2020/21 Annual Report and Accounts.

Item 8 - Performance report and update on Covid-19 planning and the People Plan

49. The COO presented the Performance Report which incorporated an update on the People Plan. The Board's attention was drawn to the following points:
 - Early signs of performance recovery had been seen during January and February with assumptions for case closures being met or exceeded. Investigator productivity was the highest it had been since November 2019.

- Case closures in March had already exceeded the number of cases closed in March 2020 and were on track to achieve planned assumptions. This improvement was due to a number of reasons: more working days in March; the lifting of some Covid restrictions, which had resulted in more productive hours for some staff, including Team Leaders; cultural changes, including moving conversations with staff on to delivery for customers; Managing by Behaviours, which had now become embedded and was having a positive impact, and changes in staff confidence and belief in their ability to do their jobs and deliver for their customers.
- The COO stressed that there was no complacency regarding performance and alerted the Board to the lower number of working days in April and the potential implications of this.
- The Executive was actively managing sickness absence, which remained a concern. The average number of sick days exceeded the KPI and half of all absences were attributed to mental health. HR was supporting leaders to proactively manage attendance and long-term sickness absence. A Wellbeing Network was in place to support staff and the COO was the Executive sponsor.

50. The Board was pleased with the improvement in performance during the first three months of 2021 and congratulated the CO and COO for the improvements that had been achieved in their first three months in role.

51. The Board urged the Executive to consider the attrition risks that might arise as the country emerges from lockdown and the mitigations that could be put in place to address them. In response, the COO reported on work being undertaken through the People Plan which would help to mitigate some of the risks on attrition. This included gaining a better understanding of employee's career aspiration with a view to developing career pathways and providing leadership training and development to ensure that staff were pro-actively managed and supported in their roles to remain productive.

52. The Board sought to understand why the most recent cohort of Investigators were more productive than some of the established investigators. The COO explained the work being undertaken as part of the People Plan to review the recruitment and induction process and how it would provide insight on this. Lessons would be learned and improvements made accordingly. It had already been identified that better support for employees who had completed their induction was required to ensure that they consolidated their learning. It was hoped that this support would lead to reduced rates of attrition in the first year of employment.

53. Considering sickness absences, the Board was supportive of early intervention to reduce overall absence rates and the active management of attendance.

54. The Board sought further information on robotic process automation, what it involved and what the risks were. The COO agreed to provide a briefing note on this out of committee.

ACTION: The COO to issue a briefing note on robotic process automation to the Board.

55. In a recent staff briefing the Executive had stressed how performance improvement would be addressed as part of a whole organisation approach. The COO reported on an 'ideas station' that had been developed by Operations Managers to capture feedback from staff on barriers to performance and suggestions on improvements that could be made. All staff had been invited to attend a briefing session on how they could contribute to this, which would help to shape plans for priority 1 and 2 of the People Plan.

56. Considering previous staff feedback, the Board had been pleased to see the level of employee engagement that was now taking place and welcomed the steps that had been taken to introduce the ideas station.
57. The COO advised that work was underway to review and gain a better understanding of the Pre-Assessment Pool (PAP) so that targeted activities could be identified to reduce it. A PAP action plan would be shared with the Board at a future meeting.
- ACTION: The COO to share the PAP action plan with the Board at a future meeting.**
58. Following discussion at the last RemCo meeting it had been agreed that the People Plan would be re-prioritised with a view to identifying the work that would have the greatest impact on improving operational performance. Three areas were identified: job design, competency frameworks and appraisals.
59. The Board was advised that work was underway on job design and competency frameworks and that appraisals fell within current business as usual activity. End of year appraisals for 2020/21 would be undertaken and a review of the appraisal process had been scheduled for Q2.
60. In addition to these three key areas, leadership development, employee relations and recruitment and induction remained a priority; work on these areas was ongoing and would underpin further performance improvement.
61. In discussion, the Chair of RemCo sought clarity on the alignment of projects within the re-prioritised People Plan to be assured that the governance was right. It was **agreed** that the COO would follow this up with the RemCo Chair outside of committee and before the next RemCo meeting in June.
- ACTION: The COO to contact the Chair of RemCo before the next RemCo meeting to provide clarity on the alignment of projects within the re-prioritised and provide assurance that the governance was right.**
62. The Board was advised that a People Plan Programme Control Board had been set up.
63. The Board **noted** the performance report and update on the People Plan.

