

Land & Property Services

Summary of the Management Board meeting held in Queen's Court on Thursday 24th November 2011 at 9.30am

Present:

John Wilkinson	Chair and Chief Executive
Alan Brontë	Director of Mapping and Valuation Services
Anne Flanagan	Director of Business Services
Wilfie Hamilton	Independent Board Member
Richard Hyslop	Director of Transformation and Customer
Dennis Licence	External Adviser
Patricia McAuley	Director of Revenues and Benefits
Patricia Montgomery	Director of Registration
Louisa McKenna	Head of Corporate Finance
Ruth Thompson	Secretary

1. Conflict of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 27th October 2011

The minutes and summary of the meeting held on the 27th October were agreed, subject to a number of amendments.

3. Finance Report

The Board reviewed the Finance Report on the LPS financial position as at 31st October 2011. In particular, the Board paid attention to the capital expenditure, which had been reforecast, and noted that capital budget would be surrendered to DFP in the January Monitoring Round. For a variety of reasons, there were some capital projects that would not be sufficiently progressed within the financial year to ensure that the capital spend would be completed. Assurances had been provided that the remaining projects would be spent by 31st March 2012. The Board also noted that the capital forecasting procedure would be reviewed in 2012-2013 to take a strategic, three-year view.

The Board stressed the need for Directors to now address business cases and to pull this work together at a strategic level for the next three years.

It was noted that the income forecast had been revised downwards, and the Board discussed the risks that needed to be taken into account as a result.

There would be further discussions with the Department, and work was ongoing on contingency planning.

Finally, the Head of Corporate Finance advised that there may be some funding available in-year; the Department had raised issues from the Comptroller and Auditor General Reports as potential areas for spend. The Chief Executive said that plans would be put together across business areas.

4. Direct Award Contracts

The Board examined proposals for the Management of Direct Award Contracts (DACs) and agreed these, subject to the ICT Governance Committee managing the strategic approach to DACs. The Board also noted the progress made with regard to outstanding DACs and recognised the work that had gone into this.

5. DARD/LPIS Update

The Director of Mapping and Valuation Services provided an update and paper for the Board with regard to this project. The Board noted that CPD had approved the contract extension to the Positional Improvement contract, and the contractors had now started the DARD boundary alignments. In addition, the Director would now attend the DARD EU Audit Compliance Programme Board, the next meeting of which would take place in early December.

6. 1. Managing Attendance Report

The Board reviewed the progress made and noted that the current projected end of year absence rate for LPS after six months was at 7.2 days, compared to 8.4 days in the same period last year. However, while this was positive, the Board was concerned about the increase in intermittent sick absences, which were currently the highest so far this year, and asked the Director of Business Services to provide further information on these absences.

6.2 LPS Corporate Score-card 2011-2012

Progress on the Corporate Balanced Scorecard was examined, with the Board paying particular attention to those targets where there had been a detrimental change in the projection to year-end.

Target BP1 (c), to reduce the value of end-dated accounts within ABBACUS by 31 March 2012, was now projected as unlikely to be met. The Board queried this target in terms of the inclusion of the current year date, and the Director of Revenues and Benefits advised that she would clarify the background to the target. There were three other targets concerning the Board:

- C3a regarding the Memorandum of Understanding being available to all councils was projected as 'amber' as action needed to be taken to secure approval from SOLACE. This would be done within the next few weeks.
- BP1e on reducing outstanding Certificates of Revisions (CRs) by 30th November 2011 was also projected as 'amber'. While it was considered

that the target could be met by year-end, the date of 30th November 2011 was unlikely to be achieved, due to a significant rise in numbers of CRs.

- BP 1f regarding the completion of a desk-based review of properties potentially entitled to an agricultural allowance was also projected as 'amber' due to competing priorities. The Director of Mapping and Valuation Services advised that the comments provided in connection with this target would be reviewed and amended.

6.3.CCCU Statistics

The Board reviewed the CCCU and IMU statistics for the period April to October 2011, and was pleased to note a decrease in the number of stage 1 complaints being received, and in Ombudsman's cases.

6.4 Registration Directorate performance report

The Director of Registration provided the performance report for Registration and in particular the Board noted that:

- Workstocks in general had reduced, although there had been a temporary increase due to Notices of Deposit being registered.
- E-Registration take-up had remained static.
- Most of the applications relating to the registration of banks equitable interests had been received and approximately 40% had been completed. The remaining 60% was in progress.

The Board noted the importance of taking account of these trends for future planning.

6.6 Revenues and Benefits Performance Report

The Director of Revenues and Benefits provided her report to the Board on progress and outlined actions in hand to address a number of issues. It was noted that, currently, collection was above profile, as was debt, following the dip in debt collection in September 2011. As at 30th September 2011, the monies transferred to the Paymaster General's Account was £35.8 million, 4.6% ahead of the profiled target. The Board was pleased with progress but stressed the need for very close monitoring over the next months.

The Board asked about progress with regard to Rating of Empty Homes (REH), and work ongoing to reduce the impact of REH on next year's debt figures. The Director provided an update on progress with regard to tracing owner details for billing (currently at 74%).

The Director also outlined steps being taken to analyse work in hand in the Directorate; part of the bid for additional resource for next year was to address specific areas of work needing to be targeted.

6.7 Mapping and Valuation Services Performance Report

The Director of Mapping and Valuation Services presented his report, focusing on progress with regard to score-card targets and the main risks and issues currently being managed. He highlighted the impact of the introduction of Rating of Empty Homes (REH) on applications for revision, which continued to increase. He advised the Board that he was:

- Considering how best to deal with the competing priorities that resulted across the business.
- Looking at best use of resources (including outside resources) to tackle vulnerable areas of business, and reviewing processes.

6.8 LPS Risk Register

The Board reviewed the 2011-2012 Corporate Risk Register including that:

- Risk 6, relating to the Rating of Empty Homes had been reduced to 'minor' as most of the additional actions required to fully manage the risk had been completed.
- Ownership of Risk 7, dealing with the Universal Credit Programme had been transferred to the Chief Executive.
- Of the nine items on the Risk Register only one – Risk 9, to do with debt, was deemed to be serious, whilst one was rated as minor.

It was agreed that:

- Consideration would be given to revising the probability of Risk 2, realising the benefits of a single land and property agency.
- Consideration would be given to the wording of Risk 4, regarding 'managing' the expectations of stakeholders.
- Consideration would be given as to whether there were other risks regarding the impact of Rating of Empty Homes on other areas of business (Risk 6).
- The wording of Risk 7 on Universal Credit would be reviewed with particular emphasis on Housing Benefit and Rate Relief, and the probability would be increased to 4, as progress was outside the control of LPS.
- The wording of Risk 8, on the implementation of Positional Improvement, would be amended.

The Board also discussed Risk 9, regarding debt recovery performance, including the actions being taken, and agreed that this risk rating would be kept under careful review. In connection with this risk, the External Advisor referred to the Historic Team work and the Director of Revenues and Benefits advised that while it had been underestimated and the work needed experienced and skilled staff, steps were being taken to make sure as far as possible that the work would be completed on time.

7. Review of action points

The Board reviewed the action points from previous meetings and the attached schedule was updated accordingly.

8. Key issues for the next team brief

The Board agreed the Management Board issues for the next Team Brief.

9. Any other business

Under any other business, the Chief Executive provided an update on Departmental Planning around the programme for Government.

10. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 15th December and would be followed by lunch.