



Resources committee minutes

30 November 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)
- Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Operational Support)
- Marlene Anderson, (Interim) Director of Finance and Procurement
- Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services
- Sarah Carter, HR Director
- Doreen Crawford, Head of Workforce Planning and Reward
- Gavin Anderson, Deputy Head of Business Management & Pathology Programme Manager
- John Cooper, Non-Executive Director

In attendance

- Trevor Davidson, Secretariat

Apologies

- Thomas Lindie, Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)
- Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and passed on the apologies from the Committee members who couldn't attend. The meeting was being conducted via MS Teams due to the current Coronavirus outbreak.

Minutes from meeting held on 30 September 2021

The Committee confirmed that the minutes were an accurate reflection of the meeting. No meeting was held on 28 October 2021.

Action Log

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

Items 1,3, and 5 were closed.

Finance Update

The (Interim) Director of Finance and Procurement (DoFP) provided an overview of the Finance update for 2021-22 noting that the forecast provided showed an underspend of £1m on resource excluding IONA.

Risks and uncertainties for 2021-22 were highlighted, which included the above underspend due to the difficulties in recruiting some positions. COP26 took place this month, and COPFS are expected to absorb any additional costs into the core budget. HoBMs, HR and Finance will continue to work together to control expenditure.

DoFP discussed the current position on overtime and forecasted an overspend due to additional court sittings being held on public holidays, however overtime is being closely managed by HoBMs.

DoFP ran through the additional information for the preparation of the 2021 Spending review, in advance of the bilateral meetings. Information has been provided to the Crown Agent and Lord Advocate to aid discussions, but there is no guarantee on the results of the meeting.

HR Update

Head of Workforce Planning and Reward (HoWPR) ran through the figures in the HR Staffing report. The staffing levels have seen a significant increase, and the HR Team are continuing to recruit toward the optimum level of approximately FTE 2,318.

Absences have shown an increase, however this is due to the unnaturally low absences figures reported during the first year of COVID. It was also discussed that smaller units can show a high level of absence when they had a small number of long term absences.

It was recognised that COPFS had a healthy number of transfers to Other Government Departments which HR would continue to monitor.

The Committee were happy with the format of the staffing report which read well and the next report has been scheduled for February's meeting.

The HR Director (HRD) continued with the papers for the 'Dying to Work Charter' and the 'carers policy', which were closely linked.

The HRD advised that COPFS were already follow the majority of the guidance laid out in the Dying to Work Charter. By signing up to the charter, COPFS would be formalising the contents into policies, which in turn would make the details clearer for staff.

COPFS could become one of the first Scottish Government Departments to sign up, and would join a number of local councils and the NHS who have already committed to the charter.

The HRD also presented the Carers Policy, which followed the model from Scottish Courts, and provided further clarity on the Special Leave policy which is already in place. The Carers Policy would allow COPFS to review the use of Special Leave rather than staff potentially using sick leave to care for terminally ill dependants.

[ACTION] The Committee were supportive of the papers but requested that the full Dying to Work Charter was circulated to the members. The Committee asked that for finer details, so it was clear how colleagues would trigger the process (Diagnosis/Definitions) and any limitations within the policies.

[ACTION] The Committee requested HRD to supply potential costs for the Carers policy.

[ACTION] It was also requested that Corporate Comms were involved to review the title of the Dying to Work Charter, as the Committee felt that the title could take away from the impact of what COPFS were trying to achieve.

Vehicle fleet review

The Director of Support Services (DSS) provided an update on COPFS's vehicle fleet.

COPFS have started the process to have a greener fleet, with 6 fossil fuel vehicles being replaced with electric ones.

COPFS have received funding from Scottish Government to install electric vehicle charging stations at a number of COPFS office locations.

SG advised that they will not longer be supplying a free service to look after our fleet. DSS advised that two options are currently being investigated. The first option is to employ two members of staff to replace the service currently received from SG. DSS is also in dialog with Scottish Courts to investigate if they would be able to offer a shared service similar to our current support. DSS will ensure that Scottish Courts are aware of the expectations and will not the burden to COPFS.

DSS is awaiting the outcome from the budget to identify any future changes to the fleet.

COPFS Legal Trainee Programme

Due to a rescheduled meeting, this item was postponed until the Resources Committee meeting on 27th January

Corporate Risk register

The Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) provided a high-level summary of the Corporate Risk Register, which was shared with the members in advance. No questions or concerns were raised to the Committee.

Updates on function workforce business plans for 2021/22

Due to a rescheduled meeting, this item was postponed until the Resources Committee meeting on 27th January

Estates Delivery update

The Director of Support Services (DSS) provided a verbal update on the Estates Delivery. Currently, the DSS is awaiting the number of staff expected to be allocated to each office due to Court Recovery, as the final figures may affect the office layouts moving forward.

A paper will be presented in January/February's Resources Committee regarding the funding of the Glasgow refurbishment.

The Edinburgh project has moved out of neutral, with the first meeting planned for mid-December, which will review the business case and requirements.

Any Other Business (AOB)

The Chair thanked both John Cooper (Non-Executive Director) and Trevor Davidson (Secretariat) for their input during their tenure on the Committee. Their replacements will be joining in the January meeting.

Date of the next meeting: 13 January 2022