


**Minutes of the Wales Office Management Board  
Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at Gwydyr House**

**Members Present:**

Fiona Adams – Jones  
David Crawley  
Tim Hemmings  
Glynne Jones

Andrew Allan

Kim Tester  


Chair  
Non executive member  
Deputy Director, Policy  
Deputy Director, Strategy &  
Constitution  
Head of Organisational Change  
and Support Services  
Head of HR  
Secretariat

**Attendees**



Strategy Branch  
Private Office

**Apologies**

Stephen Hillcoat  
Andrew Mathias  
Stephen Knight  
Amanda Latham

Principal Private Secretary  
Head of Communications  
Head of Corporate Services  
Head of Finance and Corporate  
Governance

### **Introduction and apologies received**

1. Apologies - Amanda Latham, Stephen Knight, Stephen Hillcoat The Chair opened by welcoming [REDACTED], and [REDACTED]

### **Minutes of last meeting**

2. The board formally accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November as a true and accurate record. All action points had been completed.

### **Management Information**

#### **3. Performance Statistics**

- 3.1 The board considered the FOI statistics. [REDACTED] deputising for Stephen Hillcoat, opened by stating that the Correspondence Team had now been reformed and hoped that in future Correspondence turnaround would be much improved.
- 3.2 The Board noted that the tracking issue that had previously arisen in respect of correspondence turnaround targets had now been resolved but asked that the reporting format should revert to a previous template which recorded performance at team level.
- 3.3 The Chair concluded that overall percentage figures were very good, but that a more in depth overview of the figures would be helpful at the next and future meetings.
- 3.4 **Action Point:** Private Office to review the reporting format with a view to producing for the next meeting more detailed performance statistics which included breaking down the numbers by team.

#### **4 Financial Position**

- 4.1 In Amanda Latham's absence Andrew Allan introduced the financial report and invited questions from the Board. Members raised the following points/questions:
  - 4.1.1 It was noted that there appeared to be an under spend under "Other Administration" within the variance report. This might need to be re-profiled.
  - 4.1.2 The report showed that the Parliamentary Counsels Office (PCO) had not charged for services provided to WO in 2010-11. Board members asked whether there was any information on charging arrangements in future years. It was noted that there was likely to be new legislation requiring PCO involvement.
  - 4.1.3 The Chair requested that above points be covered in the Finance team update for the next Management Board meeting.

- 4.2 **Action Point:** Amanda Latham to produce a simple table and short report, as part of her Finance update report to the next meeting, in response to the points and questions raised by the Board.

5 **Corporate Services Update**

- 5.1 In Stephen Knights absence Andrew Allan summarised the key points in the Corporate Services report.

5.1.1 Estates - the refurbishment of the reception area and staircase in Gwydyr House had been brought in on time and within budget. The project had been managed in-house without the involvement of the Managing Agent, which had reduced costs. Whilst this may provide a useful format for future work, each project would be decided on individual merit.

5.1.2 Information Assurance training - It was noted that some staff members had yet to complete the mandatory on-line training. Branch heads were asked to ensure that all IA training was completed by the end of February 2011.

- 5.2 Members raised the following points/questions:

5.2.1 It was noted that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) was promoting its own Information Assurance training module that may prove to be a better alternative to the course which the WO currently use, which is supplied by the National School of Government (NSG). It was agreed that it was worth exploring.

5.2.2 Staff had encountered difficulties in logging on to the NSG site from their desks but not when logging on from their home computers. The Board asked that the reasons for this be explored.

5.3 **Action Points :**

5.3.1 All branch heads to ensure that all their staff have completed the IA training module by the end of February 2011.

5.3.2 Stephen Knight to report back at the next meeting, as part of his Corporate Services update report, , in response to the points and questions raised by the Board.; and to provide the names of any members of staff who had not completed the mandatory IA training module by 1 March 2011

5.3.3 The Chair asked that all future updates from Corporate Services include information on the number and ratio of fire marshals, first-aiders and DSE assessors in the London and Cardiff offices.

5.3.4 **Action Point:** Stephen Knight to provide routinely, as part of the Corporate Service update reports, information on the number and ratio of fire marshals, first aiders and DSE assessors.

- 5.4 The Chair expressed her thanks to the Corporate Services team and all those who had served on the Project Board for helping to deliver of the improvements to the reception and stairwell areas

**6 HR Update**

- 6.1 Kim Tester summarised the key points in her paper. The Board considered the staffing paper and thanked Kim for the very helpful staffing data.

