

Minutes of the Wales Office Management Board  
Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010 at Gwydyr House

**Present:**

Fiona Adams - Jones	Chair
David Crawley	Non executive member
Glynne Jones	Deputy Director, Legislation and Cabinet Support
Sarah Rees	Principal Private Secretary
Stephen Knight	Head of Corporate Services
Amanda Latham	Head of Finance and Corporate Governance
Kim Tester	HR Manager
[REDACTED]	Legal Adviser
[REDACTED]	Secretariat
[REDACTED]	Presenting item 4 Accommodation Manager
<b>Apologies</b>	
[REDACTED]	Legal Adviser
Tim Hemmings	Deputy Director Policy
Andrew Mathias	Head of Communications

Fiona welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced [REDACTED] as the new Secretariat.

**1. Minutes of last meeting**

1.1 The Board formally accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009 as a true record.

**Outstanding action points**

1.2 The Chair requested an update on the progress of the **Business Continuity** guidance cards for staff. Stephen confirmed that all branches would receive their cards shortly.

1.3 On **FOI**, David requested an electronic copy of the holding letter guidance which had been issued to staff, together with a copy of the FOI manual

**Action Point:**

- Stephen to send copies of the above to David as soon as possible.

1.4 The Board noted that **Strategic Risks** have been updated and were scheduled to be discussed under agenda item 2.

1.5 The Chair thanked Amanda and her team for the work put into the new **Gift and Hospitality Policy** and **Travel and Subsistence Policy**.

1.6 Kim reported that work was ongoing on the **Training and Development Strategy**, which would be coming to the Board for its next meeting. The senior team would be holding a moderating meeting in March to consider indicative **PDP markings**. All other HR action points had been completed.

#### **Action point**

- Kim to re-circulate the PDP guidance or both MoJ and WAG Staff.

## **2. Performance Reports**

2.1 **Strategic Risk Register** – Amanda thanked Tim, Glynne and their teams for their regular updates. After their meeting to discuss relationship risks it was agreed that the document would remain unaltered until after the General Election although Amanda, Glynne and Tim would continue to meet and monitor Branch Registers. Amanda reported that following a favourable audit of the risks in legislation branch, Internal Audit Division (IAD) had recommended that the scoring of the strategy risk associated with the audit be reassessed. The chair suggested it would assist the Board if in future any changes to the Register were marked in bold, for ease of reference.

#### **Action Points**

- Amanda to record any changes to be in bold from now on.
- Amanda to send any amendments pending the Election to David Crawley
- Glynne and Amanda to discuss downgrading the levels of risks following a good Audit Report.

2.2 **Performance statistics** – The Board noted that Cumulative Year to Date figures for PQs would be available shortly. Kim reported that the need to await guidance from the Cabinet Office on some HR PQs had slowed down turnaround times. The Chair undertook to have a separate discussion with Tim Hemmings out of committee on that the Policy Briefing figures. There was a general consensus that the process for PQ distribution might be improved and Sarah was asked to explore further. The Board was pleased to note a marked improvement in overall figures.

#### **Action Points**

- Fiona and Tim to have separate discussion about Policy Briefing stats
- Sarah to review the distribution of PQs and report back at next MB meeting.

## **2.3 Financial Position –**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Board also noted that details from the Trial Balance were included as these would be on the balance sheet, giving an estimation of annual leave accrual for staff and PDP gradings. David thanked Amanda for including an End Year Flexibility (EYF) table, which he had found

most helpful. David noted that there was no planned Capital spend for this year or next. Amanda explained that she would be renegotiating the Capital budget to reflect the fact that there were no current plans for a refurbishment of Gwydyr House. Fiona pointed out that this would need to await consideration by incoming Ministers in due course. In response to a query from David on the latest Gwydyr House survey, Amanda replied that the results of the latest Quadrennial report were awaited.

