

Minutes of eighty-fourth meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, at 2.30pm on 13th November 2019

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

Apologies: Mr. John O'Callaghan, Mr. David Cagney.

Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed.

Nominees of the Minister for Health and the Minister for Local Government were appointed to the PAS Board by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform. The new Board members will be invited to the next meeting.

CEO's Report for the Board and Operational Report

The Board noted the Operational Activity Report which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

The CEO updated the Board on developments in relation to the additional work for An Garda Síochána (AGS) commencing with the Job Analysis, for which the contract has just been awarded. It was agreed that once funding is put in place by AGS or the Department of Justice that a signed SLA would include when the costs would be recouped.

The CEO also updated the Board on the scheduled appearance by PAS before the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Irish Language, the Gaeltacht and the Islands, and confirmed that Brexit related recruitment is being processed to agreed deadlines.

The Board noted that the Management Board Strategy Away Day, scheduled for 27th November, will focus on both strategy development and the development of high performing teams.

The Board discussed the results of the customer surveys and welcomed the plans for 2019 to conduct more real-time surveys. It was noted that the client survey was generally positive with the exception of timescales; this is an area that PAS is focusing on and it is expected that re-engineering the recruitment processes will result in improvements to delivery timescales. The need for an agile and responsive service was acknowledged, with a focus on ensuring that only value-add parts of the process are being retained. The CEO reiterated that there will be a strong focus on system redesign as part of Project Nova. The Board discussed the ongoing benchmarking opportunities being availed of by PAS, focusing on areas such as the future of work, increased automation and diversity and inclusion. The Board acknowledged that the candidate satisfaction levels also appeared to be generally positive with the exception of feedback. It was acknowledged that it may be difficult to provide the level of feedback required to meet candidate expectations, but the Board agreed that as it was a factor which may potentially impact on candidate engagement levels, it was worthy of further research.

Financial Position

The Board noted the financial position to date in 2019. The CEO informed the Board that D/PER had agreed that PAS could avail of a supplementary estimate to cover the cost of expenditure on both the A1 and A2 sub-heads. It was noted that PAS is underspend on capital due to the timing of the STAR replacement project and this can be used to offset in

part the overspend in the other areas. It was noted that much of the overspend is due to timing issues in relation to recoverable costs and that PAS is following up with clients on an ongoing basis to recover these costs. As PAS was unable to confirm with clients that all recoverable costs would be received before year-end, a supplementary was requested. PAS will continue to engage with D/PER in relation to the level of funding for PAS and alternative models to allow PAS deliver the required services for clients within a very constrained budget. PAS has been asked to continue to provide the level of services requested by clients and not constrain such services in order to remain within the original budget allocated.

Internal Audit Update

There were no Audit Committee meetings since the last Board meeting. An update on internal audit activity was included in the Operational Report. It was noted that the Procurement Audit Report and the requirement for an upgraded financial system would be discussed at the next Audit Committee meeting in December.

Report on implementation of business plans and progress on strategic projects (including overview of progress on Project NOVA)

Rosemarie O'Mahony gave a presentation to the Board on this area focusing initially on the developments in relation to the PAS recruitment application (STAR) and the standardisation process to date. The Board discussed the decision of the Management Board to opt for an innovation cycle approach with project Nova and discussed the governance structures in place to manage the programme of projects related to this area. The Board noted the proposed Path-to-Market aspect of the project, and the plans in 2020 to progress towards the procurement element of the project. The Board welcomed the strong project management approach to managing this key strategic project.

The Board were also provided with an update on the strategy development process and the draft mission and values. The Board provided some feedback on specific elements of the draft and agreed that it would be aiming to sign off on the draft strategy on 4th December.

The Board thanked Eddie Molloy for facilitating the workshop with PAS to assist in developing the mission and vision. The Board also agreed that the strategy development process had been very comprehensive and very valuable insights have been obtained from a wide range of stakeholders.

Key Risk Theme (Accommodation)

Lisa Keyes attended the meeting to update the Board on this key risk area. She outlined the four work streams required to move selection boards to Baggot Street, in addition to development work in Chapter House to install a new air conditioning system and redesign all office accommodation to suit business needs. The governance structure for the projects were outlined and the mitigations being put in place to address all high levels risks were discussed, as was the engagement with OPW around these projects. The importance of good communication throughout the process was highlighted by the Board, and the work to date on staff communication was welcomed.

Board Evaluation Update

It was agreed to conduct the annual Board evaluation exercise once the new Board members are in place.

Next meeting

4th December at 2.30pm.