



CROWN OFFICE
& PROCURATOR
FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

Resources committee minutes

30 June 2021 meeting, held via Microsoft Teams

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Present

Members

- Lindsey Miller, Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Chair)
- Ian Walford, Deputy Chief Executive
- Graham Kerr, Head of Business Management (Local Court)
- Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services
- John Cooper, Non-Executive Director
- Marlene Anderson, (Interim) Director of Finance and Procurement
- Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning
- Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Business Services)
- Ralph Riach, Assistant Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)

In attendance

- Richard Brown, Legal Assistant to the Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Secretariat)

Apologies

- Trevor Davidson, Secretariat
- Sarah Carter, HR Director

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting was being conducted via MS Teams due to the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Minutes from meeting held on 26 May 2021

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

The Deputy Crown Agent (DCA) highlighted to the Committee that a Freedom of Information request had been submitted seeking papers for the Executive Board in relation to resources and funding and that the final response to that FOI request would be shared with this Committee.

Action Log

The Committee agreed the following amendments to the Action Log and noted progress with the remaining actions.

Actions 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 would be continued. A verbal update would be provided in respect of Action 3 and Action 7 would be dealt with under AOB.

Finance Update

The Director of Finance and Procurement (DoFP) provided a high-level overview of the finance paper.

The DoFP provided a brief update on the annual accounts, forecasting a total overspend of £3 million. The DoFP confirmed she was due to speak to the Finance Business Partner at the Scottish Government (SG) this week in respect of the authorisation of the overspend, though the SG were already aware of this.

DoFP informed the Committee that the information had now been provided regarding senior staff pensions and that it would be incorporated into the accounts in order for them to then be finalised.

The DoFP provided an overview of the Finance update for 2021-22 noting that the first forecast is now in with a predicted overspend. The DoFP highlighted that staffing forecasts would need to be looked at in detail in order to ensure that no double counting took place.

The DoFP noted that the Service was pressing ahead with recruitment and that HR have now applied pay coherence and the new pay policy to June salaries, noting that pay coherence will be allocated on a real cost basis and a full update would be provided at the next meeting.

Risks were noted regarding the overtime budget, licenses and toxicology but also that (whilst difficult to predict) there should be a saving from lower witness costs, due to reduced court capacity.

The DoFP provided an update on Spending Review 2021, noting that the SG had asked for a 5-year high level forecast which had been duly submitted. It was also highlighted that any cuts to the COPFS budget would impact on the ability to meet public expectations. Discussions regarding this will be in earnest over the next few months.

Court recovery paper

The Head of Management Accounting and Planning (HoMAP) provided an overview of the Court Recovery Paper.

The HoMAP informed the Committee of the costs currently identified as part of the Court Recovery Programme and highlighted the need to distinguish between core and additional posts. The HoMAP also explained the methodology used to calculate these costs.

The HoMAP noted that the staffing costs had been calculated after the pay coherence had been applied so this would not present an additional source of pressure.

The Committee discussed the Court Recovery Budget including the risks and uncertainties presented by the situation.

Toxicology Update

The DCA provided the Committee with a verbal update and advised the Committee that a contract has now been signed with Glasgow University to extend their services until 30 November 2022 and that a new provider would undertake service provision from 1 December 2022. The DCA informed the Committee that there will likely be equipment that will need to be replaced before the end of the contract with GU but it is likely that the new provider will bear these costs as part of the transition (as the equipment can transfer with the staff) and it is not anticipated that this will impact on the COPFS budget.

Any Other Business – Glasgow Estate

The Head of Business Management (Local Court (HoBM)) introduced the paper in respect of the Ballater Street and Legal House accommodation proposals.

The HoBM informed the Committee that after conducting in-depth focus groups with staff the proposal is to modify the current strategy of moving all staff into Ballater Street and have no footprint in Legal House to retaining some space within Legal House to house ISD.

The option proposed by the HoBM was to retain the entire second floor of Legal House which would allow the designing of a work environment that accords with the Future Ways of Working Programme and the wishes of staff. The HoBM noted that this would cost £100K and would involve a 5-year lease with the option to break after 2 years.

The Committee discussed the proposal and considered the risks involved and concluded that they were content to approve this proposal with the additional cost to be recovered through corporate savings.

Any Other Business – COP26

The DCA informed the Committee that there was the potential for extra funding to be supplied by central government in order to cover costs associated with COP26 in November 2021 and that a paper would be presented to the Committee if significant costs are identified.

Date of the next meeting: 29 July 2021