**2.4 2010 – 2011 Financial Position** – Amanda told the Board that she had restated the expected budget and had agreed with Stephen and [REDACTED] that £50,000 would be allowed for maintenance next year. David commented that the forecast spend was larger than the budget and Amanda explained that EYF would be used as set out on the EYF table.

2.5 Fiona asked Sarah to explore what could be done to reduce the costs of Official cars and to provide a short paper for next meeting.

2.6 [REDACTED] asked about the basis for calculating the costs for Parliamentary Council Office (PCO). Amanda explained that they were based on an agreed percentage which had been established in 2004. PCO were currently looking at options for the next Spending Review (SR) Period and Glynne had fed the Wales Office views in to that exercise.

2.7 The Board approved in principle the estimated 2010-11 budget but undertook to let Amanda have any comments, after they had had a little more time to consider, no later than 1 March

#### **Action Points**

- Kim to prepare a paper on [REDACTED]
- Fiona and Kim to meet after publication of the Welsh Affairs Committee report of its Wales & Westminster Inquiry, to discuss the possible scope of a Service Level Agreement with WAG HR.
- [REDACTED] to discuss PCO funding with Glynne.
- Sarah to produce paper on Official Cars costs for the next meeting.
- Any comments on next years budget to be fed back to Finance by Monday 1 March

### **3. Corporate Services –**

3.1 Stephen informed the Board there were no Information security incidents to report. The staff guidance booklet on handling FOI cases had been a success. Fiona mentioned that she and Glynne had undertaken an unannounced spot-check throughout Gwydyr House to gauge the extent to which staff were complying with the safe desk policy. They found no major breaches and she was very pleased with the way in which staff were handling restricted papers. Further spot checks would be undertaken by members of the senior team in both Gwydyr House and Discovery House. The Chair requested that a short report on Health and Safety issues be included in the Corporate Service Update for each meeting.

#### **Action Points**

- Corporate Services to distribute BCP Cards to all staff.

- Stephen to include an update on health and safety in all future papers.

#### **4 Sustainable Development**

4.1 [REDACTED] presented a draft Sustainable Development Scheme and Action Plan for the Board's consideration and agreement. The Board accepted Gareth's points about the need to encourage and increase staff awareness and commitment. Following further discussion, the Board thanked [REDACTED] for his work on this important area and approved the Plan.

4.2 It was noted that, because of the constraints of being located within a larger office block (Discovery House), further work would be undertaken to extend the Action Plan to encompass fully the Cardiff Bay office. Stephen and [REDACTED] were asked to keep Finance informed of all costings. The Chair recognised that the Action Plan would require changes in working habits and behaviours, and emphasised the importance of effective internal communication of the Plan and why it was necessary. Stephen and [REDACTED] were asked to clear their comms proposals with Tim and Heads of Division were asked to ensure that they and/or their Branch Heads would discuss this with their teams. It was also agreed that all building signs and notices in Gwydyr House and Discovery House would be displayed bilingually.

4.3 The Board wished to review progress against the Action Plan on a quarterly basis

##### **Action Points**

- All building notices to be bilingual.
- Finance to be kept informed of all costs.
- Branch heads to discuss Sustainable Development action plan with their teams.
- Board to review this quarterly.
- Update required for June, and report ready for Management board meeting in Cardiff in September.

#### **5 Business Plan**

5.1 The board formally approved the Business Plan for 2010 – 2011.

#### **6 Annual Report**

6.1 Stephen has circulated a first draft for views. He acknowledged that performance and finance figures would not be available until April. Kim reported that some of the HR data would not be available before the end of March. Kim also asked Heads of Division to help ensure that the equality questionnaire which would be distributed shortly to each member of staff was completed by all staff and returned promptly. Fiona asked that the momentum be maintained on preparation of the annual report and asked all concerned to let Stephen have their comments as soon as possible. David asked for sight of an electronic copy.

##### **Actions Points**

- Electronic copy to be sent to David.

- Comments to be sent back to Stephen.
- Branch Heads to ensure prompt turn around of equality questionnaire.