6.1.1 Work Life Balance: there was extended discussion about concerns raised by some staff regarding long working hours. The Board was not convinced that there was a serious problem of excessive working hours with Wales Office but accepted that some individuals did work long hours for a variety of reasons. It was also accepted that the example set by Senior Managers was an important factor but that it was important to recognise that work usually became more demanding at higher levels in any organisation. It was agreed that it was the responsibility of Line Managers in the first instance to raise working patterns with those individuals who were causing concern and to reach an agreed solution. It was also agreed that all line managers would be required to discuss formally the workload and hours worked of every member of their as part of the forthcoming year-end reviews, and to record these discussions as part of their summary.

6.1.2 Internal Communications: The Chair pointed to the staff survey results and Mclvor Report findings on internal communications within the office. These findings would be factored in to the small Internal Communications Group being established to consider these and other internal communications aspects relating to WO business systems and processes. The Group meeting would be chaired by Glynne Jones and its members would include [REDACTED] (who had done some very useful preparatory work) and Kim Tester along with representatives from Private Office and the Comms team

6.1.3 **Action point**: Kim Tester to:

6.1.3.a Add data on the number of staff on outward loans to future staffing reports.

6.1.3.b Send a summary of the Work Life Balance survey results to all staff and issue guidance about the Board's requirement that every individual's workload and work-life balance would be discussed formally as part of the Performance Management end-year review system.

6.1.3.c **Action Point**: Glynne Jones to set up Internal Communications group

## 7 Major Strategic Risks

7.1 In Amanda Latham's absence Andrew Allan introduced the Strategic Risks paper. The Chair expressed considerable concern at the number of high-rated risks identified in the paper and sought information on the accuracy of the assessments and, if correct, on the urgent mitigating action put in place.

7.2

[REDACTED]

7.3

[REDACTED]

Discussion followed on the other major risks identified within the paper. Board members suggested that whilst the impact would be high, it was possible that the likelihood was overstated. In light of the discussion, the Chair requested that the risk matrix be re-evaluated.

7.3.1 **Action point** - Amanda Latham/Andrew Allan to provide the Chair with a paper explaining the risks, steps taken to address them and possible solutions to risk G1.

7.3.2 **Action point** - Glynne Jones and Tim Hemmings to review and revise the risk rating of risks P1 and P2

## 8 Annual Report

8.1 The Board considered proposals presented by [REDACTED] for the next Annual Report, which suggested that the document be structured around the Business Plan and be as simple as possible. The Report was in the early stages of production. An outline would be finished by the end of January and would then be submitted to the Secretary of State for her agreement in principle to the content. A draft report would then be presented to the Board for its meeting in March.

8.2 The Board also noted that the 2010-11 Business Plan had been signed off, and planning for subsequent years had been discussed, by Ministers and Senior Managers at a Management Team (SMT)/ Ministerial away day in December. The current Business Plan was to be circulated once more to all staff shortly after the Board meeting.

**8.3 Action Point - [REDACTED] to:**

8.3.1 Distribute the Wales Office 2010 - 2011 Business Plan

8.3.2 Produce a draft annual report for the next Board meeting in March.

**9 Learning and Development 2011 and beyond.**

9.1 Kim Tester summarised the key points in her paper. The Board felt that all external training requests should be considered but budgetary constraints would mean that priority would be given to training which was in direct support of business needs and objectives. The Board decided that all applications for external training would need to be supported at Head of Division level, quoting the relevant Business Plan aim or team/individual objective, and submitted to Kim Tester in HR for formal agreement.

9.2 It was also agreed that further in-house lunchtime seminars would be useful in addressing generic WO needs already identified and/or raising staff awareness of key topics. For example, the Chair asked Private Office to consider staging a few lunchtime seminars on Ministers' preferences re submissions and speeches. Andrew Allan was asked to contact Piers Bisson to discuss the possibility of Piers presenting a seminar on the funding of Wales.

9.3 The Chair asked Kim to now begin work, informed by this discussion, on revising the existing Learning and Development strategy, which would be based on the skills required to deliver the current and future Business Plans and would contain a separate section on mandatory corporate training.

