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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2018

CONFERENCE ROOM, SCOTTISH CRIME CAMPUS

Present: (Chair)	David Harvie John Logue Lindsey Miller Ruth McQuaid Ian Walford John Cooper Fiona McLean Lesslie Young Rob Tinlin	Crown Agent Deputy Crown Agent, Operational Support Deputy Crown Agent, Serious Casework Procurator Fiscal, Local Court Deputy Chief Executive Non-executive director Non-executive director Non-executive director Non-executive director
In attendance:	Liam Murphy Andrew Laing Robert Green Mairi Boyle	Procurator Fiscal, Specialist Casework Asst Procurator Fiscal, Specialist Casework Business Manager, Specialist Casework Legal Assistant to Crown Agent

Agenda Item 1 - Welcome

1. The Crown Agent opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Crime Campus.
2. Members confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

Agenda Items 2 - Minutes of Previous Meeting, Matters Arising / Updates

3. The minutes of 9 May 2018 were agreed and can be published. There were no outstanding actions from this meeting.

Agenda Items 3 – Finance update 17/18

4. It was noted that there were no substantial developments. The budget had been finalised with a small underspend. The Audit and Risk Committee have examined the budget and identified no difficulties. The budget will be signed off in July. JC noted that the budget had been passed whilst a Strategic Plan is in development.
5. FML asked about pathology costs (7%). DCA Serious Casework spoke of the scope and challenges of pathology work and the establishment of a project board which is working towards improving governance around how pathology services are delivered in Scotland. It is hoped that this will result in some efficiencies but pathology will remain a considerable part of the COPFS budget.

Action: DCA Serious Casework to invite NXDs to attend the project board and a mortuary visit.

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6. There was some discussion of the effect on the budget of in-year changes caused by changes in the profile of COPFS's work.

Agenda Item 4 – Finance outlook 2018-19

7. The Crown Agent turned to the present financial year. Discussions with the trades unions about the pay settlement continue and there is dialogue with Scottish Government about pay policy and the implications of this for COPFS.
8. The Crown Agent explained the different aspects of the COPFS funding challenges including funding requirements associated with legislative change. There is engagement with Scottish Government colleagues about these challenges.

Agenda Item 5 – Operational Support update

9. DCA Operational Support highlighted some examples from his paper illustrative of the variety, complexity and quantity of work dealt with by Policy and Engagement. This includes dealing with the impact of the repeal of legislation that provides for criminal offences and sanctions; and the implementation of legislation and policy about victims and witnesses. It was noted that the Inspectorate of Prosecution in Scotland had reported positively about COPFS adoption of a victim right to review framework though had made challenging recommendations about the extension of the review scheme.
10. There was discussion about the purpose and impact of the ongoing prosecution policy review which is outcome-focused and encouraging of prosecutorial decision-making at the appropriate level. One effect of the review is a reduction in the caseload in court and we continue to engage with SCTS about how this can be reflected in the court programme.
11. Provision of psychiatric reports and efforts to obtain reports timeously was discussed briefly.
12. The DCE outlined the main priorities for Business Services. These priorities are being shaped by consultation as part of the Fair Futures project. Priorities include career development and recruitment across the specialisms and a fresh approach to internal communications which will be headed by a new member of staff.

Agenda Item 6 – Local Court update

13. The Procurator Fiscal Local Court spoke about staffing challenges and the impact of the transfer of legal staff from NICP to High Court duties. There was brief examination of management information and staffing for NICP particularly initial decision-making. This led into consideration of how legal staff are deployed, discussions with Scottish Government about funding, and the scope of COPFS work. There was a wider discussion about resource reallocation as previously agreed by the Board in response to the in-year changing profile of the business and the COPFS resource requirement more broadly. The Crown Agent noted that, despite budgetary restrictions, we have maintained staffing at a high level
Action: The Crown Agent asked for clarification and an update on progress of the resource reallocation.

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14. RT enquired about progress in relation to adapting the court programme to reflect the changing profile of Local court business. The Crown Agent highlighted the update at paragraph 14 of the Local Court report. Some progress has been made. We have continued to engage with SCTS about our issues which vary across the country.
15. There was an update on Equalities work including monitoring police decision-making about the types of reports submitted, and mentoring involving LGBT staff which is hoped will be extended to staff with other protected characteristics.
Action: Procurator Fiscal Local Court to invite NXDs to the staff equality conference on 22 August and to the Stonewall conference in November.
16. In terms of outreach projects the COPFS schools public speaking competition had been successful and had had a positive response.

Agenda Item 7 – Serious Casework update

17. DCA Serious Casework highlighted key points from the paper by the Procurator Fiscal, High Court. In terms of resources, the resource transfer to date has been a zero sum balance exercise as a result of maternity leave and resignations. This has had an impact on the progress that had been anticipated. There was discussion about the various ways in which serious casework was being monitored and reviewed including feedback from DPCC from preliminary hearings, change in policy in relation to the initiation of proceedings in serious sexual offence cases and the reconvening of the Disclosure Reference Group. Lessons have been learned from experience of dealing with the largest and most complex cases.
18. The Procurator Fiscal, Specialist Casework spoke about the work of the teams based at the Crime Campus, the ethos of the campus and the benefits of collaborative working between agencies there.

Agenda Item 8 – Balanced scorecard and absence figures

19. It was noted that there had been a slight rise in sickness absence figures and this was being addressed by focussing on the importance of attendance management. We continue to deal well with complaints, FOI requests and similar.
Action: Deputy Crown Agent Operational Support is working on alternative formats for presentation of this information to the Board.

Agenda Item 9 – Audit and Risk update

20. RT reported on the last meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. There are no issues from the auditors about the draft accounts and the focus is now on internal audit and KPI report. The audit action tracker is being made smarter to enable better monitoring of achievement. The Risk Management Group are revising the risk register and work is underway to look at the roles of RMG and ARC to avoid duplication.

Agenda Item 10 – Case Management in Court

21. This project is progressing well. The corporate app is working in Livingston and being developed based on feedback. By the end of August 5 more offices will have CMiC

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and wifi, using the same provider as SCTS, is being installed across COPFS to facilitate this.

Action: A report on the feasibility of rolling out CMiC to Sheriff & Jury work will be presented at the next Board.

Agenda Item 11 – AOB – ongoing litigation

22. Mairi Boyle gave an update to the NXDs on the background to a recent court hearing, the matters considered by the court, and timescales for future procedure and decision-making.

Action: Crown Agent to ensure that NXDs not present at the Board receive a similar update.

**Crown Agent's Office
June 2018**