**Office of the Advocate General**

***Our purpose: Providing high quality legal services to secure the UK Government’s objectives in Scotland***

**Business Plan 2014-15**

Introduction

The Office of the Advocate General is the UK Government’s Scottish Legal team. We provide legal advice, drafting and court services to the UK Government in relation to Scotland.  We utilise our skills in advocacy and negotiation in order to advance the UK Government’s objectives, and we support the Advocate General in his role as a Law Officer.

*This business plan will be updated periodically*

*Last updated: December 2014*

What we will do: Our strategic objectives

**Objective 1. Providing Advice on Policy and Legislation Affecting Scotland.** We will advise UK Government departments on the implications of their policies for Scotland and work with them to ensure UK legislation works for Scotland. We will review Scottish Parliament legislation in support of the Advocate General’s statutory function under section 33 of the Scotland Act and engage with UK Government departments and the Scottish Government to ensure implications of Scottish legislation are understood and competence issues are addressed.

**Objective 2. Protecting the UK Government’s Interests in the Courts.** We will continue to provide an excellent service in the conduct of litigation in the Scottish courts and tribunals and in the UK Supreme Court for departments such as Home Office, Department of Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs. We will support the Advocate General in discharging his statutory functions under the Scotland Act.

**Objective 3. Scotland’s Place Within the UK**. We will work to support Scotland’s continuing place within the UK, including working to support the delivery of a strengthened Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom to meet the commitments made in advance of the independence referendum, and working with Scotland Office to develop and lead the new cross-Government network of UK departments in Scotland.

**Objective 4. Helping to Ensure that Devolution Works.** We will work to ensure that the UK Government operates effectively for Scotland in reserved areas and facilitate cooperation between Scotland’s two administrations.

**Objective 5. Supporting Ministers.** We will work to ensure that UK Government Ministers achieve their objectives in Scotland, and, in particular, support the Advocate General for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

How we will deliver our objectives: Our approach:

**1. Expert:** We will display a depth of knowledge and analytical ability, and will deploy it on our work. We will provide our people with the opportunity to gain the knowledge and experience that is required to deliver high quality, timely and effective legal services. We will also promote better knowledge-sharing within the office to ensure that our people can gain an overview of the activities that we engage in, see their purpose, and be equipped to contribute to their delivery.

**2.** **Flexible:** We belong to a particular team or division, but we will recognise that not all of our work must be done within that context. We all share responsibility for the development of the office and maintenance and improvement of client relations. In order to develop true flexibility, we will ensure that enhanced opportunities to gain experience in other teams are available to our people. In addition, more project-based working will be beneficial in building knowledge, expertise and truly flexible teams.

**3.** **Networked and outward looking**: We will seek to develop strong relationships across all Divisions, with Whitehall departments and with external stakeholders. We will provide our people with opportunities to see a bigger picture by shadowing and contributing to the work that is going on in other teams, areas (including London) and client departments. We will engage effectively with the Scottish Government to resolve issues in a proactive way. We will continue to develop links and ensure the legal advice we provide recognises the wider implications and potential risks of any action. We will ensure that strong links with the Scottish Government are maintained at all levels, even at times of political tension or strong differences of opinion.

4.

**Inclusive:** We have a wide variety of functions but we work together, with our Minister, to deliver our purpose and strategic objectives. Each Division of OAG, the Legal Secretariat, Private Office and the Business Support team is core to our operations, and we will support our people with a focus on driving forward priority OAG business.We are one team.

**5.**  **A place for growth and development:** We will build the capacity of all our people by providing them with as diverse a range of work as possible, letting each member of OAG work to their maximum potential. We will innovate and try new ideas and approaches. We will seek to provide a stimulating environment in which to work, learn and develop. Much of this work will be led by the OAG Learning and Development group.