**9.4 Action Point – Kim Tester to**

9.4.1 Bring forward proposals for a 2011-12 training budget, for the Board's agreement at its next meeting

9.4.2 Alert staff to the new Learning and Development process via e-mail by 30/01/11

9.4.3 Produce a revised L&D Strategy for the Board's agreement at its meeting in June/July

9.4.4 Co-ordinate topics and presenters for a programme of regular in-house lunchtime seminars

9.5 **Action Point – Andrew Allan to invite Piers Bisson to present a lunchtime seminar on funding for Wales**

**10 Wider Market Initiative**

- 10.1 The Board considered and noted the paper. There were no additional comments or actions arising.

**11 AOB**

- 11.1 The Board discussed the following matters:

11.1.1 Mobile Telephone Usage: The Chair asked Stephen Knight to look into the mobile phone usage within the office and enquired if it were possible to differentiate between work calls and private usage, and to investigate phone contract arrangements within other Government departments and report back to the Board in due course with advice  
**Action Point** – Stephen Knight.

11.1.2 Internal Audit Action Point Table: The Chair asked Kim Tester to contact [REDACTED] of Internal Audit, to ensure the Internal Audit Action Point table was up to date in respect of the audit on staff induction  
**Action point** – Kim Tester

11.1.3 Use of Government Car Service: The Chair asked [REDACTED] to produce a cost analysis paper for the next Board meeting relating to the use of Government Car Service. The paper to include recommendations on next steps.  
**Action Point** – [REDACTED]

**12 Conclusion and Date of next meeting.**

- 12.1 The next meeting was scheduled for 8 March 2011

[REDACTED]  
**Finance & Corporate Governance Unit**

**Minutes of the Wales Office Management Board  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at Gwydyr House**

**Members Present:**

Fiona Adams – Jones  
David Crawley  
Glynne Jones

Tim Hemmings  
Stephen Hillcoat  
Andrew Mathias  
Andrew Allan

Amanda Latham

Stephen Knight  
[REDACTED]

Chair  
Non executive member  
Deputy Director, Strategy &  
Constitution  
Deputy Director, Policy  
Principal Private Secretary  
Head of Communications  
Head of Organisational Change  
and Support Services  
Head of Finance and Corporate  
Governance  
Head of Corporate Services  
Secretariat

**Attendees**

[REDACTED]  
Private Office

**Apologies**

Kim Tester

Head of HR



## 1 Introduction,

1.1 Apologies were received from Kim Tester

1.2 The Board was given brief oral updates on 2 issues:

1.2.1 Wales Referendum: At the Chair's request, Glynne Jones reported the outcome of the Wales referendum vote, (a "yes" vote by 63.5% to 36.5%). Glynne explained that the result would enable the Assembly to legislate in all the areas covered by the original devolution settlement. The Board formally congratulated Glynne and his team for delivering a successful referendum. It was one of the highest profile pieces of work the Wales Office had undertaken in recent years.

1.2.2 Security: The Chair reported that following an attack on the Junior Ministers constituency office, security in Discovery House had been reviewed.

[REDACTED]

The Board would receive an update on any resulting action taken at its next meeting.

**Action Point:** Andrew Allan and Stephen Knight

## 2 Minutes of last meeting

2.1 The board formally accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on the 20 January as a true and accurate record, and noted that all action points had been completed.

## 3 Management Information

### 3.1 Performance Statistics

3.1.1 Stephen Hillcoat presented the PQ and Correspondence statistics for the Board's consideration, commenting that the figures were very encouraging. The Board noted with approval that Private Office had reverted to a previous template which recorded performance at team level.

3.1.2 Stephen Knight presented the latest FOI statistics, which were also viewed

as being very good.

- 3.1.3 The Chair expressed her thanks to the whole Department for their continued hard work in these areas.
- 3.1.4 David Crawley asked whether the Office was preparing for the 'Purdah' or pre-election period prior to the Assembly elections on 5 May. Glynne Jones explained that Cabinet Office would be issuing guidance for all Government Departments, and that his team were preparing to analyse the manifestos when received. Ministers would be advised as appropriate. The Board agreed that it would be particularly important for all WO staff to maintain an awareness of the sensitivities and asked that Glynne Jones issue a reminder to staff prior to circulation of the Cabinet Office guidance once received.

