

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2020  
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE**

**Present:**

**Members**

John Logue	Deputy Crown Agent (Operational Support) (Chair)
Ian Walford	Deputy Chief Executive
Graham Kerr	Head of Business Management (Local Court)
Bill Comrie	Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)
John Cooper	Non-Executive Director
Mark Howells	Director of Finance and Procurement
Douglas Taylor	Head of Management Accounting and Planning
Marlene Anderson	Head of Finance
Doreen Crawford	Head of Workforce Planning & Reward

**In attendance**

Kathy Brown	Secretariat
Colette Weir	Secretariat

**Apologies**

Sarah Carter	HR Director
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**Welcome**

1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting which, due to the current Coronavirus outbreak, was conducted via tele-conference.

**2. Minutes from meeting held on 27 March 2020**

3. Head of Workforce Planning and Award had previously circulated the minutes to the Committee to obtain clarification with regards to Excess Fares. The Committee discussed and agreed from 1 April 2020 COPFS would pay Tax and National Insurance for all relevant moves and retrospective payments only be made to staff that had moved due to a compulsory or managed move.

4. Paragraph 20 should be amended to read COVID-19.

5. Head of Business Management (Local Court) advised they had recently recruited a Chartered Surveyor and Paragraph 25 should be changed to reflect this

**Action: Paragraphs 6 & 7 to be amended with regards to Excess Fares.**

**Action: Paragraphs 20 and 25 to be amended.**

## Action Log

6. The Committee agreed the following amendments to the Action Log:

**Actions: 1, 3 and 4 to be closed as they had been overtaken by recent events.**

**Actions: Deputy Chief Executive to discuss and review Action 1 with Chief Digital Officer. Secretariat to add item to Year Planner for meeting in 6 months.**

**Actions: 7, 8, 9 & 10 to be closed and removed from Action Log.**

The Committee noted progress with the remaining actions.

## HR MI Update

7. HR presented an updated Staff Report showing MI as at 31 March 2020. Head of Workforce Planning & Reward (HWPR) advised so far 32 new staff have started with COPFS in April 2020 with 13 more expected to complete their employment checks over the next month. Average turnover of staff between 1 April 2019 and 30 March 2020 was 5.7%. A limited numbers of leavers are predicted in April.

8. Staff absence in March had increased slightly and HR predicted that April sickness absence (non-Covid 19) figures were 1/3<sup>rd</sup> lower at the moment. This could be due to number of staff currently on special leave or working from home during the Covid-19 crisis who may otherwise have reported sick absences. HR will provide clear figures at the May meeting.

9. It was noted that just over 19.5% of all staff are over 55 and approximately one in three staff over 50, which may have longer term resource implications. The average age of retirees during the first quarter of 2020 was 62.

10. The Chair pointed out we were reaching the 2 year point to report on the gender pay scale gap. HWPR will look at this when finalising the pay award and send out an email with the findings.

**Actions: Following implementation of the pay award HR to obtain up to date figures on the gender pay scale gap and email Committee.**

## Finance Update

### 2019/20 Budget Position

11. Director of Finance and Procurement (DFP) advised the Committee of the indicative outturn for 2019-20 based on budget forecasts provided by the functions and before final year-end and any audit adjustments have been made. An overspend of £1.75m for Running costs and Non-cash expenditure (depreciation) has been indicated along with an underspend of c£2.8m for Capital.

12. COPFS received assurance from Scottish Government on 3 April 2020 acknowledging the overspend on Running costs and allowing it to be compensated for at SG (consolidated) level by the Capital underspend.

13. The Committee noted a need for improved budget monitoring in 2020/21 and beyond.

### **2020/21 Budget**

14. DFP updated the Committee on the progress made to date with budget planning for 2020-21. The final Spending review allocation for COPFS Running Costs is £124.9m with a further £3.2m promised in-year. In addition £4.3m of Capital had been allocated.

15. The recommended way forward given the uncertainty that COVID-19 outbreak has created is to delay setting a budget at Function level until at least the end of May.

16. Given the uncertainty around the £3.2m in-year funding and the possibility that the budget as a whole may be re-opened, the Committee were asked to agree this approach and to consider the need for contingency planning.

17. A full budget, risk and workforce plan review will be carried out once there is more clarity about the timing and nature of the COVID-19 recovery phase.

18. After lengthy discussions the Committee agreed to this approach and taking the following actions:

- No new posts should be created for the time being other than in exceptional circumstances and summer casuals should not be recruited;
- Business cases to fill existing vacancies, replace leavers and to change the structure of posts in a way which increases cost should only be approved in exceptional circumstances;
- A decision about increasing trainee pay should be deferred, and not implemented until October 2020 at the earliest;
- Funding should be sought from the SG as soon as possible to cover the costs of the Lockerbie appeal.
- Budgets should not be allocated to Functions before the end of May, with the position being reviewed by the Resources Committee at that point.

19. The Head of Business Management (Serious Casework) expressed concern regarding the difficulty around filling posts only under exceptional circumstances given that COPFS had secured funding for additional posts in 2020-21. He expressed concern that the position now being proposed is significantly different to that previously announced to staff and highlighted the importance of ensuring that the reason for any change and its impact is carefully communicated to staff.

### **Finance Strategy Update**

20. The Committee was presented with an amended version of the Interim Finance Strategy which reflected the comments made at the previous Resource Committee meeting and the very significant impact that the COVID-19 outbreak

will have. The Committee approved the Strategy and asked DFP to formalise the document.

**Action: DFP to formalise COPFS Finance Strategy.**

**Procurement Update**

21. DFP presented the Committee with a Procurement update. He advised that there had been the usual seasonal peak of activity in February and March, particularly in IT. He advised that:

Ruth Wildgoose had been recruited as a permanent Procurement Business Partner for IT to replace Adrian Williamson who was employed as a Contractor;

Graham Kerr had agreed to take over as Chair of the Procurement Steering Board (PSB) to ensure that the Board is customer focused and driven;

Colette Weir has established herself as the operational team leader helping the 2 trainees to develop;

Katherine Brown has now passed her CIPS level 4;

Following approval from the PSB, COPFS have retained the shared service provided by the Scottish Government;

The issues with Off Contract Expenditure and Contract Management remain open having both a Financial and Business impact. The Committee agreed to discuss this in more detail at the next Procurement Update in June.

**AOB**

22. The Chair suggested that next month's meeting be held via Microsoft Teams. This was agreed by the Committee. No other business was raised.

**Date of next meeting: 27th May 2020**