## **7. HR Update**

7.1 Kim summarised the results of the staff survey, and stated the senior management team had met to discuss the results. The three main areas for improvement over the coming year would be 1) managing change, 2) learning and development and 3) articulating our vision, values and behaviours as an organisation. Dr Karen McIver, a consultant, has been brought into help with the work on the third area. The Board noted that a Survey Action Plan, to address the areas for improvement, would be in place by the end of April. Fiona thanked Kim for ensuring that the Wales Office had the highest survey response rate in MoJ.

7.2 Kim informed the Board that [REDACTED] had volunteered to help organise monthly lunch time briefing sessions for staff which would cover subjects of collective interest such as FOI, devolution, referendum etc. David stated that he had presented similar sessions on the Audit Committee both in Cardiff and London and that the feedback from staff was very positive. Sarah Rees suggested that at least 2 sessions take place before Easter, if possible, and that sessions took no longer than 30 minutes as a rule of thumb.

7.3 Kim raised the question of work placement opportunities within the Wales Office. She had registered an interest with Building Young Britain, and was awaiting their response. It was noted that MoJ had no placement scheme. It was agreed that, if placements were offered, it would be essential to provide individuals with a structured program to ensure that such placements provide useful experiences and valuable insights.

### **Action Point**

- [REDACTED] to circulate a selection of possible topics for the lunchtime briefing sessions.
- Kim ensure that a Staff Engagement Action Plan was in place by the end of April.

## **8 Major Strategic Risks**

8.1 Senior Team will continue to meet and report back to Management Board.

## **9 Terms of Reference –**

9.1 The updated Terms of Reference for the Board were approved.

## **10. AOB**

**10.1 i-Expenses** - The arrangements were approved by the Board. Senior Managers would authorise all expense claims from their staff. In the absence of the relevant Head of Division, Finance Branch would act as default authoriser.

**10.2 New Contract with Calders** – The Board asked for an oral update for the next meeting.

**10.3 Risk workshop**, the final workshop will take place in March, Amanda asked that staff be encouraged to attend. It will be revisited twice a year for any new starters.

Art work – David Alston will be attending on 01/03/10 to explain new art on display to all staff managers again to encourage staff to attend.

#### **Action Points.**

- Amanda to arrange for the date of the Risk workshop to be circulated to all staff and to Fiona who would like to attend.
- [REDACTED] to provide oral update on the operation of the Calders contract.

#### **11. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next Board meeting would be 22/04/2010.

Minutes of the Wales Office Management Board  
Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010 at Gwydyr House

**Present:**

Fiona Adams - Jones	Chair
David Crawley	Non executive member
Tim Hemmings	Deputy Director Policy
Stephen Knight	Head of Corporate Services
Amanda Latham	Head of Finance and Corporate Governance
[REDACTED]	Legal Adviser
[REDACTED]	Secretariat
[REDACTED]	HR Observer
[REDACTED]	Observer
<b><u>Apologies</u></b>	
Glynne Jones	Deputy Director
Sarah Rees	Principal Private Secretary
[REDACTED]	Legal Adviser
Andrew Mathias	Head of Communications
Kim Tester	Head of HR

Fiona welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced [REDACTED], who was attending in the absence of Kim Tester and [REDACTED] Amanda Latham's coaching partner from HMRC who had been invited to attend as an observer

**1. Minutes of last meeting**

With the small amendment to the wording in 2.2, the Board formally accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February as a true and accurate record

**Outstanding action points**

The Chair ran through the action points of the previous meeting. In Sarah Rees's absence, her review of Performance stats and her paper on Government Cars would be carried forward to the next meeting. It was the general consensus that this would be more suitable as it would allow a new Minister to make an informed decision on government cars.

The chair also asked about the distribution of Business Continuity cards and it was agreed that distribution to date needed to be checked to ensure that every member of staff had received a copy to keep.

Fiona also noted that the draft Wales Office training and development plan, which the Board had asked to see at this meeting, would be delayed until the next meeting due to Kim's absence.

