



Steering Board Meeting Note

Date: Thursday 29 January 2020

Time: 10:15am

Location: Concept House, Newport B3 / 10 Victoria Street, London 3.08

Attendees: Tim Suter (Chair), Tim Moss, David Rawlins (London), Lopa Patel, Andrew Lawrence, Mandy Haberman, Laurie Benson, Karin Schulte, David Holdsworth, Adam Williams (morning only), Pippa Hall, Ros Lynch (afternoon only), Mary-Anne Venables, Secretariat, Maria Ciavatta

Apologies: Kevin Orford

Presenters: Andy Bartlett, Aimee Symonds

Chair's Introduction

1. Tim Suter welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Laurie Benson who joined the Board as a new Non-Executive Director, and Karin Schulte who joined as the new apprentice via the Board Apprentice Scheme for 12 months.

Apologies

2. Apologies were received from Kevin Orford.

Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting

3. Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed.

Actions

4. There were no outstanding actions.

Declarations of interest

5. None.

6. Governance and Performance

6.1. Executive Report and Corporate Scorecard

- 6.1.1. Tim Moss presented the Executive Report, highlighting key items for the Board. He noted the new government had big ambitions for innovation in their manifesto that could have an IP impact, including mention of a new innovation agency and an increase in research and development funding.
- 6.1.2. Tim noted that the Royal Sussex trade mark applications had garnered media attention and that David Holdsworth was involved to ensure this was managed effectively.
- 6.1.3. Tim highlighted the Office's gender pay gap and noted the Executive Board would be discussing this tomorrow and deciding on an approach to reduce the gap. Tim explained that

in the IPO the gender pay gap was primarily due to issues around Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) representation by gender as there was a high proportion of STEM roles in the IPO.

- 6.1.4. Tim explained that the Digital Single Market copyright directives would not be implemented due to the UK leaving the EU but that the next steps were not yet clear. He noted that stakeholders had been asking questions as expected, and he highlighted that the issues were highly contentious, so we were not in a strong position currently.
- 6.1.5. Tim passed over to David Holdsworth to update on operational matters. David first highlighted that the patent examination backlog continued to drop with a further 200 completed in January. He noted that trade marks applications had already started to increase and that the expectation was that this would continue to increase throughout the Brexit implementation period.
- 6.1.6. The Chair said the inclusion of the Corporate Scorecard was a helpful way to understand the work going on across the IPO easily. He noted that there appeared to be quite a few items reporting as red and asked how the Executive Board felt about this and if there was anything particularly concerning. Pippa Hall highlighted that the work in the data sphere had progressed but was still a big risk especially given the links with the transformation programme. She noted that although this work was reporting red this was mainly due to the milestone not being hit, but overall it is not in a bad state. The Chair thanked Pippa for the update.
- 6.1.7. The Board noted that the Renewals service was performing well with 90% of renewals processed through the new service in December and expressed congratulations to the team for their achievement. David Holdsworth thanked the Board and noted the critical point was to get 90% of renewals through the system in March to achieve the Ministerial Target.
- 6.1.8. The Board queried if work on IP Valuation would become a higher priority given the government focus on innovation. Pippa Hall said this was the case and noted it linked to the IP as an Asset piece, explaining this would come under a single strategy.
- 6.1.9. The Board noted the high Average Working Days Lost (AWDL) figures. Tim Moss explained that there was ongoing analysis and discussion at Brilliant Place to Work Committee. He noted the focus was on ensuring there was adequate support, improved reporting and a clear process for managers. The Board queried how the IPO compares with other organisations.

Action 1: Dominic Houlihan to provide the Steering Board with a note on how the IPO compares with other organisations with regards to AWDL.

- 6.1.10. The Board noted the reduction in patent search input. David Holdsworth explained that analysis was ongoing but this was difficult without full access to data from other organisations. He noted that one potential reason was the changes in search timeliness between the EPO and the IPO. David also highlighted that a large number of applications from one company in the previous year appears to have masked the decline, so it had not been noticed immediately.

6.1.11. Tim Moss noted the need to balance timeliness, cost, and quality, and highlighted that the analysis would help the IPO to understand customer behaviours and identify the organisation's unique selling point. He highlighted the complexity of the issues.

6.1.12. The Board advised that in addition to the IPO's current customers and their behaviour, analysis should take into account the potential customers and ensure they understand the value of IP. Tim noted this was at the core of the education and business support work. The Chair thanked the Executive for the report.

6.2. BEIS Update

6.2.1. David Rawlins gave an update on the current priorities for BEIS. He noted the 11 March Budget will give information on research and development spend and the impact on BEIS and agencies. David explained that the IPO Framework Document draft is with Treasury for review and should be ready for discussion at the next Steering Board meeting.

6.2.2. Tim Moss noted that he had been in discussion with BEIS colleagues on the role of the IPO and how we link into the wider innovation and creativity agenda.

6.3. Brexit Verbal Update

6.3.1. Adam Williams provided an update on the Brexit and Trade work for the period November 2019 to January 2020, and future plans for 2020 during the implementation period. He noted that from an operational perspective there would be no changes to IP rights on 31 January and said the IPO external website was being updated with clear messages. Adam explained the Brexit IT project board was meeting monthly to ensure they were ready to restart preparations for the end of the implementation period, 31 December 2020, including appropriate communications.

