

Minutes of eighty-second meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.00pm on 12th June 2019

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

Apologies: Mr. Paul Lemass, Ms. Mary Connaughton.

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed (with one amendment) in relation to strategic analysis.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CEO's Report for the Board and Operational Report

The Board noted the Operational Activity Report which has been circulated in advance of the meeting, noting that activity levels are up by 25% on this time last year. The Board discussed the update on Hospital Consultant recruitment and noted that campaigns are being advertised within two weeks of receipt of all of the relevant documentation; the increase in campaigns advertised and the number of successful candidates being assigned was welcomed.

The Board requested a commentary around the requests for review statistics in future reports in relation to the significance of the level of appeals in comparison to recruitment activity.

The Board discussed the establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group who are due to have an inaugural meeting on 27th June. The Board welcomed the establishment of this Advisory Group to support PAS in assisting public service employers provide inclusive workplaces to ensure the public service is attracting candidates from all groups in society. The Group will also help ensure PAS is providing best practice recruitment and selection process from a diversity and inclusion perspective. It was suggested that the Group should include someone from a large private sector recruiter. The Board discussed the focus on diversity and inclusion in the Civil Service People Strategy and other examples of public sector commitment to diversity and inclusion. The constitution of the Group was noted and it was agreed that it may be expanded in the future and that membership may be fluid, depending on the focus of the Group at a particular time. It was agreed that PAS should continue to work with D/PER on diversity and inclusion related policy issues (including, requirements for EEA citizenship or specific qualifications for entry level posts). The Board welcomed the commitment of PAS to monitor and report on diversity and inclusion related statistics and acknowledged the need to ensure that such processes are GDPR compliant. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be provided to the Board in addition to regular updates on meetings of the group. It was agreed that there is a need to raise awareness on the diversity and inclusion related initiatives already underway in PAS and in the wider civil service. The Board also welcomed the established of the internal Diversity and Inclusion Forum.

The Board noted the success of the recent use of remote proctoring for the AO campaign.

The CEO updated the Board on changes at Management Board level with the proposed secondment of the Senior Psychologist to An Garda Síochána and the internal move of the Head of Corporate Affairs to Head of Justice Sector recruitment.

The Board noted the updates on legal cases and asked for the changes in future reports to be highlighted.

The Board discussed how quality of candidates could potentially be assessed and it was agreed that PAS would consider how quality could potentially best be measured going forward.

The CEO gave a presentation to the Board on a number of key areas as part of the CEO's Report for the Board. This included an update on the strategy development process, including key principles and the consultation and development road-map. It was agreed that the September Board meeting would also include a strategy session with the Management Board and a relevant external speaker. An update was provided on developments in relation to the request from An Garda Síochána for additional recruitment support; an MOU and SLA are currently being drafted. An update was also provided on ChapterHouse development and engagement with OPW in relation to accommodation related issues.

Risk Management

The Board noted the update provided as part of the CEO's Report on the key risk theme of Brexit. It was agreed that the risk of a slowdown in recruitment as a result of Brexit would be incorporated into the risk register.

Financial Position

The Board noted the financial position to date in 2019. It was noted that PAS is above profile on both A1 and A2 subheads due to the level of additional recruitment activity and the staffing levels required to deliver on this activity. Additional costs include the cost of alternative interview sites. It was noted that this level of expenditure has been flagged to D/PER and that PAS can slow down activity if required for expenditure purposes although this would impact on the level of service delivery required by clients. It was agreed that it is too early to decide whether this expenditure will level out or what level of client recoupment will be available to offset expenditure. It was agreed to review this in detail in July and have discussions with D/PER in relation to the expenditure patterns at that time. It was noted that the deficiencies in civil service workforce planning may be contributing to the high levels of expenditure as there is a lack of clarity around client needs, including for specialist posts. It was agreed that the Accountant would be asked to develop a costing model to allow PAS determine the cost of various types of campaigns, including specialist recruitment.

Internal Audit Update

The Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 27th March 2019. The next meeting of the Audit Committees will take place on 27th June.

Audit and Assurance Arrangements

The Board noted the Audit and Assurance Arrangements document and welcomed the content of same.

Review of PAS Metrics Project and Update on new CO Model

Ciarán Oman made a presentation to the Board on the aims of the business analysis unit and provided an update on the KPI review currently being conducted by that unit. The Board discussed some of the analysis presented and agreed that the data would assist with better decision making around campaigns. The Board agreed that it was important to have customer input into the new KPIs and agree stretch targets with clients. The Board also received an update on the roll out of the new CO model. The importance of communicating how this model is operating to clients was emphasised

Update on Strategic Projects

The Board noted the update on strategic projects that had been circulated in advance of the meeting and agreed that an update would be provided in advance of each Board meeting. It was agreed that the importance of continuing to embed the appropriate culture and values required for PAS will form a key part of the strategy development process.

Overview of, and Responses to, Third Party Risks

Margaret McCabe made a presentation to the Board on the main third party risks and the actions in place to mitigate those risks (covering selection board members, test providers and clients). It was agreed that there is a need to focus on effective vendor management on an ongoing basis.

Board Evaluation Update

The Chairman discussed the Board evaluation summary and it was noted that some of the actions are being implemented and that others will be agreed at the Board Strategy Session in September/October.

Next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in conjunction with the Board strategy session in September/October. Any suggestions for an external speaker for this session should be sent to PAS in advance.