Amanda gave a brief update regarding the new hotel booking system with Calders. As a whole, the system was reported to be working very well apart from a few minor teething troubles, Amanda was impressed by Calders price match and the Chair was really pleased with how the system was working.

Amanda went on to give a brief update regarding I Expenses. The system has resulted in payment being made more quickly, although a few staff members had experienced a few minor difficulties getting to grips with the new system. Tim noted that claims had to be signed off within a 5 day period otherwise the claim would have to be resent to be approved. Amanda reminded the Board that she was the default authoriser when senior managers were on leave or otherwise absent.

#### **Action Points:**

- Stephen Knight to ensure Business Continuity cards have been distributed to every member of staff for their retention
- Amanda Latham to give a brief update on the progress with Calders and I Expenses at next meeting
- Sarah Rees to report back on Performance stats and provide paper for Government Cars for next meeting
- Kim Tester to submit a draft Wales Office Training and Development plan for substantive consideration and adoption at the next meeting.

#### **2.1 Performance Reports**

Amanda, Glynne and Tim had previously met to discuss the Strategic Risk register. Amanda drew the Board's attention to the fact that all changes had been highlighted in bold. As these changes were still quite difficult to spot, future changes would also be added in a bold red font to make them more apparent. The Board noted the recommendation that no amendments were needed at that stage to the Relationship Risks and Strategic Risks but recognised that this would be subject to review following the General Election.

#### **Action Point:**

- All changes to be flagged in red bold font (Amanda Latham)

#### **Performance Statistics**

The Chair was pleased to note the performance statistics which had greatly improved since the last meeting, and conveyed her thanks to the teams concerned.

#### **Financial Position**

Amanda introduced her paper on the latest financial position, pointing out that the latest figures available were for February 2010, rather than March 2010. She undertook to continue to check the position on a weekly basis until the figures had been finalised and distribute the final report out of Board.



### **Action Point:**

- Amanda Latham to distribute final figures for March 2010 once data is available .

## **2.2 Corporate Services –**

Stephen Knight reported that Internal Audit had upgraded their rating for Information Assurance to amber – green, confirming that the office was generally compliant subject to two minor recommendations.

Tim Hemmings raised the subject of the temporary fire door on the third floor and Stephen confirmed that this was to be replaced very shortly.

David Crawley asked about the budget for the building works on the ground floor.

Stephen went on to say that all exploratory work on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor should be finished in time for the arrival of a new Minister with the main work to both the ground and the first floor to be undertaken during the summer recess.

The Chair noted the latest update on Health and Safety near misses and agreed with the Corporate Services team that it was as important to properly record 'near misses' as it was to record accidents, and that staff needed to be aware of this. Stephen reported back on the recent fire drill in Gwydyr House which had gone well. A similar drill was now being planned for Discovery House. The chair undertook to mention this in her next newsletter to all staff. concerned regarding this would be most useful, Amanda asked if the names of the fire wardens could be included in this. The Chair asked for a separate meeting with Stephen to take forward some of these H&S issues.

### **Action Points**

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- Corporate Services to inform all staff of the importance of reporting near misses in addition to slips and accidents.
- Stephen to meet with Fiona to discuss various H&S issues
- Next staff newsletter to thank staff for their conduct in the latest Fire Drill in Gwydyr House and to include names of Fire Wardens.
- Corporate Services to arrange Fire Drill at Discovery House.
- Stephen to inform Finance of any costs.

## **2.3 HR Update**

### **Annex A - Policy Statement regarding Loans and Detached Duty Terms**

The board opened by discussing the Management Policy Statement Regarding Loans and Detached Duty agreements within the Wales Office, David questioned whether or not the policy was sufficiently flexible assuming there was an individual that the office was particularly keen to keep, the Chair added

that this policy was a necessity to offer clarity to staff making everyone aware of the situation, and to refresh the mix of employees within the organisation. David questioned whether this process had been agreed with WAG, and was told that Kim had discussed this with WAG and would herself review this annually. Amanda felt it was important that staff were also aware that they were not guaranteed jobs when they returned to their original organisations, the Chair felt that this should also be articulated in the Policy, and requested that Kim report back at the next meeting.

