

Minutes of sixty-fifth meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, at 11am on 22nd April 2016

Present: Ms. Judith Eve (Chairman), Ms. Fiona Tierney, Dr. Eddie Molloy, Ms. Anne-Marie Taylor, Mr. Damien McCallion, Ms. Eimear Kenny, Mr. Paul Lemass, Ms. Catherine Dobbins (Secretary).

Apologies: Ms. Oonagh McPhillips, 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

There were no declarations of interest.

CEO's Report for the Board

Operational Report and Risk Management

The CEO presented her report and discussed how PAS has been re-organised to deliver on client demands (including the retention by Niall Byrne of responsibility for State Boards and the allocation of responsibility for process improvement, client relations and front-of-house to Lisa Keyes). The establishment of new compliance and customer relations functions was also discussed.

The Board welcomed the ongoing work to establish PAS as part of the wider strategic HR agenda. It was agreed there is a need to examine the recruitment implications of developing specialist career paths, e.g. IT and HR.

The Board welcomed the news that PAS has negotiated to get the office space back on the second floor in order to meet operational needs.

The CEO discussed the benchmarking visit of Selor to PAS. They welcomed the plans for further engagement between both organisations, and the plans for PAS staff to see how Selor have set up their advanced testing and operational facilities.

The CEO updated the Board on the current work programme, including the HEO campaign (and the extended closing date) and the high level of assignments made (over 200) from graduate campaigns (with very positive feedback on the quality of candidates received from clients). The CEO informed the Board that the Garda Trainee recruitment programme has been "front loaded" in anticipation of any change in demand levels for trainees, and discussed the plans for Probation and Welfare Officer and Prison Officer campaigns. An update was provided on progress with all of the local authority campaigns; the Board discussed possible interventions with candidates in advance of these campaigns in order to get candidates to prepare adequately for online testing. It was agreed that all learning from these campaigns will be taken on board for future campaigns.

The Board discussed the results of the customer satisfaction surveys and discussed the disappointing level of client satisfaction with recruitment timescales. It was agreed that the customer relations function will be critical in setting and managing client expectations and that the re-organisation of PAS with a specialist clearance and assignment function should help standardise processes and reduce clearance timescales where possible. The Board also discussed the level of candidate satisfaction with the quality of feedback and the need to set expectations in relation to this area, and welcomed the creation of guidance for selection boards in relation to the level of feedback to be provided. The Board agreed that it would be useful to establish norms in other jurisdictions in advance of the 2016 surveys and that additional free text boxes be used to provide examples where responses are not positive. It was agreed that PAS should compare the responses to the Candidate survey against previous years (particularly in respect to perceived fairness). It was also suggested that a one-page summary be prepared for Selection Board Members on good interview techniques/questioning.

The CEO updated the Board on the meeting with the CPSA in relation to the proposed review of the CPSA Codes and on the discussions in relation to critical issues, such as the review process and the provision of feedback.

Financial Position

The Board noted the Financial Report and the level of expenditure to date. The CEO informed the Board that the finances are being managed carefully and that the cost of a new testing suite cannot be met from the existing budget.

Internal Audit Update

The Board noted the draft minutes of the last audit committee meeting and the IPA Review on the Internal Audit function in PAS. It was noted that the recommendations in this review are in the process of being implemented. The Board was informed that new committee members are currently being sourced and that a new internal auditor has been sourced through the OGP framework.

Internal Audit Annual Report

Ms. Sylva Langford, Chairperson of the Internal Audit Committee, presented the 2015 Annual Report to the Board. She discussed the role of the Committee in monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Audit Plan in 2015 and stated that the plan had been implemented in full.

She discussed the Internal Audit Reports on Data Protection, Business Continuity Planning, Payroll and Health & Safety. She stated that the Internal Audit Committee is satisfied that all recommendations are being implemented and that no significant issues were raised by these audits.

Ms. Langford informed the Board that risk is on the agenda of each Internal Audit committee meeting; the committee would continue to view the reputational risk attached to the State Boards process as the most critical reputational risk.

Ms. Langford stated that the committee welcomed the decision to increase the number of committee members and the decision to have all external members as there have been some difficulties in getting a quorum for meetings in 2015.

The Board thanked Ms. Langford for her own input and commitment and thanked her for her service on the committee which is coming to an end in September.

Annual Report 2015

A draft report was presented to the Board; it was agreed that the Board would revert with observations within two weeks. It was agreed that a paragraph be included on managing the risks in relation to State Boards.

Corporate Risk Register

The Board noted the Corporate Risk Register and the assurance from the CEO that there are effective risk management practices in place in PAS. The Board agreed that the top three to four risks should be included in the Board papers (the top eight are already included) and that the Board would focus on high priority key risks on certain thematic areas over the course of the year.

Report on Review of State Boards

The Board noted the paper on the review of state boards. The Board agreed that it would be useful to get feedback from departments/offices on the current process and from the Corporate Affairs Assistant Secretary Network.

PAS Marketing Strategy for 2016

The Board noted the paper setting out the plans for marketing for 2016.

Any Other Business

The Board was informed that they will be given access to Share File to access board papers in this way should they wish.

Next Meeting

17th June at 11am