



## Steering Board Meeting Note

**Date:** Monday 24 June 2019

**Time:** 10:00am

**Location:** Concept House B3 / AOS G.01

**Attendees:** Tim Suter (Chair), Tim Moss, David Rawlins, Nora Nanayakkara, Lopa Patel, Andrew Lawrence, Kevin Orford, Mandy Haberman, David Holdsworth, Dominic Houlihan, Pippa Hall, Secretariat, Maria Ciavatta, Andrea Woodliffe (Observer)

**Presenters:** Andy Bartlett, James Bruckel, Jon Cox, Thomas Booth

### Chair's Introduction

1. Tim Suter welcomed everyone to the meeting, including Andrea Woodliffe as an observer and David Holdsworth for his first Steering Board in his new post as Deputy CEO and Director of Operational Delivery.

### Apologies

2. No apologies were received.

### Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting

3. Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

### Actions

4. The Board agreed to close the two outstanding actions on Steering Board involvement in the Transformation Programme and the budget planning process, as these were to be captured in the discussions around buddying and other parts of the non-executive director role. Tim Moss highlighted the note on misleading mail and the renewals project in the information papers which was completed as an informal action from the previous Steering Board.

### Declarations of interest

5. Lopa Patel raised that Eversheds Sutherland are a sponsor of Diversity UK, of which she is founder and CEO, in reference to the note on misleading mail in the information papers.

## 6. Governance and Performance

### 6.1. Executive Report

- 6.1.1. Tim Moss presented the Executive Report and highlighted some key items. He said that patents workload is reducing, and customer analysis is ongoing to understand this. He noted that applicants appear to be filing less overall, rather than switching to filing solely with other offices which would cause more concern. Tim said that trade mark applications

are above what was expected and could rise again on the UK's exit from the EU so preparation for this is needed.

- 6.1.2. Tim explained that the method of measuring productivity in the patent examining division was under review, with a new method being trialled by three examining groups. He said early indications show some areas of increased productivity and that examiners are reporting less stress. He highlighted that a move away from the more stringent measure of productivity would allow more focus on customer service and less on hitting targets, and that this could have the knock-on effect of reducing peaks of work for support teams.
- 6.1.3. Tim said the Renewals project was progressing well and clarified that the private beta was launching in July, with the public beta due in autumn. He noted that there would be an update on the wider Transformation Programme later during the meeting.
- 6.1.4. Tim said the roll-out of Surface Pro devices had been completed, and the Executive Board had recently discussed the art of the possible for next steps on smarter working. Tim explained that the data teams had recently been restructured and a new Chief Data Officer was in post. Tim highlighted some successes including the recent AI Conference which had been well received with excellent feedback and attendees from around the world. Members of the Board who attended the conference noted that it was enjoyable and encouraged more events of this nature. Tim highlighted the hard work undertaken by Ros Lynch and the team to deliver the conference, and noted that the Executive Board would consider how to continue with thought leadership activities.
- 6.1.5. Tim updated the Board on the EU Exit IT programme, explaining that a Lessons Learned workshop had taken place and had provided some key points to consider for other projects and programmes. He said the programme was due to shut down by 12 July and pick up again at the end of September in order to make the necessary changes needed for EU Exit on the current planned date of 31 October.
- 6.1.6. Tim noted that he was in correspondence with Government Property Agency (GPA) regarding mention of IPO property in the recent GPA corporate plan, in order to clarify their intention given the lack of communication on this point.
- 6.1.7. The Board thanked Tim for the update and commended the report, particularly noting the inclusion of the new corporate scorecard as being very helpful. The Board queried whether the IPO could be providing more support for customers, particularly Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), relating to preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal. Tim explained that the business is ready in terms of policy and IT preparations, and that there was a strategic communications plan in place which was prepared in alignment with BEIS. He highlighted that outside of these plans the organisation is constrained by central government advice, but as much as possible is being done to make managing IP rights simple for customers during EU Exit.
- 6.1.8. The Board were pleased to note the benefits recorded from the Smarter Working initiative and encouraged the ongoing work on capturing project benefits. The Board queried whether the EU Exit teams were recognised for their hard work and asked about their wellbeing. Tim assured the Board that the teams were all encouraged to take annual

leave when possible and said a celebration event had been held, with a message from the Minister to thank them for their work.

