

Minutes of eightieth meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.30pm on 7th February 2019

Present: Mr. Tom Moran (Chairman), Ms. Anne-Marie Taylor, Ms. Shirley Comerford, Mr. John O'Callaghan, Dr. Eddie Molloy, Ms. Mary Connaughton, Ms. Rosarii Mannion, Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

Apologies: Mr. Paul Lemass, Mr. David Cagney.

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed and these will be published on the website.

Declarations of Interest

Ms. Mannion queried as to whether it would be considered if she was potentially conflicted in relation to discussions on Consultant recruitment given that she is a Director and decision maker in the client organisation. Ms. Mannion advised she would be guided by the Chair in this regard.

There were no other declarations of interest at this stage. However, Ms. Taylor recused herself at a later stage as she was an applicant for a State Boards position which was unexpectedly tabled for discussion in the meeting. She returned to the meeting once that matter was discussed.

CEO's Report for the Board and Operational Report

The CEO discussed the Operational and Activity report, highlighting the key statistics from 2018. The Board acknowledged the breadth and complexity of recruitment undertaken by PAS in 2018.

The level of appeals and the reasons for peaks in appeals were discussed. It was noted that the new Diversity and Inclusion Lead would commence with PAS on 20th February.

The Board noted the three highest rated risks as outlined in the Operational and Activity Report and discussed the ongoing legal cases (noting the commitment to clarifying the finding which referred to the CPSA review date in one of those successful cases).

The Board noted the update from IT and welcomed the Security and Resilience Audit and the new accessibility plug-in for publicjobs.ie.

The Board noted the 2018 Report on State Boards and agreed the new format for reporting on State Boards as used in the Operational and Activity Report.

A request from a Minister for additional information in relation to a State Board application process was discussed. The Board noted that PAS had complied with the State Boards Guidelines and that the Minister had been informed of the process involved.

It was agreed that the information provided to applicants for each State Board's process will be expanded to explain that shortlisting would be conducted on the basis of agreed criteria. It was also agreed to hold discussions with D/PER in relation to the timing of informing candidates of the outcome of the assessment process.

The CEO made a presentation to the Board on a number of key areas, including an update on the review of Hospital Consultant Recruitment; PAS plans for International Women's Day, and the upcoming benchmarking visit to Ottawa. An update was provided on the business planning process and it was agreed that the Board will review the final business plan at their next meeting. The CEO discussed the report from the remote proctoring provider on the incident experienced by PAS in using their services. The Board suggested that this report also be reviewed by the Audit Committee at their next meeting.

Risk Management

The Board discussed the paper circulated on the key risk theme of Brexit. The Board welcomed the establishment of the working group and the contingency plans being put in place. The Board welcomed the new approaches being considered (including the new Clerical Officer model) and acknowledged that the risk appetite in relation to some recruitment processes may have to shift if large volumes of staff are required at short notice by PAS clients. It was agreed that Brexit preparation would be a standing item on the agenda for PAS Board meetings.

Financial Position

The Board noted the financial position at the end of 2018 and noted the high level of costs recovered from clients.

Internal Audit Update

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee on 13th December and the Report on Compliance with PAS Published Documentation. The Board welcomed the low level of findings and the management responses to all recommendations. The Board acknowledged the high standard of audits carried out by Mazars throughout their contract period which has now come to an end. The Board welcomed the clear report from the C&AGs who attended the Audit Committee meeting in December.

The Board also welcomed the risk theme for the next Audit Committee meeting in relation to how we meet our data protection requirements in the management of board papers.

Update on ChapterHouse Developments and Business Process Improvement

A member of the Management Board (Lisa Keyes) gave a presentation on some key business development projects, including the review of large volume clearance and assignments, the roll out of a new model for Clerical Officer recruitment, and the PAS Brexit Readiness Plan. The Board welcomed the process re-engineering of the recruitment process for Clerical Officer and acknowledged that aspects of this flexible recruitment model may be applicable to other campaigns. It was agreed that it would be important to retain client involvement with the assignment events in the longer term. An update was provided to the Board on how civilian staff were being sourced for An Garda Síochána and that the area of security clearance (which is the cause of significant delays) is now being conducted by An Garda Síochána. It was agreed that a communication would issue to Departments, at the appropriate level, in relation to the new approach, and that a quality review would be conducted to ensure there is no significant impact on the quality of candidates assigned. The Board welcomed the review of clearance and assignments and the enhanced focus on metrics and the shift to conducting parts of the process in advance of the interview and the potential appointment of candidate's subject to security clearance and self-declarations where possible.

It was agreed that a video update on ground floor developments would be circulated to the Board by email. An update was provided on PAS development work and the proposed building works next to PAS. It was agreed a further update on building works would be provided for the Board at the next meeting.

Risk Management Business Plan

This plan was noted.

Board Evaluation

It was agreed that the evaluation form will be circulated for completion, and once all are returned to the Secretary, they will be forwarded to the Chairman for review.

It was agreed that the June meeting will include a session without the Chairman in order for the Board to consider the performance of the Chair.

Next meeting

Dates for Board meetings for April and June are to be agreed as soon as possible.