

Minutes of sixty-eight meeting of the Board of the Public Appointments Service held in Chapter House, 26-30 Abbey Street Upper, Dublin 1, at 11am on 4th November 2016

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

Apologies: Ms. Eimear Kenny, Mr. Paul Lemass, Ms. Oonagh McPhillips.

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 discussed the highlights from the operational report at the meeting.

It was noted that activity levels remain high with a continued high level of demand for COs and EOs. The CEO provided an update on progress with the Garda Trainee and Prison Officer campaigns and the recently advertised graduate campaigns. It was noted that feedback on the quality of staff being appointed from these campaigns remains high.

The CEO updated the Board on the establishment of the new mid-volume recruitment unit, and the lack of progress achieved in freeing up the space on the second floor for PAS staff and action being taken in this regard.

The CEO highlighted the plans to work over the next few months on strengthening the customer relationship with the local authorities.

The CEO provided an update on complaints made to the CPSA which have been resolved to the satisfaction of PAS, and the recommendation by the CPSA that PAS provide guidance and advice to the Prison Service in conducting internal campaigns. The Board acknowledged that this was a tribute to the work of PAS.

The CEO updated the Board on ongoing efforts to reduce the time taken to clear candidates for appointment post interview, stating that significant improvements have already been made in reducing timescales, with work in this area ongoing, including the planned use of robotics. The Board agreed that additional knowledge sharing with the HSE in the area of clearance would be of benefit. It was agreed that PAS would attempt to organise a joint workshop on this area.

The Board discussed other benchmarking and networking activities, including the visit to the UK by PAS staff to look at similar organisations.

The Board welcomed the establishment of the candidate support unit to examine the fall-off in attendance at some tests and interviews.

The Board welcomed the new draft Codes of Practice from the CPSA, and was satisfied that PAS feedback had been taken on board in the development of the new Codes. It was noted that the review of the Guidelines for appointments to State Boards has still to be finalised.

The CEO provided an update on the recent case which was heard by the Labour Court.

The CEO provided an update on recent engagement with OGCIO on the recruitment application project and on progress in relation to that project. An update was also provided on networking events attended to promote stateboards.ie.

The CEO informed the Board of some decisions relating to key management positions. The Board also noted the current staffing breakdown and the plans for staffing in 2016 and 2017. The CEO agreed to look at contingency plans in relation to the management of IT should a vacancy arise in this role.

An update was provided in relation to the IT outage on 20th October. It was noted that the learning from that event has been taken on board and has included additional contingency plans being put in place as part of the business continuity process. An update was also provided on other risks in relation to legal cases and appeals.

The Board discussed the increased focus on marketing and attracting high quality graduates to the public service. The Board also discussed the feedback received by PAS in relation to a number of campaigns with respect to the high quality of candidates assigned to clients, and agreed there was a need to continue to monitor and develop the area of feedback on quality.

The Board discussed the PAS client base and potential revenue stream from 'non-core' clients. Recruitment for the role of President for the Institutes of Technology was raised. It was agreed that the Board would consider PAS recruitment activity across the range of work and PAS client base early in 2017 in the context of constrained resources, reflecting on the percentage of recruitment for the different segments in 2016.

Financial Position

The Board noted the Financial Report and the level of expenditure to date. The CEO informed the Board that PAS will come in under budget.

An update was provided on the resource allocation for 2017 and the positive engagement with D/PER in this regard.

Internal Audit Update

The Board noted the minutes of the Internal Audit Committee meeting on 15th September.

Statement of Strategy

The Board discussed the draft Statement of Strategy for 2017-19. The CEO provided an update on the extensive consultation process involved in preparing the Strategy Statement. The Board agreed that the Strategy Statement should be presented to the Minister and suggested a number of minor amendments to the text.

Corporate Risk Register

The Board discussed the three main risks in detail. It was agreed that the risks involved in process compliance should be reviewed and the importance of interview boards' appreciation of the significance of their role in relation to data protection, etc. should be highlighted in both the risk register and as part of the new online board member training project.

Update on Strategic Projects

The CEO provided an update on the strategic projects; all but two are on target, and those two are slightly behind schedule. A comprehensive update on each project will be provided at the next meeting.

Any Other Business

The Board agreed to meet the NI Civil Service Commissioners in 2017, and that the Chairperson and CEO would meet the Commission for Public Service Appointments.

Next Meeting

9th December at 11am.