**Action Point:** Glynne Jones

### 3.2 Financial Position

- 3.2.1 Amanda Latham introduced the financial report.
- 3.2.2 It was noted that, overall, the Office was forecast to within its budget at the end of the financial year.
- 3.2.3 Amanda explained to the Board that, for accounting purposes and due to a pension commitment for a previous member of staff, the Office would be creating an Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget line within its accounts for the next few years. A short paper, setting out further and better particulars, would be provided to the Board out of committee.
- Action:** Amanda Latham
- 3.2.4 The Chair enquired about PCO charges in relation to the 2011 – 2012 budgets. Amanda explained that a new charging system would be implemented shortly, but it was already known that PCO would only be charging for services supplied as opposed to a flat fee as in previous years. The Board welcomed this change in PCO charging practice as more cost effective.
- 3.2.5 The Board noted that indicative budgets for 2011-12 had been allocated to each team, but that these allocations would be subject to review and amendment by the Change and Efficiencies Committee, a new sub-committee of the Board which was being established from the start of the new financial year. The Board formally approved the indicative budgets.
- 3.2.6 Amanda reported on the Cash Management arrangements. She confirmed that preparations for the Office to have its own accounts were progressing well and were ahead of schedule.

3.2.7 The Board expressed its thanks to [REDACTED] and Amanda Latham for their continued hard work in setting up all the new systems necessary for the next financial year.

3.2.8 It was noted that progress was also being made with the new Estimates and COINS system. Amanda informed the Board that she was awaiting written guidance from HMT and would be sending a further paper on new controls to the Senior Management Team (SMT) in due course.

**Action:** Amanda Latham

3.2.9 Amanda also informed the Board that she had arranged a meeting with the Ministry of Justice to discuss the reduction of costs regarding Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The aim of this meeting was to scope the possibility of future efficiencies and to build in reasonable notice periods. The Board asked that Andrew Allan produce an up to date list of SLAs, including break out dates, for the next meeting.

**Action:** Andrew Allan

3.2.10 The Board accepted the recommendation to continue with the status quo for the time being in respect of MoJ policies relied on by the Wales Office, including the charts of accounts and finance policies. It was noted that those policies would then be reviewed on an incremental basis over time in conjunction with the Scotland and Northern Ireland Offices and informed by the evolving Shared Services project for the 3 Territorial Offices. .

### 3.3 Corporate Services Update

3.3.1 Stephen Knight summarised the key points in the Corporate Services report. The Board thanked Stephen and his team for all their hard work with regards to the recent office improvements,

3.3.2 The Chair welcomed the fact that the update report now included the number and ratio of fire marshals, first aiders and DSE assessors in the London and Cardiff offices. It was noted that several staff members in both London and Cardiff offices were or had undertaken relevant training, which would alter the figures presented. A more accurate update would be available at the next meeting.

3.3.3 The Chair asked Stephen Knight to arrange for the Board to undertake its annual review of compliance against the Wales Office's Welsh Language Scheme at the next Board meeting.

**Action:** Board Secretary (Andrew Allan) & Stephen Knight

### 3.4 HR Update

3.4.1 In Kim Tester's absence, Andrew Allan presented HR report. The key points discussed were:

### 3.4.2 Recruitment

3.4.2.a An appointment had been made in respect of the EO Policy Officer vacancy. A reserve candidate had also been identified.

3.4.2b The G7 Head of Social Affairs post was being advertised more widely in CS VACs (the CS wide redeployment pool)

3.4.2.b An advert for the G6 Deputy Head of Policy post, based in Cardiff, would be advertised shortly.

### 3.4.3 Performance Management

3.4.3.a An updated paper had been circulated to MB.

### 3.4.4 Electronic Staff Records system

3.4.3.b Dates for mandatory training for all line managers in the online processes for the MOJ's new Electronic Staff Records System had been received and would shortly be circulated to Senior Managers.

### 3.4.5 Apprenticeships

3.4.5a The Chair had requested advice on the new Apprenticeships initiative across government and would be discussing with the Secretary of State. She noted however that the capacity of the Wales Office to accommodate apprenticeships was limited and envisaged that future action would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### 3.4.6 Other HR matters

3.4.6a The Board approved the proposal that the Maundy Thursday half-day and the Queen's Birthday privilege holidays be fixed for the dates on which both occasions fell and not taken in lieu on other dates. The Chair asked that Kim Tester send an email to all staff regarding these privilege days on her return  
**Action:** Kim Tester.

3.4.6b The Chair drew attention to the low sick absence rate for the Office.

3.4.6c The Board noted that the Learning and Development Strategy was being revised and the Chair asked that the revised draft be submitted for the Board's consideration at its next meeting  
**Action:** Board Secretary (Andrew Allan) & Kim Tester

## 4 Major Strategic Risks

4.1 Amanda Latham introduced the Strategic Risks paper, adding that it would need to be updated in light of the referendum result.

