

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 18 AUGUST 2016

TRAINING SUITE, PFO, DUNDEE

Present: (Chair)	David Harvie Ian Walford John Logue John Dunn Lindsey Miller Lesslie Young Esther Robertson Douglas Hutchens	Crown Agent/Chief Executive Deputy Chief Executive Deputy Crown Agent, Operational Support Deputy Crown Agent, Local Court Deputy Crown Agent, Serious Casework Non-Executive Director Non-Executive Director Non-Executive Director
In attendance:	Jennifer Harrower Mhairi Marshall Ann Marie Henderson	Sheriffdom PF Sheriffdom Business Manager Corporate Office
Apologies:	Stephen Woodhouse	Head of Corporate Office

Welcome

1. The Crown Agent welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jennifer and Mhairi who were representing Tayside, Central and Fife. Douglas Hutchens was welcomed to his first meeting of the Executive Board. Arrangements for the staff event following the meeting were discussed.

Minutes of Previous Meeting, Matters Arising / Action Tracker

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June were noted and approved.

It was agreed that the Resources Committee would work with HR to provide greater granularity on the data and work type absences.

Balanced Scorecard

3. The balanced scorecard reflected the position at the end of June 2016. It was noted that the time figures for complaints and FOI have improved but VRR are down. Performance against targets is on track and spend is in line with budgets.

The staff turnover rate was 8.7% overall, with 1.8 involuntary and 6.9% voluntary as at 31 July 2016.

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The VRR performance against target figure is 47%. The Board recognised the difficulties faced in terms of responding within our 20 working day target.

Since April 57 VRR's had been received, 11 of which were in responded to within target, 22 were upheld, 1 had been withdrawn and 1 had been overturned.

The Board discussed and agreed that there may be some merit in categorising FOI requests; this work will be taken forward by the Operational Performance Committee.

Action: Operational Performance Committee to consider categorising FOI requests.

Absence figures have slightly increased over the last quarter. The Board noted the helpful comparison for absence rates with other agencies, and asked whether it was possible to show the same comparison for long-term and short-term absence.

It was agreed that the Resources Committee would receive the detailed attendance data on a monthly basis, with a more detailed breakdown of categories of illness type – especially mental ill-health, and that it would also come to the Executive Board quarterly. It was noted that the Fair Futures project were considering making a recommendation that COPFS should set a target for reducing absence rates to the Civil Service average.

Action: Resources Committee to consider detailed absence report monthly, and Executive Board to receive the report quarterly (November meeting).

Resources Update

4. The Resources Committee met on 29 July 2016.

Finance

John Logue explained that the budget allocations were still being adjusted to reflect the new structure and financial responsibilities across COPFS following the Shaping the Future restructuring. At this stage expenditure overall remained on track to be within budget, but staffing expenditure will continue to require close vacancy management. The corporate finance report (CFR) will be updated to reflect the allocation of £0.95 million funding for Domestic Abuse. It was confirmed that the major cases figure of £2.7 million included the Helicopter Team expenditure. It was agreed that a summary of the CFR would be provided as an annex to the Resources committee minutes in future.

VES

The Committee agreed that a VES Scheme was not a priority for 2016-17 but this will be kept under review.

Depute Accreditation

The new Deputy Accreditation Policy will come into effect from 01 September 2016. Discussions have taken place with Trade Unions. A communication is to be issued to unions and the wider organisation within the next week.

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National Fraud Initiative

The Board noted the update provided on the 2014 National Fraud Initiative.

Long Service Awards

The Board noted the paper and agreed that a consistent approach should be taken on how best to acknowledge the work of long serving members of staff. It was agreed that a small working team should be set up to review the proposals. John and Ian are to review paper and discuss the approach to consultation with HR. The option of doing nothing specific to recognise long-service, as happens in other Departments, public bodies, and Agencies, should be kept open.

Action: John and Ian to review Long Service Awards paper with HR and provide update at September meeting.

Update on Spending Review

Following the EU Referendum the Scottish Government advised that a 1 year budget, for 2017-18 only, would be published later in the year, following the UK autumn statement.

Advice has been given to the Lord Advocate ahead of his bilateral meeting later this month.

Business Improvement Update

5. The Business Improvement Committee meeting was held on 10 August 2016 where it was agreed that they would provide governance to the remaining StF work and monitor deliver of the benefits.

The Business Modernisation Strategy paper and the Remit of the Committee were both signed off.

The Committee agreed that the priorities for Business Transformation are to:

1. Deliver Witness Engagement Process into live
2. Deliver Sheriff & Jury Pathway into live
3. Prepare and Deliver CMiC UAT
4. NICP process analysis and transformation
5. NICP workflow/work management analysis
6. Progress MI Project requirements.

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Operational Performance Update

The Operational Committee met on 16 August 2016.

There has been an increase in homicides at 33% but resources are sufficient to meet that demand.

Lindsey advised that Law Officers have asked for a review of NSCU processes to allow resources to be freed up for case preparation. They were keen going forward for initial decisions in relation to proceedings for sexual offences to be taken by teams who report to Crown Counsel while recognising that there was still a role for Crown Counsel in the more complex/high risk/high profile cases. Lindsey has been tasked with producing series of proposals for the Solicitor General. Once this is in place it will have effect on pre-petition work.

The Board were advised that Police Scotland raised concern over the retention of communications data following a recent court judgement which is currently under appeal. There will be a requirement from a police perspective if the court of appeal judgement is not favourable to *potentially* destroy communications data once the statutory time limit for retention has expired and this could have a significant impact on prosecution cases. Lindsey advised that she had gone back to Police Scotland to identify the cases and provide figures, along with an impact assessment if the data was not available in an evidential format.

Any Other Business

Register of Interests

The Board agreed with the recommendations in the paper on Register of Interests. It was also agreed that there should be a policy in place to record why we don't disclose the interests of Executive Board members in our Annual Report.

Action: John Logue to draft policy on Register of Interests.

Community Justice Paper

The Board noted the proposed approach and the impact on COPFS to the implementation of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Scottish Government's vision for community justice in Scotland. John Dunn is to take this forward with Paul Beaton.

Action: John Dunn to discuss the Community Justice paper further with Paul Beaton.

**Corporate Office
August 2016**