
MINUTES

MINUTES of the meeting of the directors, held at Stanhill Court Hotel, Charlwood RH6 0EP on 8 September 2010 at 9.15am

Present	Chris Kelly	chairman
	Alan Cook	director
	John Howard	director
	Kate Lampard	director
	Julian Lee	director
	Maeve Sherlock	director
	Roger Sanders	director
In attendance	Natalie Ceeney	chief executive & chief ombudsman (CEO)
	Tony Boorman	decisions director
	Barbara Cheney	company secretary
	David Cresswell	director of communications & customer insight
	Stuart Curl	interim performance & finance director
	Simon Rouse	operations director
	David Thomas	corporate director
	Jacque Wiggett	HR director
Francesca Muller	strategy consultant (item 3)	

1/1009 Apology for absence

An apology for absence was received from Elaine Kempson.

2/1009 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2010

The minutes of the board meeting held on 21 July 2010 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3/1009 Strategy - 2020

The CEO introduced Francesca Muller, a strategist who had spent the summer considering strategies and views about the direction in which the Service might travel in the next ten years.

Francesca considered the possible characteristics of the world in 2020 from the perspective of public policy, technology, the financial services industry and consumers - in the context of dispute resolution. During a wide ranging discussion, a number of possible ombudsman models were considered against criteria such as the Service's values, feasibility, relevance, accessibility, public policy and fundability.

The board thanked Francesca for her work on this project and for facilitating an interesting discussion. It was agreed that this work would form a useful backdrop to ongoing strategic decision making.

4/1009 Regulatory reform and transparency

fos/10/09/05

The decisions director gave a presentation about transparency in respect of the policy environment, the way in which it had evolved at the Service and its correlation with impartiality and confidentiality. He went on to consider more disaggregated complaint data & better contextualisation, discussions with regulators about key risks and the publication of ombudsman decisions.

The board focussed its discussions on the implications of the publication of ombudsman decisions. It was noted that, as the government was currently consulting about the Financial Services & Markets Act, this was an opportune time to propose any relevant legislative changes. However, this would have to be done quickly as the period for consultation was coming to an end. Whilst the board was in favour of being proactive and further exploring the issues arising from the publication of decisions, it wanted to explore the implications of change in more detail before committing to a particular set of actions.

The board reaffirmed its commitment to transparency and agreed that the executive should give more detailed consideration to the implications of publishing ombudsman decisions.

Action The decisions director will develop this work and report back.

5/1009 Staffing model

fos/10/09/06

The HR director presented plans for a revised people strategy and model to meet the demands of a larger and more complex organisation. She explained that the new model for casehandling staff that she was developing was a professional-services based system. Progression would be based more explicitly on expertise, with a stronger focus on coaching and development of staff by experts at all levels (with ultimate professional leadership from the ombudsmen). The model was designed to provide better customer service, greater clarity about roles & career paths and aid retention of staff. It would allow staff to progress by a variety of technical and operational routes, and should help staff development.

In welcoming the introduction of this model, the board agreed that the time needed to achieve changes of this type should not be under-estimated.

6/1009 Vision and strategy – 2011/12 and beyond

fos/10/07/07

The communications director introduced a draft document, *our vision*. He explained that this was something new that was designed to proactively share with stakeholders the ambitions for the service, and to enable more detailed plans to be derived from this. He added that it would be used as a basis for discussions with stakeholders in the coming months. It was hoped it would help to address comments that had been in the past that the Service did not always engage with all of its stakeholders.

During a discussion, a number of comments were made about the style and messages in the document. However it was noted that some of the detailed plans were still being developed to explain how the vision would actually drive action within the service. There was also some discussion about how it might be viewed by some stakeholders, particularly in light of the timing of government FSMA changes. It was agreed that the executive would reconsider the style of the document in the light of comments made by the board.

The board also considered an annex to *our vision* which set out more specific plans that formed part of the vision, as the basis for starting to develop the service's 2011/12 plans. The board welcomed the proposals outlined, and were content that these should be costed and developed as part of 2011/12 future planning.

Action The executive will reconsider the *vision* document, particularly in terms of positioning and timing (led by the director of communications & insight)

The executive will continue to work up the plans detailed in the annex as part of the 2011/12 planning and budgeting cycle (led by the performance & finance director)

7/1009 Any other business

NAO review

The board discussed the timing of the forthcoming review by the National Audit Office.

Action The CEO will finalise the timetable for the review.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4.00pm