**Action Points:**

- Kim to provide an update at next meeting
- Kim to provide an action plan by the end of April
- Fiona and Kim to meet

**Annex B – Equality Monitoring**

The Board reviewed the Paper, and the chair thanked HR for its quick turnaround of the Equality Monitoring Data.

**Annex C – Incremental Dates**

David stated that he felt a more formal understanding between the Wales Office and the Welsh Assembly Government was necessary, the Chair agreed and stated that Kim has already begun to take the necessary steps and is awaiting a more formal agreement to be put in place, but this would be better addressed after the coming election. The Chair felt that this issue should be revisited and that Kim should provide an update at the next Board Meeting.

**Action Point:**

- Kim to provide an update at next meeting

**Annex D – Sickness and Absence Monitoring**

The Chair felt comfortable with the rates and invited comments. Amanda was concerned that the information did not always filter through to HR and with the accuracy of the numbers. [REDACTED] also felt that that the whole process was a long and drawn out process. The Chair agreed that this was an onerous process and had concerns with accuracy. In other organisations an electronic process was in use, the board felt that Kim should look into the whether or not such a system was on its way and whether it would be beneficial to the Wales Office. The board also felt that a reminder email sent to all staff from HR would be most useful.

**Action Points:**

- Kim to look into possibility of an electronic absence system
- Kim to give update at next meeting
- HR to send ZZOPS to all staff regarding Sickness and Absence Monitoring

### **3 Welsh Language Scheme**

The Chair expressed thanks to Tim and his team for the document, and asked that all future comments be sent to Stephen, he and Tim would then co-ordinate. Amanda requested that she be consulted on all costing, David agreed with this. The Chair stated that apart from the odd bit off signage the expenses would be minimal. The board discussed the implications of this, with even answer phone messages to be in Welsh, the Chair said that Welsh speaking members of staff would be able to record a generic phone message as well as helping out with bi lingual emails signatures and out of office messages.

The subject of Welsh lessons for staff was brought up, the chair felt that HR should be able to gauge the appetite of staff and if necessary a Welsh tutor could be brought in to provide lessons for staff if demand was high enough.

Staff awareness, David felt that it was important that the message be sent from the top, and asked Fiona to send an email to all staff on this matter, and be backed up by Team leaders within team meetings.

#### **Action Points:**

- Fiona to include a message regarding the Welsh Language Scheme in her newsletter.
- Branch heads to back up message within Team meetings.
- All staff to ensure all messages are bi- lingual.
- Stephen to inform Finance of all costs.

### **4 Draft Statement of Assurance**

The draft Statement of Assurance will be circulated for comments, the statement includes comments from Fiona. The first draft needs to be filed with MOJ on 7<sup>th</sup> May with a final version to be made available by the end of May.

#### **Action Point:**

- Amanda to forward the document to Fiona with track changes, and circulate once approved.

### **5. Strategic Risk Strategy – Risk Appetite Discussion**

Amanda started by saying across Whitehall all departments were updating and assessing Risk Management Strategies and asking whether the board were content with the both the level of risk appetite and how this was articulated in the Wales Office Risk Management Strategy. The chair felt that the Wales Office was high risk by definition and could be highly exposed by high risk taking. The board felt the current wording was transparent and

portrayed openness to risk; it was felt that reputationally this was not a good time for anyone to be taking excessive risks. David and Tim both felt that if a new way of things could be found to make people work smarter and leaner it would be welcome, but unwise to take forward any changes until a new Government is in place. Amanda explained that HM Treasury were in the process of a Corporate Governance Review and if needed would be amending the Orange Book. The Board felt it wise to await the outcome of the review for further guidance. The Chair felt that this subject would be useful to revisit at a later date.

