

Executive Team – for assurance

Meeting agenda title: Update on the work of the Resources Board

Meeting date: 16 February 2022

Time required: 5 minutes

Presenter: Angela Donaldson

Approved by: Angela Donaldson

1. Objective and recommendation

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the work of the Resources Board to give ET an opportunity to provide a strategic steer on future work.
- 1.2. The Resources Board is tasked with ensuring the ICO's people, financial, physical, and technical resources and infrastructure remain fit for purpose, are developed in line with the ICO's medium and long-term capacity and capability needs, and are deployed efficiently, effectively and with value for money.

2. Key Achievements over the last 5 months

The key achievements of the Resources Board over the last 5 months since we last reported to ET are:

- 2.1. One of the key focusses of the Resources Board recently has been the provision of oversight and assurance of the ICO financial position. Given the impact on our data protection income as a result of the economic downturn and the corresponding deficit, the Resources Board has covered deep dive reviews of the current year financial position, and income assumptions as at Q2 and Q3 including sensitivity analysis on our DP Income. These deep dive reviews cover the financial risks and mitigations that are in place, and in progress, including joint working with DCMS to get a Reserves Policy approved by HMT and the upcoming Data Protection Fee review work which will see our charging model be reviewed for 2024/25.

The Resources Board has also considered the 2023/24 financial scenarios, focussing on DP Income and the assumptions underpinning these scenarios, including the potential new data sharing agreement we are aiming to put in place with HMRC for

Official Sensitive

2023/24 as well as the options to balance the budget against Reserves, pending HMT approval of our Reserves policy.

On a monthly basis assurance is also provided through a review of the monthly management accounts.

- 2.2. The Board has continued to receive quarterly updates of the Digital and IT service and technical roadmap from an assurance perspective. The Board plays a key role in taking assurance on the progress of the deliverables, providing feedback to help shape the priorities for the Digital and IT service, and providing assurance on the strategic direction as set out in the roadmap.
- 2.3. The Board received an oral summary of the development of the Workforce Planning Framework for assurance, noting that “buy, build and borrow” was the cornerstone of the approach. The Resources Board received updates regarding progress against a number of projects including education market mapping, employee mapping, and development of a dashboard to assist budget heads to forecast volumes of work. The Board discussed benefits to taking an early careers approach for some directorates to help build a skills development pipeline to meet future needs.
- 2.4. The Board also discussed and approved the Good Faith document which supports our Trade Union Recognition Agreement (TURA) as signed by the Information Commissioner and Chairs of our recognised Trade Unions (TU). It supports efficiency and high levels of productivity to enable constructive TU and Management engagement, practices, behaviours, processes, and infrastructure. Most importantly it frames the good faith principles which are essential for both Management and TUs to demonstrate for constructive industrial relations to flourish.
- 2.5. As well as the topics brought to the Board for discussion and approval, the Board has also received updates on the following items for assurance purposes:
 - Corporate Charge Card – spending analysis for assurance of the financial controls and spending within policy. This item will be discussed by exception only should any risks or issues need to be discussed.

3. Key Challenges over the last 6 months

- 3.1. In discharging its duties, the Resources Board is focussed on the mitigation of some of the ICO's most significant risks. Ensuring the Resources Board only focusses attention on the areas of highest strategic impact remains a challenge. To assist with this the Resources Board had previously commenced a review of the Terms of Reference. This is in progress alongside a wider review of the governance framework across SLT Boards.

4. Key Areas of Activity over the next 6-12 months

- 4.1 There are a number of strategic areas of focus for the Resources Board in the coming months:
- Consideration of the outcomes of the pay benchmarking analysis, and the approach for review of pay in 2023/24.
 - Phases 3 and 4 of the People Policy reviews will come to the Board for approval.
 - Workforce Planning Framework - Oversight of the continued mitigation of the ICO's capacity and capability risks, with particular focus on the identification and efficient delivery of talent/recruitment pipelines in a challenging recruitment market for our most complex technical specialisms.
 - Procurement - Ensuring effective and compliant procurement pipelines are in place to mitigate the risk of budget underspend and bring new capability on stream smoothly when investing in year in new infrastructure / third party services.
 - High Performance Strategy - Ensuring that the future strategy brings together the corporate services and enabling functions of the ICO to provide optimum conditions for the organisation to achieve high performance. The Resources Board will position itself to oversee the delivery of this strategy as one of its main focusses going forward.
 - Financial Planning and Performance – Oversight of the continued mitigation of the ICO's financial resilience risk by continuing to focus on quarterly deep dive reviews of our financial performance, risks and mitigations. The Resources Board will also support the development of our longer term business planning and forecasting methodologies as our funding model continues to become more complex, ensuring

Official Sensitive

we are able to gain maximum value for money from the resources available.

- The Board will also oversee the implementation of the Professions in the ICO and the Capability Framework.

5. Areas for Challenge

- 5.1. ET may wish to consider whether the proposals for the role of the Resources Board would meet the level of assurance that the ET expect.
- 5.2. ET may also wish to consider whether there is appropriate reporting and assurance provided from the Resources Board to the Executive Team, and through to Management Board and Audit and Risk Committee. Are there regular reports or agenda items that Resources Board should be providing to ET that we are not already?
- 5.3. Are there any areas of focus that ET would expect to see in the Board's future work which are not covered in this report?

Author: Angela Donaldson

Consultees: Mike Fitzgerald, Sarah Lal

List of Annexes: None

Publication decision: Report can be published internally and externally without redactions