6.1.9. The Board asked if work with venture capital funds and challenger banks had been considered as part of the IP Valuation work. Pippa Hall explained that the team are working with challenger banks and gathering data on how a partnership may work. She said working with venture capital funds had not been ruled out but noted that they tend to focus on a different market, whereas SMEs tend to need more assistance from traditional banks, hence the focus of the piece of work.

6.1.10. The Board asked for more detail on the public sector IP work with HM Treasury. Tim explained that the main aims were to have a structure in place to manage public sector IP and to instigate a culture change of understanding and recognising knowledge assets. He said the IPO had pitched to the project steering board to take ownership and leadership of the knowledge and education part of the work.

6.1.11. The Board noted the new method of measuring customer satisfaction and raised a concern that the current scoring felt quite close to the target. They asked what more could be done to provide an excellent customer service. Tim explained that the new method provided much richer data and would help to see where quick wins could be put into place, and helps to move the organisation to be much more customer focused.

**Action: Secretariat to circulate the report on the new measure of customer satisfaction.**

6.1.12. The Board discussed the Average Working Days Lost (AWDL) figure, noting it was currently above the target of 6.5 days. Dominic Houlihan explained that the HR Business Partners would be working with Directors and Line Managers about how to have robust conversations about working days lost whilst keeping these in line with The Deal principles. He noted that a spike in short term absences relating to mental health issues had been recorded, and that the organisation was working to ensure people understood the mental health provisions on offer. Dominic confirmed that there was a suite of provisions for physical health issues as well. He stressed that IPO has a much lower AWDL figure than most other government departments despite the current spike.

6.1.13. The Board commented that given the recent AI conference and other work in this area they would be interested to see a strategy developed on use of AI within the IPO. Tim confirmed that the Executive Board had recently had a demonstration of a proof of concept for using AI in trade mark searches, and were considering how to progress this. The Chair noted that it would be beneficial to have a demonstration at a future Steering Board meeting.

## **6.2. ARC Update and Self-Assessment**

6.2.1. Andrew Lawrence provided a verbal update on the recent Audit and Risk Committee meeting. He explained the Committee had viewed the Board Risk Register and Committee Risk Registers, noting that the method of reporting risk management would be considered in detail later in the year. He said the Committee discussed the first draft of the year end accounts and there were no major issues raised.

- 6.2.2.** Andrew said the Committee discussed the Internal Audit annual report for 2018/19 which had a score of moderate. He said the Committee then looked at the Internal Audit plan for 2019/20 and were in support of the plan. He noted the need to confirm the role of the Committee in the Internal Audit plan process.
- 6.2.3.** Andrew said the Committee discussed a report on security incidents and breaches, in particular related to lost and stolen items, and had requested a more detailed report in the future to understand the nuances.
- 6.2.4.** Andrew moved on to discuss the ARC annual self-assessment, noting that this had been completed using an informal reflection approach. He highlighted that the overall assessment was positive but that the Committee recognised the need for better definition of what and why certain items are discussed at ARC, in particular Internal Audit plans, the Corporate Scorecard and Finances. The Chair noted that this should be considered as part of a wider discussion on the role of non-executives, Steering Board and ARC.
- 6.2.5.** The Chair thanked Andrew and ARC on behalf of Steering Board for all their hard work.

### **6.3. BEIS Update**

- 6.3.1.** David Rawlins gave an update on the current priorities for BEIS. He said the IPO Framework Document is with BEIS and needs to be updated to reflect some new guidance, but he is keen to finalise it by autumn and bring to Steering Board when ready. David highlighted the recent update to the Code of Conduct that was recently circulated to Steering Board members. David explained the recent reorganisation within BEIS noting that an interim Director General, Sam Lister, was in place whilst a full recruitment was underway.

### **6.4. Review of Committees**

- 6.4.1.** Kevin Orford gave an update on the recent review of IPO committees which he completed with help from John Chick, PPS Transformation Lead. Kevin thanked John for his support and thanked everyone who engaged with the process with enthusiasm. Kevin noted that he felt privileged to attend all the committees and gain a better understanding and assurance of how the organisation works.
- 6.4.2.** Kevin explained that the review did not uncover any major issues, but that the report recommended some suggestions to integrate and improve, as well as one radical option to reform the structure of the committees. He explained that the Executive Board agreed to the recommendations for a stronger performance management approach and better governance of devolved power from the Executive Board, and chose to reform the committees into a structure based on the three strategic pillars of the IPO.
- 6.4.3.** Tim Moss said he was grateful to Kevin and John for completing the review. He explained that the Executive Board took the decision in May to restructure the committees, and said a Task & Finish Group were working on the detail of the changes; they will report to IPOB in July, and have the new structure in place in September. Tim highlighted that the Transformation Programme Board will be separate from the committees and will report directly to IPOB.