## **6. AOB**

The board briefly ran through the dates of future meetings.

The Chair brought up a Pilot scheme that had essentially banned the use of first class rail travel which been in practice since the start of Purdah. The Chair welcomed comments and feedback on how members had found it. It was felt that in this economic climate that expensive first class tickets could no longer be justified, this was an issue Fiona would raise with a new Minister and this could coincide with a discussion regarding the use of Government cars and trying to find a more cost effective solution.

Amanda raised the issue of an Office away day, again in this financial climate this was seen as unwise, although the Chair did think an opportunity for the office to get together was a valid one. Amanda went on to update the board about her teams move to Ashley house, this is planned for the 04/05/10, Amanda to circulate her teams new telephone numbers by ZZOPS to all staff immediately after the meeting.

Because of this Chair felt that Stephen would need to review the Business Continuity Plan and continue to keep in contact with MOJ in case of future disruption.

### **Action Points:**

- Amanda to produce a paper to be circulated out of board regarding train travel.
- Amanda to send email regarding office move.
- Fiona to meet with new Minister upon there arrival.
- Stephen to review Business Continuity Plan

## **11. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next Board meeting would be 24/06/10

Minutes of the Wales Office Management Board  
Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010 at Gwydyr House

**Present:**

Fiona Adams - Jones	Chair
David Crawley	Non executive member
Tim Hemmings	Deputy Director Policy
Stephen Knight	Head of Corporate Services
Kim Tester	Head of HR
[REDACTED]	Secretariat
Glynne Jones	Deputy Director
Sarah Rees	Principal Private Secretary
[REDACTED]	Finance Corporate Governance
Piers Bisson	Observer
<b><u>Apologies</u></b>	
Andrew Mathias	Head of Communications
Amanda Latham	Head of Finance and Corporate Governance

Fiona Adams-Jones welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1. Minutes of last meeting**

With the small amendment to the wording in 2.2, the Board formally accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> April as a true and accurate record

**Outstanding action points**

The Chair ran through the action points of the previous meeting. Fiona requested that Stephen Knight dealt with the outstanding business continuity cards and their distribution as a matter of urgency, the Chair then requested that Stephen set aside some time to meet with her to discuss Health and Safety Issues and the outcome of the fire drill in Discovery House.

The Chair moved onto the issue of Government Cars, Sarah Rees had been unable to produce a full paper due to a change in remit and a number of changing scenarios making it almost impossible to produce accurate figures. Following discussions with both Ministers the two Ministerial cars would be reduced to one, with the Ministers themselves agreeing to share the remaining car, in the event of this being unavailable a pool car would be used. These changes would take effect as of the 9 September as notice needed to be given, in the mean time the Chair requested that Sarah produce a full submission along these lines.

The chair asked about the Welsh Language Scheme, and how things were progressing regarding all messages (signatures, voicemails etc) being bi-lingual, it was felt more work was necessary along these lines, as a result Sarah

volunteered to send [REDACTED] a Welsh out of office template for him to distribute by zshops to the whole of the Wales Office.

AOB Fiona also noted that the office would all travel standard class by rail, as a matter of course.

#### **Action Points:**

- Stephen Knight to ensure Business Continuity cards have been distributed to every member of staff for their retention
- Sarah Rees to provide a submission for Government Cars for next meeting
- Stephen Knight to meet with Fiona to discuss Health and Safety issues.
- Sarah Rees to forward Welsh Language out of office template to [REDACTED] for him to distribute.

### **2.1 Performance Reports**

#### **2.1 Strategic Risk Register**

The board noted the risk register which remained unchanged albeit for one minor amendment, David Crawley thought that the office would have to start preparing for cuts and the risk register would soon have to start reflecting the current outlook and become more financial and relationship driven.

