



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

Resources Committee minutes

31st May 2022 meeting, held via Microsoft Teams

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Present

Members

- Anthony McGeehan, Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Chair)
- Keith Dargie, Head of Business Services & Chief Digital Officer
- Graham Kerr, Head of Business Management (Local Court)
- Thomas Lindie, Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)
- Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Operational Support)
- Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services
- Doreen Crawford, Head of Workforce Planning and Reward
- Marlene Anderson, Director of Finance and Procurement
- Fiona McLean, Non-Executive Director

In attendance

- Ali Caddis, Secretariat

Apologies

- Sarah Carter, HR Director
- Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning

Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies.

Minutes from meeting held on 28th April 2022

The Committee confirmed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting.

Action Log

The Committee agreed the following regarding the Action Log and noted progress with the remaining actions

Action 013 – The DoFP confirmed budgets have been uploaded into the finance system and now on DEPM. When final journals are completed for May, functions will be asked to submit their forecasts.

Action 014 – The Chair confirmed that the additional post proposals have been presented to SET and the Executive Board but have not been approved in light of the current Resource Spending Review.

Finance Update 2021-22

The Chair provided background on the Finance update and the financial pressures faced not only by COPFS but more widely. Scottish Government have provided indicative allocations to each Government portfolio, and COPFS is a flat cash envelope for the years 2023-24 to 2026-27. The Chair advised that conversations have commenced with Scottish Government on the consequences of this indicative allocation to COPFS due to the real terms reduction of available budget. It is to be noted that although these funding envelopes have been provided for planning purposes, the final budget allocations will take place annually as normal. The budget process for 2023-24 will begin in the autumn with the budget possibly published in the winter.

The Director of Finance and Procurement (DoFP) provided an overview of the Finance Update paper for the financial outturn for the annual accounts for 2021/22 and noted an underspend as major case legal expenses have been lower than expected. This is subject to further analysis and audit adjustments but DoFP anticipates reporting an underspend in due course.

Resource Spending Review (RSR)

DoFP provided an overview of the Resource Spending Review (RSR) and noted the current staffing budget deficit due to pay parity and the increase in National Insurance that COPFS was required to absorb within the budget allocation. The DoFP also indicated that future pay policy will also require to be absorbed. In relation to overtime, additional overtime will require to be carefully considered until we return to a balanced budget. The DoFP stated although this was a challenging picture, COPFS are known for managing their budget and a continued corporate approach by all will assist..

A discussion took place on the detail of the RSR. The HoBS/CDO confirmed detailed modelling will take place over the coming months and will be used for actual budget discussions with Scottish Government and, if required, used as mechanism for decisions on organisational priorities. HoBS/CDO further noted the additional capital investment provided in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to transform systems such as the next generation case management systems.

The Chair confirmed that budgetary planning for future years has begun including modelling staffing scenarios, however reminded that the RSR is an indicative settlement for planning purposes only. The Chair further confirmed there was no proposal to pause current recruitment. However, consistent with current best practice, there is a need to assess the need to fill particular vacancies against wider business demands and priorities. This assessment will be conducted by the Workforce Planning Group (WPG). WPG will have checkpoints for assessing staffing priorities and affordability throughout the year.

The Non-Executive Director (NXD) raised the need to consider the communications to staff. The Chair confirmed that this need had been recognised and that a message providing some reassurance would be published today via Connect.

HR Update

The Head of Workforce Planning and Reward (HoWPR) provided an overview of the HR update paper and confirmed that staff in post continues to increase due to ongoing recruitment with 27 new entrants in May and 87 pre-recruitment checks being undertaken, reducing the vacancy factor. The HoWPR noted that turn-over is relatively low compared to the wider market. Absences have returned to pre-covid levels and continues to be monitored. In relation to overtime, HoWPR stated there was a marked decrease in overtime from March 2021 to March 2022 and will confirm the figures for April.

DoFP observed that due to the increased level of staffing in COPFS it was expected the requirement for overtime would reduce.

The absence figures were raised in relation to individual functions. HoWPR confirmed absence data will be provided to assist functions.

Estates Update

DoSS summarised the financial position in relation to Estates paper and confirmed the last financial year closed on budget and half of this financial year's capital spend has been allocated across various estate projects. A RAG rated report will be provided as the year develops and will highlight where projects are on or off track financially.

Two key points on the project portfolio highlighted by DoSS are the Edinburgh Estates and Glasgow Ballater Street.

In relation to the Edinburgh Justice Campus, DoSS confirmed the business case has been forwarded to Scottish Government, with phase 1 proceeding. It was noted that Phase 1 does not affect COPFS and relates to a sale of an asset. Regarding Phase 2, which relates to COPFS, where we will vacate Edinburgh Sheriff Court, update Crown Office, and procure a satellite site, Scottish Government have advised that no

substantial work should be undertaken at this time. at present. It is anticipated that work on the design and specification can continue. A communication will be issued in due course to staff within Edinburgh and thereafter to the wider COPFS staff. DoSS confirmed that SET will be updated.

Work continues on the business case for Glasgow Ballater Street and it is anticipated this will be available within the next few weeks to be reviewed formally by Resources Committee and SET. DoSS further advised that he and DoFP are considering commercial options for Ballater Street. DoSS confirmed Resources Committee will be provided with further details prior to any decisions being made.

DoSS thereafter provided information on the Risk Register and Energy Report and noted the figures are distorted due to the pandemic and will have a truer picture as business as usual continues. DoSS further noted the green initiatives ongoing for parts of the estate and the bids made to Scottish Government for our carbon reduction projects in Elgin and Falkirk. DoSS confirmed when the pilots are finalised further bids will be put to Scottish Government to reduce our carbon footprint.

Function Procurement Report

The Head of Business Management (Local Court) (HoBM (LC)) provided an overview of the Function Procurement Report and thanked colleagues in procurement and the organisation for the positive report, highlighting the cash and non-cash savings made to date demonstrating the value of professional procurement.

The Chair formally recorded his thanks to the Central Procurement Team.

Any Other Business (AOB)

No AoB noted

Date of the next meeting: 30 June 2022