Item 9 – RemCo update

64. The Chair of RemCo updated the Board on the key items discussed at its meeting on 11 February, which included:
- The People Performance Report.
 - The People Plan, which the Committee had agreed should be re-shaped and re-prioritised in line with the 2021/22 business plan.
 - Celebrating Success: Reward and Recognition Scheme, where the Committee had made a decision to review the 2021/22 scheme at its next meeting in June once there was clarity on the 2021/22 budget and business plan.
65. The RemCo meeting had been preceded by the annual meeting with Staff Council, where discussions had taken place on the Civil Service Survey results, People Plan, the 2021/22 budget submission, staff retention, accumulation of flex leave and the use of Pool Ombudsman.

- 66. RemCo Members had found this joint meeting very helpful as it provided an opportunity to hear directly from staff about some of the issues. A key point noted at this meeting had been the need for LeO to ensure that all actions from staff surveys were progressed and reported back to staff.
- 67. The RemCo Chair reported that the Committee would be reviewing its terms of reference at the June meeting.
- 68. The Board **noted** the RemCo update.

Item 10 – Review of actions from the Independent Review

- 69. The Head of People Strategy and Organisational Design presented a paper updating the Board on the progress made on the actions arising from the Independent Reviews. In the period since the reviews had been conducted, many of the recommendations had been further developed, some had moved into business as usual, some had moved into projects and others had been completed.
- 70. Of the 39 recommendations that had been made, 21 were being progressed as part of the People Plan and 11 were being progressed through operational management. Seven recommendations related to the Board and had been progressed as part of Board effectiveness.
- 71. The Board **noted** the progress that had been made on addressing the recommendations so far and considered how the Independent Reviews could be brought to a close.
- 72. Recognising that it would not be possible to draw the Independent Reviews to a close on the strength of the report presented at this meeting, it was **agreed** that a final summary assurance report would be presented to the Board within the next six-months.
- 73. The COO advised that this report would include empirical evidence of the further progress that had been made and could be reviewed alongside the People Survey results which should be available by then.
- 74. The Board requested that the report also provided further assurance on the consistent application of policies and on how any remaining live actions would be dealt with and monitored going forward.
- 75. **ACTION: The Executive to present the Board with an Independent Review summary assurance report within the next six-months’.**
ACTION: Board Secretary to add Independent Review summary assurance report to the Board forward plan.
- 76. A discussion took place about Board sponsor roles, recognising that the Board sponsor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion had resigned the Chair agreed to follow this up with Board Members out of committee.
ACTION: The OLC Chair to discuss Board sponsor roles with Board Members out of committee.
- 77. In discussion, it was **agreed** that the Executive would reflect on how to improve reporting against people and performance going forward.

ACTION: The Executive to reflect on how to improve reporting against people and performance going forward.

78. Board **noted** the update on the actions from the Independent Review

Item 11 – Update on the Employment Tribunal and review

79. The CO reported on the two Employment Tribunal cases; one which had concluded, the other a live case. A review of lessons learned from the concluded case was being undertaken and the findings would be presented to the Board at the May Board meeting.

ACTION: Board Secretary to add update on lessons learned from the Employment Tribunals to the Board forward plan for the May meeting.

80. Considering the concluded Employment Tribunal case and the lessons to be learned, the Board recommended that a cultural approach was taken regarding any future key staffing decisions.
81. The CO advised that consideration would be given to what information should be reported to the Board and RemCo on critical HR cases and any emerging risks in the future.
82. The Board **noted** the update on the Employment Tribunal and review.