#### **2.1 Performance Statistics**

Sarah ran through correspondence and performance statistics, stating that 32 PQs had been received, all but 2 had been answered within the 5 sitting day target, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The number of letters answered on SUBs had increased and private office were working on a way to best record them. David questioned why the board had not received proper stats, and asked if there had been a new system, Sarah stated that Correspondence Unit had just been too busy. Sarah assured the board that they would receive the figures retrospectively and the baseline for these had only started after the election.

#### **Action Point:**

- Sarah Rees to circulate retrospective PQ stats in July

### **2.1 Financial Position**

The board noted a report from [REDACTED] Head of Core Accounts at the Ministry of Justice explaining the previous miss-postings and the actions taken to prevent them on the Wales Office ledgers as 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. David noted the report and said that this would satisfy Audit Committee. [REDACTED] went on to explain that Accommodation Journals were not available for this particular

meeting as they were only released on the day of the meeting, but would be available to be circulated by July. [REDACTED] also explained that as yet the parachute payments to the previous Ministers had still not been paid. David questioned the scope for reduction of staff increment changes if not salaries. [REDACTED] went on to explain that there would need to be a reduction for the Wales Office baseline EYF over a period of 4 years. Fiona stated that it was very early days. [REDACTED] went on to say that savings had started to be made, with the whole office travelling standard class on all rail journeys, further savings were to be made by a change of plan with regards to ministerial cars, although actual figures were not fully calculated. Fiona added there was a possibility of merging back office functions and thus saving further costs. The Chair requested that an Agenda item to formally look at the process of rationale, baseline and cuts proposed be added to the agenda for the next Management Board meeting to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> September, although this date may change due to a short summer recess. [REDACTED] explained that savings would be made on rail travel but it was a bit early in the day to quantify savings, the actual amount would remain unknown until the end of July. Glynne Jones requested that finance kept an eye on all late ticket bookings, as standard class rail tickets booked well in advance would still be considerably cheaper, Glynne was aware that now all travel was standard colleagues may not try to get requests in soon enough to get the cheaper advanced tickets. [REDACTED] then stated that savings would also be made on hotels due to the relatively new contract with Calders, the chair invited comments, to which Piers Bisson responded that he had had a few problems, Sarah also found the process a little hit and miss originally but blamed that on teething troubles.

#### **Action Points:**

- Variance Report to be circulated by [REDACTED] in July
- Finance to monitor the number of late tickets booked
- Branch heads to report any problems with hotel bookings to finance.

#### **2.2 Corporate Services –**

Stephen opened by saying that all the work on the ground floor was on track for completion by the end of summer recess, and that the Finance Team had been successfully relocated to Petty France for the foreseeable future whilst work was underway. Fiona asked Stephen if he had spoken to [REDACTED] regarding updating the Wales Office Business continuity Plan, Stephen explained that Audit had said that they would contact him, but he would make contact with Audit himself to take things forward. He updated the board that there had been a problem with security cameras outside the building, and urged people to be vigilant in terms of who gained entry to the building. Stephen thought that the problem was due to a lightning storm causing a power surge a few weeks prior to the meeting, and was taking forward discussions with MoJ colleagues, about strengthening its resilience to future power surges. David enquired if there had been any issues with FOI's, Stephen said there was nothing to report. Fiona enquired about the loss of a Blackberry telephone and whether that in itself was a data security incident, Glynne stated that due to phone encryption and passwords the phone loss would cause no threat. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Piers commented that he thought that his IT systems were running very slowly, Glynne agreed and asked that Stephen and his team look into this. Tim Hemmings raised the issue of accommodation for his team, Fiona agreed to meet with Tim and Stephen to discuss taking this forward. The Chair asked for a separate meeting with Stephen to take forward some H&S issues to include first aid and DSE assessments.

