



CROWN OFFICE  
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FISCAL SERVICE

SCOTLAND'S PROSECUTION SERVICE

## Resources committee minutes

### **31 August 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
- Elaine Hales, Head of Business Management (Business Services)
- Thomas Lindie, Head of Business Management (Serious Casework)
- Jonathan Shebioba, Director of Support Services
- John Cooper, Non-Executive Director
- Sarah Carter, HR Director
- Sharon Davies, Head of Management Accounting and Planning
- Janie Patterson, Deputy Head of Business Management

### In attendance

- Trevor Davidson, Secretariat

### Apologies

- Graham Kerr, Head of Business Management (Local Court)
- Doreen Crawford, Head of Workforce Planning and Reward
- Marlene Anderson, (Interim) Director of Finance and Procurement

## 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 29 July 2021

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

## Action Log

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

Head of Management Accounting and Planning (HoMAP) confirmed that they spoke with the Pathology Programme Senior Business Manager regarding budgets and extended the deadline to Octobers Resources Committee meeting. Action 6 was closed

## Finance Update

HoMAP advised that the audit of 2020/21's accounts are now complete except for the final litigation provisions

HoMAP provided an overview of the Finance update for 2021-22 noting that the forecast provided showed an overspend which was accounted for.

Risks and uncertainties for 2021-22's were highlighted. COPFS will monitor the costs for COP26 to confirm if any additional costs could be absorbed and highlighted overtime as a concern due to the current and projected overspend. Overall, the Heads of Business Management (HoBMs), Finance and HR will continue to work together to monitor all expenditure and savings can be identified.

HoMAP covered the cost split for the Court Recovery Programme, and highlighted that full funding would be required for the 2022/23 financial year to meet the target of FTE 2,319 (Excluding Advocate Deputes)

HoMAP shared the updated draft medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which was shortened to make the document more user friendly. The document is still being reviewed, but the Committee agreed that the document was more succinct.

**[ACTION]** MTFP to provide more clarity on the definition of short / medium / long term

**[ACTION]** MTFP should draw more attention to the green / environmental savings and improvements being made by COPFS.

## Staffing vacancies – Risk analysis and mitigation measures

Head of Business Management (Business Services) (HoBMBS) provided an overview of the paper, which was supported by the other Heads of Business Managers and highlighted the current concerns of the business regarding the recruitment campaigns.

The Committee had a full and in-depth conversation on the paper which included

- Delays in recruitment
- Experience levels, especially with an influx of new staff
- How to increase the number of applicants
- Areas of concern – ISD / legal staff
- Increasing the number of Trainee Solicitors
- Attracting candidates – Future ways of working / Agile working initiatives

**[ACTION]** The Deputy Chief Executive, advised that they would take away action points to the Workforce Planning Group, to look at priorities and how this group could support the current issues.

COPFS expect to become more competitive with legal positions as the pay parity programme is implemented for these grades. ISD remains a concern as COPFS cannot compete with the salaries paid in the private sector.

The Committee agreed to look at increasing the number of Trainee Solicitors but noted that this option would take time to increase the number of qualified legal staff, will carry a burden on other staff/departments. The Deputy Crown Agent (DCA) requested more work to be carried out before agreeing to increase the number of trainees.

There was a consensus that COPFS should not engage with recruitment agencies, as COPFS has a high level of knowledge and understanding of the civil service / legal recruitment market.

**[ACTION]** DCA recommended that COPFS compares jobs / pay grades with Scottish Government and other Government Departments to ensure COPFS remains competitive.

After further detailed discussions and in addition to the above action items, the Committee agreed to prioritise the recruitment of staff, and continue to be flexible in their approach to recruitment to fill the identified positions. The Committee would also work in conjunction with the Workforce Planning Group.

## Estates Strategy Delivery update

Director of Support Services (DoSS) provided a high level update on the Estates paper.

The Ayr/Kilmarnock project is 95% complete. The Edinburgh and Glasgow refurbishment projects are currently on hold. The initial project plans did not allow for the forecasted expansion of staff shown in the Finance section, so the pause provides an opportunity to revisit the numbers expected to be accommodated in these buildings.

## **Any Other Business (AOB)**

HoMAP highlighted that COPFS were still paying for parking fees for staff who were required to attend the office and requested the committee to review the policy. This policy was implemented during COVID restrictions to avoid staff travelling on public transport.

**[ACTION]** The Committee agreed that this process should continue due to current COVID guidance, and the policy should be reviewed at January's Resources Committee meeting in 2022.

**Date of the next meeting:** 30 September 2021