Item 12 – Approach to the Equality Priority Objectives 2021/22

83. The Board considered a paper setting out a proposed approach to developing the 2021/22 Equality Priority Objectives.
84. Recognising that the organisation's Equality Priority Objectives required further improvement, wider staff consultation and input from the new Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager the Board **endorsed** the proposed approach to developing the 2021/22 Equality Priority Objectives, **noting** that the current EPOs would only remain in place until the new EPOs were signed off by the Board after Q2.

Item 13 – Horizon Scan

85. The External Affairs Team Leader presented the Horizon Scan, drawing the Board's attention to key changes in the sector that could impact on demand for LeO's service.
86. Overall, demand forecasting was neutral. Some short-term demand changes may be seen because of changes in conveyancing and employment claims and it would be necessary to monitor how the market reacted regarding Personal Injury cases following the introduction of the Civil Liability Act.
87. A draft of the OLC's response to the LSB's discussion paper on quality indicators would be shared with the Board for comment on 8 April. The Board discussed how consistency of narrative and positioning would need to be considered when responding to this discussion paper. It was recommended that there may be value in exploring whether there was any learning from other sectors that could also be considered before the response was finalised.
88. The Board discussed the importance of raising awareness with regulators that the majority of complaints made to LeO related to service issues rather than the quality of legal

knowledge and, as such, equal weighting should be given to any enforcement action taken by the regulators.

89. A Policy Officer was to join LeO in April and would be taking forward some of the work set out in priority three of the business plan.
90. The Executive **noted** the Horizon Scan.

Item 14 – ARAC update and Approval of ARAC Terms of Reference

91. The Chair of ARAC updated the Board on the key items discussed at the ARAC meeting on 10 March, which included:
 - The Internal Audit plan for 2021/22.
 - The Risk Assurance report. Three strategic risks were rated red: failure to secure the proposed budget; levels of staff engagement diminishing and loss of stakeholder confidence. The risk rating for each of these risks was reduced to amber after mitigation.
 - The External financial audit plan and timings.
92. Since the ARAC meeting the ARAC Chair and CO had met to discuss improvements required to the ARAC papers and ways to make future meetings more effective.
93. The Board **noted** the update on the ARAC meeting.
94. The Chair reported on a follow up letter to the Permanent Secretary that was being prepared for issue at the end of the financial year. A draft of this letter, which reported on the progress that had been made since the Financial Governance Audit, had been reviewed by the CO and Chair of ARAC and would be sent to the MoJ for review and comment. Once finalised, a copy of the letter would be circulated to Board Members for information.

ACTION: The OLC Chair to circulate the letter to the Permanent Secretary to Board Members once finalised.
95. ARAC's Terms of Reference (TORs) are subject to review on an annual basis. This year's review was undertaken by the Chair of ARAC in conjunction with ARAC Members and the OLC Chair. A paper proposing amendments to the ToRs was presented to the Board for consideration.
96. Having considered the proposed changes, the Board moved to **approve** the revised ARAC ToRs.

ACTION: The Board Secretary to publish the revised ARAC TORs.

Item 15 – Annual review of the Scheme of Delegation and Matters Reserved to Board

97. The Scheme of Delegations and Matters Reserved to Board are subject to an annual review to ensure that they reflected current working arrangements.
98. The Head of Complex Casework and Deputy Chief Ombudsman presented a paper setting out proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegations and Matters Reserved to Board, which reflected changes to the current leadership structure and the arrangements set out in the revised Tripartite Protocol.

99. Having reviewed the proposed amendments set out in the Scheme of Delegation the Board provided the following feedback on areas for further amendment and clarification.
- Remove reference to the Management Team in the definitions section.
 - Ensure that information in the column headed 'specific role holder' was not left blank; either add the name of the role holder or add the words 'not applicable' to ensure consistency across each line.
 - Remove 'not applicable' from the Non-Executive oversight and advice column in line 35 and add either OLC Chair or Board.