6.4.4. The Board endorsed the new approach and commended the decision of IPOB. They considered whether they could have a role to support the new committees as a critical friend to the Chairs or in another capacity and agreed this should be part of the wider discussion on their role.

**Action: Tim Suter, Tim Moss, Andrew Lawrence and Kevin Orford to discuss how NEDs interact with the IPO, including the Terms of Reference of Steering Board and ARC, links with IPOB sub-committees, NED buddying opportunities.**

## 7. Strategic

### 7.1. Proposal on Buddying

7.1.1. Tim Moss introduced the paper noting that it asked where the non-executives could use their experience and background to add value. Maria Ciavatta explained that the annex provided a suggestion of areas or pieces of work where the non-executive directors could get involved. She asked the Board to consider their time commitment and whether there was anything missing from the annex that they would like to be involved in. Kevin Orford raised his interest in the IP in the Public Sector work.

7.1.2. The Chair commended the approach and noted that the amount of time commitment and level of engagement would depend on the individual item. He asked board members to raise their areas of interest with him and Maria ex-committee.

**Action: Non-executive directors to identify areas or pieces of work they are interested in buddying for, and raise with Tim Suter and Maria Ciavatta.**

### 7.2. Steering Board Awayday

7.2.1. Tim Moss presented this item looking at high-level themes for the Steering Board Awayday in September. The Board agreed to the proposal and were particularly keen to meet regional stakeholders, as suggested. They asked to hear about businesses specific IP needs to help focus the conversation. The Board also queried if it would be possible to invite universities with innovation hubs in order to discuss take-up of education on IP.

**Action: Tim Moss and Mary-Anne Venables to consider guests to invite to the Steering Board Awayday, in particular local businesses and universities.**

### 7.3. Digital Transformation

7.3.1. Andy Bartlett presented an update on the Transformation Programme. He said the Renewals private beta was planned for 8 July, with customers lined up and business elements ready. Andy explained that work to decommission the financial system POCAS was reaching the conclusion, with just a mop up of IT changes to finish. On Digital Payments, Andy explained that Online Deposit Accounts are no longer being considered as there are likely to be faster payment options available via banks in the near future. Andy said the 'Change of' services had been through an alpha assessment and the further 'Manage my' project items were in final stages of procurement for a delivery partner. Andy said that a full forward plan for the Transformation Programme would be ready to share shortly.

**Action: Secretariat to circulate the Transformation Programme forward plan when available.**

7.3.2. Andy said the new Programme Manager had recently joined the team and recruitment was ongoing for Service Transformation Owners. He said that there was lots of work on business change looking at mapping out the affected areas and considering the wider impact of change. He highlighted the plans for more training and development in preparation for a digital workplace. Andy ran through the communications plan, highlighting the transformation tour in particular as a way to share plans across the organisation.

7.3.3. The Board thanked Andy for the helpful update and were pleased that the programme appears to be in a good place. They discussed the digital payment options and agreed with the pragmatic approach. The Board discussed the Renewals system and the impact this may have on customers.

7.3.4. The Board asked if there was a plan B if the programme encountered issues, and Tim assured the Board that there was contingency planned in. He noted in particular that the Lessons Learned exercise from the EU Exit programme had highlighted some clear points including the importance of having the right resource in at the right time. The Board requested to see the Lessons Learned paper.

**Action: Secretariat to circulate the EU Exit Programme Lessons Learned paper.**

## **AOB**

8. David Rawlins asked whether the high level risk of other Government Departments deciding policies that cut across the IPO's was still the top risk for the organisation. Tim Moss confirmed that in his view it was, citing the recent Cabinet Office/HMT project on public sector IP as an example.
9. The Chair noted that it was Nora Nanayakkara's final Steering Board meeting as a non-executive director. He thanked her for her contribution over the past six years, and presented her with a gift on behalf of the Steering Board and the Executive Board. Nora thanked the Steering Board and said she had enjoyed her time as a non-executive director for the IPO.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Steering Board Away Day – Thursday 26 September, Birmingham.