4.2 The following points were raised in discussion:

4.2.1 David Crawley asked why risk identifier W3 present in the December risk register had been removed. Amanda Latham undertook to write to David (copied to the rest of the Board) to clarify the position.

**Action:** Amanda Latham

4.2.2 The Chair commented that following the actions and reviews that had taken place since the last meeting, the risk register now better reflected the risk profile of the Office.

4.2.3 Stephen Hillcoat asked that his name also be added to risk identifier P5 and that the descriptor be slightly amended.

**Action:** Amanda Latham

## **5 Annual Report**

5.1 Glynne Jones outlined the revised format for the 2010-11 Annual Report, stating that the aim had been to make the Report more conversational and accessible than previous years' reports. An early draft had been seen by the senior management team, the Secretary of State, the Minister and HM Treasury (HMT), all of whom were content with the way the document was progressing. HMT had informed the department that the report could be published any day before the summer recess. Glynne informed the Board that the intention was to publish the Report before 7 July.

5.2 The Board thanked Glynne for the good work done by his team and commented that the Report was shaping up to be a very readable and professional document. There were no additional comments or action points

## **6 Gwydyr House Improvements Work Plan**

6.1 Stephen Knight introduced the proposed forward work programme. He pointed out that there were possible building consent issues with some of the bigger improvement works, such as the refurbishment of the cloakrooms.

6.2 The Chair noted that within the plan there was a very specific security need for the back door at Gwydyr House to be replaced. Stephen Knight informed the Board that this was to be done imminently.

6.3 The Board relayed its thanks to Stephen and his team for the successful

improvement works to date, which had all been completed to time and to budget. The forward programme was formally agreed in principle, subject to more detailed costings of each item as the plan progressed. .

## 7 Report from **Health & Safety Committee**

7.1 The Chair of the Health & Safety sub-committee, Tim Hemmings, reported that the Health and Safety Committee had identified three key areas for further scrutiny: training, induction and the Health and Safety risk register. The Board welcomed the establishment of the Committee as a clear demonstration of management's commitment to the wellbeing and safety of staff, Ministers and visitors. The following points were raised during discussion of the paper:

7.1.1 Travel, late working, and home working were identified as additional key areas for further investigation.

7.1.2 The chair requested that Tim Hemmings provide an update on the work of the Health & Safety committee for the next edition of the staff newsletter.  
**Action:** Tim Hemmings

## 8 **Government Car Service.**

8.1 [REDACTED] presented to the Board a paper setting out the options for the Wales Office's future use of the Government Car Service. The following points/questions were raised in discussion:

8.1.1 The Board was of the view that the current system in Cardiff was becoming increasingly unviable, and that, as the current lease on the Jaguar based in Cardiff expired shortly, a more cost effective approach should be sought.

8.1.2 It was recognised that [REDACTED] an Assembly recommended car service in Cardiff, could be a suitable alternative provided certain requirements such as security issues could be met. Private Office will engage in further discussion with [REDACTED]

8.1.3 The Board also considered the car service arrangements in relation to the London Office. The Chair was of the view that the plans to streamline the 2 Private Offices into one might also result in better co-ordination in the use of the car and possibly improved access to the car by the junior Minister. The Board considered that the current system in London presented the best option for the time being when considering access arrangements for the Palace of Westminster and other Ministerial needs.

8.2 The Chair asked the Private Office to continue with its current investigations with an aim of reducing costs further. At which point, she and the Principal Private Secretary (PPS) would have a discussion with the Secretary of State. The PPS would provide an oral update for the Board on the outcomes at its next meeting

**Action:** Stephen Hillcoat (Board Secretary Andrew Allan)

**9 Mobile Phones**

9.1.1 The Chair raised the issue of charging staff for personal calls made on office mobiles and BlackBerries, and invited initial views from the board. General opinion was that despite the relatively small costs involved it would be wise to find out the policy position of other government departments. Andrew Allan and Amanda Latham were asked to investigate further and to put forward advice and recommendations to the Director and senior team. .

**Action:** Andrew Allan & Amanda Latham

**10 Any Other Business**

10.1 No other business was raised.

**11 Conclusion and Date of next meeting.**

11.1 The next meeting was scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011

  
**Finance & Corporate Governance Unit**