**Action Points:**

- Stephen to contact Audit regarding updating the Business Continuity Plan
- Stephen to meet with Fiona to discuss various H&S issues
- Stephen to meet with Tim & Fiona to discuss accommodation possibilities for Tim and his team
- Stephen to take forward his team looking into IT problems and report back at next meeting

**2.3 HR Update**

Kim Tester started by asking that all future HR papers were only circulated to the board themselves and not actually optional members, as papers were to be kept confidential. Kim suggested that if the papers were suitable then line managers would be able to circulate them if required. Kim stated that due to the tightening of the Wales Office finances there would be a question mark over the fixed term appointments held within the office. Kim went on to say that there would be no promotions with regard to internal recruitment.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] David questioned the review of Press Office, Kim said the possibility of basing Press and Correspondence Unit in Cardiff was under consideration. There were no grade issues to report, Kim felt it wise to stick to contractual conditions, 2 months notice and then re-deployment. Kim then stated that the Staff Engagement comments and feedback would be circulated to the board, Kim felt there were a few formatting issues to take up with Dr Karen McIver the person responsible for the research and producing the document before it was circulated. Kim felt on the whole that feedback from the survey was positive. Fiona felt that this was a valuable piece of work, and would help the office start to build in values, which staff had previously felt were lacking. Glynne felt that this needed to be implemented as soon as results were received. Kim went on to explain that a full review of allowances is underway to ensure the office is compliant of WAG current policies, and as yet is still awaiting clarification from them. If any further errors occur Audit Committee will be notified and a paper produced. Kim went on to say that she had received a template Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from Internal Audit, further work will continue during the summer on establishing MoU's with WAG and MoJ.



### **3. Learning and Development Strategy Paper**

Kim ran through the paper, and responded to the Boards Comments. Kim said that she wanted the paper to be an evidenced based one and was looking at the needs of this coming year when it was written, with regards to the Business Plan and the current UK position. Kim stated that the staff engagement survey raised various points, and she would like to conduct a skills analysis. Fiona thought that this was a good idea and would sit well a new business plan. Glynne thought that it was an excellent piece of work, as did David Crawley who felt the paper would also sit well with Audit Committee requirements. Tim Hemmings asked if the paper could be linked more with PSG and the new business plan, to which Fiona agreed. It was felt that this paper should be a topic for discussion at team meetings, Kim also stated that she would happily lay on a couple of lunchtime sessions to explain this to staff. With the amendment of Interim the board approved the paper.

### **4. Risk Register – update on CSR progress**

After a CSR meeting with HMT he had attended earlier in the morning Piers Bisson opened by asking where to start with making 33% effective economies, and how best to scope efficiencies for savings. David Crawley stated that it would depend on the SoS core business plan, she herself would have to write to the Treasury by the 16<sup>th</sup> July to put forward the Wales Office proposals for the CSR settlement. Senior Management team to meet on July 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss savings, and then prepare to meet with SoS. Fiona stated that this was the start of a process, and felt that Tim, Glynne and Piers should look to re-evaluate The Wales Office risk registers to reflect this new age of austerity.

#### **Action Points**

- Senior Management Team to meet to discuss possible cost efficiencies, to put forward the best possible narrative to the SoS
- Glynne, Piers, and Tim to meet to discuss possible changes to the Strategic Risk Register

### **5. Annual Report – Lessons Learnt**

Due to HMT Guidance last years Annual Report was no longer to be published. Stephen who was responsible for putting the report together asked the other members how they had found the whole process. Glynne felt that as the document had been started a lot early than in previous years the whole process had been a lot easier, and it meant that updates and re-drafts were afforded the time necessary. [REDACTED] pointed out that although the report was not being published Financial tables would still need to be put on the Wales Office Website once this has been updated.

## **6. Audit Committee Annual Report**

The Board noted the Report, and Fiona expressed her thanks to David for the document.

## **7. AOB**

The date of the next Board meeting would be 7 September 2010 to be held in Cardiff, Glynne stated that this may not be an ideal day due to this years very short recess, certain board members may not have time to travel to Cardiff when busy workloads may have to take priority. Other dates were considered, [REDACTED] to arrange a more feasible date by email in due course.

### **Action Points**

- [REDACTED] to arrange a more feasible meeting date in due course.