

Executive Board meeting minutes

Meeting held on 12 May 2021 by Microsoft Teams

Present:

David Harvie (Chair)	Crown Agent
Lindsey Miller	Deputy Crown Agent, Operational Support
Stephen McGowan	Deputy Crown Agent, Specialist Casework
Ian Walford	Deputy Chief Executive
John Cooper	Non-executive director
Annie Gunner Logan	Non-executive director
Fiona McLean	Non-executive director
Rob Tinlin	Non-executive director

In attendance:

Ruth McQuaid	Procurator Fiscal, Local Court West Scotland
Marlene Anderson (Item 3)	Head of Finance
Jonathan Shebioba (Item 4)	Director of Support Services
Andrew Laing (Item 4)	Deputy Procurator Fiscal
Melanie Ward (Item 5)	Head of Response & Information Unit
Mairi Boyle	Legal Assistant to Crown Agent
Ann Marie Henderson	Personal Assistant to Crown Agent (Secretariat)

Apologies:

John Logue Deputy Crown Agent, Local Court

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

1. The Crown Agent opened the meeting and welcomed all colleagues, including Ruth McQuaid who was attending to cover Local Court on behalf of John Logue. Apologies were tendered from John Logue.

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of previous meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 were approved and can be published. Members confirmed there were no conflicts of interest.

Agenda Item 3 - Finance Update

Annual Accounts

3. The Head of Finance introduced paper EB21/22(01).
4. The Board noted the update provided on the 2020/21 Annual Accounts.
5. The Board noted an underspend on core budget (check this wording with Marlene) of around £300K. The Board noted that the overspend arising from Iona is being underwritten by the Scottish Government, which authorised expenditure will be reflected in the annual accounts.

Finance Update 2021/22

6. The budget allocations were finalised as agreed at the March Board meeting. Both tables in the paper have been updated to reflect this. Anticipated pressures are likely to focus on non-staffing expenditure. Any additional funding requests are to be considered by the Resources Committee.
7. The Board noted that the overtime budget has been reduced in line with staff increases. The budget may be put under pressure due to public holiday court cover but contingency arrangements are in place.

Action

To monitor and manage use of overtime budget given increased staffing capacity (DCA Operational Support/DCE)

8. Other areas of possible cost pressure include ISD licensing and maintenance costs, post mortems and toxicology, witness costs and accommodation costs. The Board noted anticipated higher risk around toxicology in the next FY given issue of service provision and the work ongoing to mitigate the risk.

Finance Strategy

9. Head of Finance introduced paper EB21/22(02).
10. The Board approved the finance strategy.
11. The Board agreed the need for an annual business plan.

Action

DCE and DCA Operational to progress.

Agenda Item 4 - Court and Office Recovery Planning

12. Director of Business Support and Deputy Procurator Fiscal introduced paper EB21/22(03).
13. The Board noted the update provided on the approach to recovery planning, including key planning assumptions, recovery road map, arrangements for managing and monitoring progress and the communications plan which will take into account wellbeing issues as staff return to the workplace. The Board noted ongoing work on a number of practical issues including multi-accused and organised crime trials.
14. The Board approved the recovery planning approach and the approach to the associated transition to Future Ways of Working (FWOW), including the move to the permanent extension of the flexi bandwidths, noting that business need remains the core priority and that emphasis must be reflected in the associated guidance .

Agenda Item 5 - Revised Complaints Handling Procedure

15. DCA Operational Support introduced paper EB21/22(04) and welcomed Head of Response and Information to update the Board on this paper. The Board heard how the Procedure had been created and adapted from the SPSO model including the decision that we should not at present offer mediation. The Board approved the revised procedure.

Action

DCA Operational Support, Director of Business Support and Head of Response and Information to explore the question of mediation further and report back to the Board.

Action

Head of Response and Information to sight SPSO on the approved revised procedure.

16. There was discussion about the need to monitor and have further assurance that lessons learned were implemented. It was agreed that OPC should lead. The Board noted that work is ongoing to better capture and reflect compliments and positive feedback.

Agenda Item 6 - Function Updates – Operational Support

17. DCA Operational Support introduced paper EB21/22.
18. DCA Operational Support updated the Board on discussions that were taking place with Scottish Government about which Covid legislation provisions we would like to retain.

“Releasable under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 after the next meeting”

19. The Board were also provided with an update on the current demands on Enquiry Point.

Agenda Item 7 - Function Updates – Local Court

20. Procurator Fiscal, Local Court introduced paper EB21/22(05) and provided the Board with an update on current performance and progress across Local Court, highlighting the need to enhance performance and accountability given our increased staffing capacity, and work with Police Scotland on quality issues.

Agenda Item 8 - Function Updates – Serious Casework

21. DCA Serious Casework introduced paper EB21/22(07).
22. The Board noted the update provided in the paper.

Agenda Item 9 - Committee Updates – Resources

23. The minutes of the Resources Committee meeting were noted.

Agenda Item 10 - Committee Updates – Operational Performance

24. DCA Serious Casework introduced paper EB21/22(09).
25. The Board noted the update provided in the paper.

Agenda Item 11 - Strategies Update

26. DCE advised the Board that the People Strategy, Learning & Development Strategy, and the Estates Strategy would be circulated for comment by correspondence.

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