7. People Survey

7.1. Tim Moss introduced this item along with Aimee Symonds, Head of Internal Communications and Engagement, to take the Board through the high-level People Survey results for 2019. Tim explained the People Survey was the annual Civil Service staff survey that had taken place for over 10 years and noted the overall engagement score was based on five key questions. He highlighted that the IPO had gained an engagement score of 68 and maintained its position in the Civil Service High Performers, the top 25% of organisations who take part.

7.2. Tim noted that the Executive Board were glad the engagement score had been maintained but said the aspiration was to achieve 70+. He explained that the second level indicators showed areas of success and concern and noted that the Executive Board would have a discussion on the full results the following day to decide an action plan. He highlighted the key areas to work on were leadership and managing change, bullying and harassment, work objectives and performance management.

7.3. Aimee Symonds highlighted that the past year had been a transition period for performance management and at the time of the survey there was not an embedded system in place. She noted the need for more work to ensure managers have support to use the system.

7.4. The Board discussed the results. It noted that managing change appeared to be an area of challenge and agreed the importance of engaging well with the leadership group. The Board requested a breakdown by gender.

Action 2: Aimee Symonds to provide a breakdown of People Survey results by gender for the Steering Board.

7.5. The Board noted that maintaining the overall engagement score was a success to be celebrated and was a credit to the Executive Board. It noted the need for further analysis in some areas and expressed interest in hearing how this develops. Tim Moss thanked the Board and asked them to share any key learnings about engagement that they had experienced in other organisations.

8. Strategic

8.1. Transformation Programme Roadmap

- 8.1.1. David Holdsworth and Andy Bartlett presented the Transformation Programme Roadmap. David introduced the item and set the context, noting the decision taken to pause the programme in September 2019 after the issues that arose during the “Manage My” project. He said this gave the opportunity to undertake a “lessons learned” exercise and engage with the organisation to ensure understanding of why the transformation programme is taking place. David noted that this helped to identify the gaps in capability and capacity across the organisation, and thus the need to restructure the plan, with the result being the new Transformation Roadmap which built on the previous plan and articulated the journey in a different way.
- 8.1.2. Andy Bartlett took the Board through the roadmap, noting that the first six months was a mobilisation phase focusing on resourcing, communicating and engaging the organisation. Andy noted that the end point remained the same: a common platform with rationalised services. He highlighted the design principles underpinning the plan and noted that “building for the common case” would also be added as requested by the Executive Board.
- 8.1.3. The Chair asked the Board for comments and questions. The Board queried where there were capability gaps and how these would be addressed. David outlined some areas of concern and noted that a minimum capability requirement and priority posts had been identified with plans to use external contractors to fill gaps and help build capability over two to three years. David Rawlins highlighted the commercial capability within the wider BEIS family as potential sources to help.
- 8.1.4. The Board agreed the visual roadmap had great impact but suggested making the benefits to IPO people more obvious. Andy explained the plan to have specific versions for different areas of the office to highlight the benefits and changes in their areas. The Board highlighted the importance of celebrating successes.
- 8.1.5. The Board queried the governance processes; Andy explained there would be a formal gateway at the end of the mobilisation period with assessment by the Independent Project Authority. Tim Moss also noted that Audit and Risk Committee would have a role in assurance.

8.1.6. The Board noted that it was reassuring to see the plan and said the use of past experience and the robust approach to planning was greatly encouraging. It highlighted the need for a clear communication and engagement strategy and in particular the need to manage expectations regarding completion dates.

8.2. Board Development and Engagement – Show and Tell – Transformation Programmes

8.2.1. As a continuation of the Transformation Programme discussion, the Board each shared their experiences of transformation or change initiatives in other organisations and outlined key lessons learned that may be applicable to the IPO. The key points brought out were: the need for a clear vision statement; importance of design principles; engagement with the organisation including use of language, inclusiveness, and using junior grades during testing phases; focus on the customer and their expectation for interaction; caution over reliance on external resource.

8.2.2. The Chair thanked the Board for their input. Tim Moss noted that it was hugely valuable and thanked the Non-Executive Directors for sharing their experiences.

8.3. Corporate Plan 2020/21 Draft Plan and Ministerial Targets for Comment

8.3.1. Tim Moss and Mary-Anne Venables presented this item. Tim took the Board through the forecast income, expenditure and headcount data for 2020-21. The Board agreed it would be beneficial for Andrew Lawrence and Kevin Orford to review the detail using their accounting experience to gain assurance.

8.3.2. Mary-Anne then presented the strawman Corporate Plan noting that there was a lot of content still to add. The Board provided comments on the structure and presentation noting that it appeared logical, consistent and achievable. The Board recommended a section on sustainability and Tim explained this would be included once an upcoming environment report for the IPO had been received and digested.

8.3.3. The Board discussed the proposed Ministerial Targets and agreed that four felt like the right number. The Board noted that the wording of the Ministerial Targets needed to be tightened up. David Rawlins said BEIS were keen to be involved in the Ministerial Target setting and other key performance indicators. He noted he would brief the Director General ahead of her upcoming visit to the IPO.

8.3.4. Mary-Anne explained she would finish the draft and circulate it to the Board in mid-February for review.

Action 3: Mary-Anne Venables to circulate the draft Corporate Plan for comments in mid-February.

8.4. Forward Plans for NEDs: April “Stay Day” and Update Days

8.4.1. This item was not discussed due to time constraints. The Board were asked to send any comments in correspondence. The Chair noted his approval for the plans.

Action 4: Secretariat to circulate the Stay Day paper for comments.

8.5. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 2 April 2020