

## Minutes of OTS Board meeting 24 May 2021

(held online)

### Present

Kathryn Cearns (Chair)

John Cullinane

Judith Freedman

Matt Henty (for Beth Russell)

Bill Dodwell (Tax Director)

Kathleen Russ

Paul Aplin

Jon Sherman (for Ruth Stanier)

Teresa Graham (Observer)

### In attendance

David Halsey (OTS Head of Office), Bethan Kay (OTS), Mark Pickard (OTS), Hannah Smith (OTS), Sue Youngman (OTS), Stuart Gregory (HMT), Caroline Eele (HMRC)

#### 1. Minutes of previous meeting (15 March 2021)

These had been circulated prior to the meeting and were confirmed as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

#### 2. Register of interests and potential conflicts

An updated register of Board members' interests had been circulated. Kathryn Cearns reminded Board members to notify her, and David Halsey, of any changes.

There were no potential conflicts to declare.

#### 3. Tax Director's Report

Bill Dodwell spoke to his report.

There continued to be a range of external engagement, the OTS continuing to be open to presenting at events, including with advisory firms and their clients. Bill Dodwell had also had the opportunity to present at HMRC's tax strategy forum in relation to HMRC's work on the Single Customer Account and the Single Customer Record.

The second Capital Gains Tax Report had been published on 20 May, with some good coverage in the national press, following direct media engagement. The Board congratulated the Office on the report and the nature of the coverage achieved.

Bill Dodwell reported on staff movements, including two part-time appointments made following the recent round of recruitment activity - with the first of these due to take up duty in June, and on the Office's plans for easing into hybrid working over the next few months.

In recent months the staff team had benefitted from useful and informative visits from a number of Board members to team meetings, which had been much appreciated.

#### **4. Annual Report**

David Halsey spoke briefly to a draft of the Annual Report for 2020-21, which it was intended to publish in July as usual. Board members were content with the approach taken. A final draft would be circulated nearer the time.

#### **5. 2021 review**

Matt Henty reported that the Treasury's Call for Evidence in relation to the review had been published on 12 May, that work was progressing in relation to the advisory panel for the review, and that the lead Treasury reviewer would be arranging to meet Board members.

The Board then considered a first draft of the paper it was envisaged the OTS would publish to inform the review, which was commended for the way it set out the story, impact and dynamics of the OTS, to inform the reviewer and the wider tax profession and public.

The Board discussion touched on a number of ways it could be improved, including in relation to potential aspirations for the future of the OTS.

A further draft would be prepared and circulated for discussion.

#### **6. Third party data review**

Bill Dodwell introduced a draft of this report and outlined its key recommendations, noting that data from HMRC's KAI Directorate was being received and would be included.

Board members were very positive about the draft report. A later version, for final comments, would be circulated ahead of publication, which it was envisaged would be during June.

#### **7. Tax Year Date**

Bill Dodwell noted that this piece of work was of a different kind from many that the OTS had undertaken, and the collaboration with HMRC on it which was being developed.

In updating the Board on progress, he outlined the main taxes under consideration, an initial sense of the effects of a change to either 31 March or 31 December and the nature of the impacts to be taken into account.

A draft of the report would be circulated before the next Board meeting.

#### **8. Future work**

Bill Dodwell outlined some possible areas for work after the busy period between now and July, and the potential for a further Evaluation update paper on previous reviews.

Discussions with HM Treasury and HMRC would continue about these and other possibilities, ahead of further discussion with the Board.

#### **9. Administrative matters**

The Board received a report on meetings recently held by the OTS. The Head of Office updated the Board on staffing and finances.

#### **10. Any other business**

The Board noted the meeting dates for the remainder of 2021. It was hoped that the July meeting could be held on a hybrid basis.