ACTION: The Head of Complex Casework and Deputy Chief Ombudsman to make the amendments set out above to the Scheme of Delegation.

100. Subject to these amendments, the Board **approved** the Scheme of Delegation and Matters Reserved to Board.

ACTION: The Head of Complex Casework and Deputy Chief Ombudsman to publish the updated Scheme of Delegation and the updated Matters Reserved to Board

101. In discussion, the Board sought assurance that lines 13 and 14 of the Scheme of Delegation would address the learning from the Employment Tribunal. The CO confirmed that this would be considered as part of the learning review; this could result in future amendments to lines 13 and 14 for the Board to consider when it next reviewed the Scheme of Delegation.
102. Recognising that the findings of the recent Governance Audit had identified the need for more clarity on roles and that the term 'Heads of Function', as set out in line 35 of the Scheme of Delegation, had little meaning to the Board Members, the CO agreed to take an action to review and clarify the terminology used for roles within the management structure and report back to the Board.
- ACTION: The CO to review and clarify the terminology used for roles within the management structure and report back to the Board.**
103. Considering that line 35 of the Scheme of Delegation was to be updated to include an oversight and advice role for the OLC Chair / Board, the Chair and CO confirmed that they would reflect further on whether there was a broader oversight role for the Board, outside of the Scheme of Delegation, regarding senior roles, specifically the COO role.
- ACTION: The Chair and CO to consider whether there was a broader oversight role for the Board, outside of the Scheme of Delegation, regarding senior roles.**

Item 16 – Transparency reports

104. The Board reviewed and agreed the quarter four transparency reports which included Board Member, Ombudsman and Senior Manager Register of Interests and **approved** them for publication.

ACTION: Board Secretary to publish the Board Member, Ombudsman and Senior Manager register of interests for quarter four.

- 105.** The Board **noted** that there had been no further entries to the Gifts and Hospitality register since it had last been presented to the Board on the 27 July 2020. The last entry to the register was dated 16th of June 2020.
- 106.** The Board **noted** that the Board Member and Senior Manager Expenses Report was not available. The information required to collate the report was held in LeO's office which, due to the pandemic, was not being accessed by all staff. The report will be presented to the Board for review at the earliest possible opportunity.

Item 17 – Board Paper Redactions and Non-Disclosure report

- 107.** The Board reviewed a paper setting out the redactions and items for non-disclosure proposed in respect of the March Board papers.
- 108.** The Board **approved** the items identified for redaction and non-disclosure.

ACTION: Board Secretary to publish the March Board papers subject to the approved redactions and items for non-disclosure.

Item 18 – Board Effectiveness

- 109.** In line with the Board's commitment to improving Board effectiveness, Annette Lovell reflected on the meeting and made the following points:
- It had been evident that Board Members had taken on board the feedback from the recent Board Development session where they had given themselves permission not to speak to every agenda item and to respect the Board / Executive boundary.
 - The discussion about the Employment Tribunal had gone well.
 - Considering the duration of Board meetings and that they were being held remotely, there was some concern that the Board may not be giving the right amount of attention to papers that were presented later in the day.
- 110.** A discussion took place about the challenges of long Board meetings and being sat in front of a screen for long periods of time. Overall, it was felt that day-long meetings were necessary as the organisation was going through a period of change and it was important to ensure that there was sufficient time on the agenda for discussion and to ensure that matters were properly dealt with. Recognising that it was important to strike the right balance, it was **agreed** that further consideration would be given to how papers were presented and to providing more frequent comfort breaks and longer lunch breaks whilst also ensuring that there was sufficient time to deal with agenda items.
- ACTION: The Chair and Board Secretary to consider how papers were presented, providing more frequent breaks and longer lunch breaks at future Board meetings.**
- 111.** The Executive provided feedback on the Board / Executive boundary, commenting that the boundary had been respected at the meeting and that there was a good balance of constructive challenge and support from the Board.

Item 19 – Any other business

112. There was no other business.