

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2014

CROWN OFFICE, EDINBURGH

Present: (Chair)	Catherine Dyer	Crown Agent/Chief Executive
	John Dunn	PF East of Scotland
	David Harvie	PF West of Scotland
	John Logue	Director of Serious Casework
	Liam Murphy	PF North of Scotland
	Esther Robertson	Non-Executive Director
In attendance:	Iain Campbell	Media Relations
	Helen Knipe	Head of Response and Information Unit
	Carol McDivitt	Business Manager, RIU
	Janice Irvine	Director of Human Resources
	Lynne McNaughton	HR Services Manager
	Kevin McArthur	Minute Secretary

Welcome

1. The Crown Agent welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2014 were noted and approved.

Action Tracker

3. It was noted the Senior Executive Team agreed, in principle, to introduce a nationally managed Initial Case Processing (ICP) Unit. An Implementation Group, led by David Harvie, will be set up with the Unit led by a SCS Band 1 as PF ICP.

ACTION: Draft message to staff advising of decision

Policy and Communication

Twitter Strategy

4. The members welcomed Iain Campbell to the meeting. The meeting noted paper EB(1415)17 which provided information on the use of Twitter since its corporate introduction by COPFS in July 2012 and opportunities to improve and expand its use.

5. COPFS currently has around 1800 followers which is expected to rise and peak at approximately 2500 in the next 12 months. The

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followers include criminal justice partners, journalists, students and the general public.

6. Twitter provides COPFS with a useful vehicle to issue news releases via links to its website. Only tweets issued by COPFS appear on its Twitter page.

7. The Board agreed, as per the recommendation, to expand the use of Twitter by COPFS to such things as:

- i. Stakeholder Events
- ii. Images
- iii. Retweeting of relevant partner material
- iv. Retweeting of links to interviews with COPFS officials
- v. Advice for victims and witnesses
- vi. Advice or reminders to journalists
- vii. Information about COPFS for the general public
- viii. Unusual facts, laws, cases or historic points of interest

ACTION: Media Relations to provide regular updates on analysis of Social Media coverage to Executive Board

Response and Information Unit (RIU)

8. The meeting welcomed Helen Knipe and Carol McDivitt to the meeting. Helen and Carol provided a presentation on the progress made by RIU since its introduction in July 2013.

9. The meeting noted that there has been a significant improvement in how COPFS deal with complaints, in particular a notable rise in the percentage of cases answered within 20 working days (86%) in the first quarter of 2014/15. 195 complaints have been received in that period of which 6% were upheld and a further 10% partially upheld.

10. 94% of Freedom of Information request responses are dealt with within the statutory timescales

11. The top 5 most common complaints which have been upheld involving Summary and Solemn cases are as follows:

Summary	Solemn
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Decisions to discontinue being taken at trial▪ Lack of communications with witnesses at trial▪ Witnesses not being released promptly▪ Correspondence not being answered▪ Address being read out in court	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Witnesses subject to uncertainty about when they will be required in 2 week sitting▪ Release of productions▪ Length of time it takes for proceedings to commence▪ Plea negotiation▪ Witnesses not being protected from cross-examination by defence in High Court cases

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12. RIU have fed back to Operational Boards and are to start a programme of presentations and feedback sessions to senior management and Operational Boards to further improve awareness of the unit and advise of areas where lessons can be learned from complaints received.

Human Resources

Learning and Development Review

13. The meeting welcomed Janice Irvine and Lynne McNaughton to the meeting. Paper EB(1415)18 advised of progress made following discussion of their paper EB(1415)14 at the last Executive Board in September and was noted.

14. Learning and Development are developing a structure and timetable for delivery of the Management Development Programme (MDP). Any external requirements will be procured through Civil Service Learning.

15. The Board agreed that the programme should be tailored to the needs of the manager and the respective business requirements of the post.

16. The meeting noted a number of Deputes are currently involved in the accreditation process and that there may be scope for further amendment to this, given the changing demographic of legal staff and the changes arising from the move to functional working.

ACTION: Senior Executive Team (SET) to discuss requirements of MDP and potential amendment of Depute Accreditation at meeting on 28 October

Review of Federation and function working and new Governance Boards

15. COPFS introduced a new governance structure in April 2014 following the move in 2012/13 to operational units brigaded into functions and managed in Federations. It had been previously agreed that a review of the revised management and governance structures should take place to consider if they are delivering improved governance and decision-making and to ensure COPFS has the necessary structures to facilitate effective decision-making to meet the significant challenges arising from the anticipated financial constraints from 2015/16 onwards.

16. The Board considered that there had now been sufficient time to allow the new Strategic and Executive Board and Business Service Delivery Group to bed in and agreed terms of reference for the Review. The Review is to be commissioned to be carried out by an independent external individual and completed by 31 January 2015.

Operational Boards

17. *Sheriff and Jury 21 (SJ21)* – The meeting noted that following direction from the Solicitor General a draft remit has been developed for

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SJ21. A Project Board has been assembled and its work will be project managed by Susan Cameron, Strategy and Delivery Division.

18. *High Court 21 (HC21)* – The meeting noted progress since HC21 was rolled out in May 2014. Progress continues to be monitored and the priority now is to ensure the quality of cases coming remains high and continue to focus on appropriate programming of courts.

Strategic Board Outcomes

19. The meeting discussed progress against outcomes and actions from the Strategic Board on 20 August 2014.

20. The Strategy Planning Group has met with the Trade Unions and has further consultation events planned with external stakeholders to discuss the draft Strategic Plan. It was noted the general feeling is that the consultation has been useful and well received by those attending events so far including criminal justice partners.

21. It was agreed that COPFS must be ready to take advantage of opportunities that arise to change business processes and estates requirements through changes arising as a result of new IT and people developments in COPFS, Scottish Court Service or Police Scotland, or as a result of legislation.

ACTION: SET to discuss potential accommodation and legislative changes which may affect COPFS and identify any further opportunities which may be discussed at December Strategic Board

Kevin McArthur
Corporate Office
22 October 2014