

Land & Property Services

Summary of the Management Board meeting held in Queen's Court on Thursday 27th October 2011 at 9.30am

Present:

John Wilkinson	Chair and Chief Executive
Alan Brontë	Director of Mapping and Valuation Services
Wilfie Hamilton	Independent Board Member
Patricia McAuley	Director of Revenues and Benefits
Patricia Montgomery	Director of Registration
Leanne McCullough	Head of Corporate Finance
Louisa McKenna	
Chris Smart	Head of Corporate Human Resources, Agenda item 8 only
Tracey Newell	Transformation, agenda item 7 only
Ruth Thompson	Secretary

Apologies:	Anne Flanagan, Change Management Advisor
	Dennis Licence, External Adviser

1. Conflicts of interest

There were no conflicts of interest.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th September 2011

The minutes of the previous meetings and the summary for publication on the intranet were agreed.

3. Finance Report

Management Board reviewed the current budget situation, and the Head of Corporate Finance provided an update on the budgets for 2011-2012, advising that the August accounts indicated a budget neutral position. She also outlined further pressures and easements. In addition, the Board was advised of:

- Arrangements for meeting budget holders in connection with the final monitoring round.
- Arrangements for managing the contingent liability.
- That there would be an extraordinary meeting of the Transformation Sub-Committee regarding the capital budget.

In connection with the capital budget, the Board discussed issues around procurement, and noted that the Chief Executive would talk with Directors regarding this.

On behalf of the Board, the Chief Executive thanked the Head of Corporate Finance, who would be moving on to a new position later that week, for all her work with the Board on finance issues in the past two years.

4. Update on LPS Valuation Client Services Charging Policy

Management Board reviewed the LPS policy regarding charging for the provision of Valuation Client Services. The current policy was discussed, and consideration was given to a number of options; continuing with the current model, moving to full hard charging, or moving to partial hard charging. The Board noted the range of important work undertaken by this small team.

Following discussion, the Board favoured continuation with the current model, where the budget for Valuation Client Services used by the NICS Departments was held by LPS, departments were notionally charged for their usage, and other bodies would continue to be hard charged. It was agreed that this option should be adopted, and that a paper to this effect would be brought to the Departmental Board in December 2011.

5. Northern Ireland Mapping Agreement (NIMA) Delivery Update

This paper provided the Board with an update on NIMA, which was the centrally funded agreement which allowed LPS geographic information to be used by all Northern Ireland departments, NDPBs, and local authorities. It was noted that NIMA also underpinned the Geographic Information (GI) Strategy and enabled compliance with the EU INSPIRE Directive. The Board noted examples of the work that LPS was involved in connection with:

- LPS mapping products
- The GI consultancy service
- The Intellectual Property Rights Service
- Global Navigational Satellite System Service
- Geohub NI
- The GI Strategy and INSPIRE support
- Emergency Response Service

The Board noted that NIMA continued to underpin the growing use of geographic information across the Northern Ireland public sector, and that, going forward, the NIMA teams would further develop the range of products and services, the implementation of INSPIRE and seek to extend the income generated by NIMA. Again, the Board commented on the range of work throughout the Northern Ireland public service in which LPS was involved, and which was positively influenced by LPS data and work.

6. LPS/DARD EU Audit Compliance Programme

The Director of Mapping and Valuation updated the Board with regard to this work, including the most significant risks and the arrangements put in place to take forward the alignment of DARD field boundaries by the required date. The

Board noted that it was intended that the bulk of this work would be carried out through an extension to the current positional improvement contract, with some alignment being carried out by LPS staff, and considered information on:

- The resource requirements and arrangements
- The high level project plan
- That Central Procurement Division's approval was being sought for the extension to the positional improvement contract, and therefore there was a one week slippage in the plan.
- That the changes to project governance noted in the previous report to the Board were to be implemented.

The Board urged that there should be clear demarcation of responsibilities with reference to the public interface of this project, and the Director of Mapping and Valuation Services advised that this issue would be addressed once the contract and governance issues had been resolved. The Chief Executive and the Board recognised the work that was being done by Trevor Steenson in connection with this project.

7. Progress update on Making a Difference in LPS – 2011-2012 Stepping Stones

The Board reviewed a paper reporting on progress on the LPS 2011-2012 'Stepping Stones', which brought together key corporate and directorate level actions in direct response to staff feedback. It was noted that the delivery of the Stepping Stones was a key enabler for meeting the LPS targets in relation to staff engagement and the Staff Attitudes Survey. Directors had provided updates for their areas, and the Board noted the actions taken and progress made, and agreed a proposed communication to staff about this. The next review would be due in January 2012.

The Board was pleased with the amount of work that had been done throughout LPS in connection with these issues, and noticed that the excellent progress was because of good management and the wide-ranging work done on development of people at all levels. While progress was still being driven, the Board was optimistic that the ethos of staff engagement and development would soon become part of 'normal business' throughout LPS.

8. LPS Human Resources Strategy: Six Month Report

The Board reviewed the six-month progress report on the actions taken under the LPS Human Resources Strategy 2010-2013, and noted the substantial progress made to date, which included:

- Meeting the LPS objective in connection with staff in post, which was due to the hard work of teams and of line managers.
- The provision of up to date management information, draft organisational charts/structures, new cost centres, and a new hierarchy following the significant organisational changes in the last six months.
- Recruitment and promotion of professional and technical grade staff.

- Staff development, including over 500 staff participating in the Leadership Development Programme.
- The AA/AO Workshops, which would begin the following week.
- The development of a Revenues and Benefits Training Framework.
- A new on-line induction for LPS, which would be available shortly.
- Continuous development of LPS professional and technical staff, including a 100% pass rate at the last RICS assessment.
- Ongoing, excellent work being carried out by managers throughout the organisation in connection with absence management.
- Positive working relationships with TUS.

Management Board considered a separate health and safety progress report, including steps taken to provide senior management with substantial assurance of internal control. The Board noted that further work would be done with regard to the LPS Lone Working Policy; a paper would be brought to the Directors' Weekly Meeting regarding this, and agreed recommendations would need to be built into the review of the Working in the Field Policy.

The Independent Board Member commented on how much he welcomed this report and, in particular, the work that had been done to transform the LPS approach to people and the culture of the organisation.

9.1. Managing Attendance Report

Management Board reviewed the current position in relation to absence management in LPS, including long-term and intermittent sick absences. The overall absence rate for LPS remained at 3.4%, showing a continuous improvement compared to 4.1% for the same period last year. The current projected end of year absence rate was 6.9 days lost. The Chief Executive advised that the good work in connection with this had been acknowledged by the Departmental Board at its last meeting.

9.2 Accommodation Report – July 2011 to September 2011

Management Board considered the current situation in connection with LPS future Belfast accommodation and noted that research and planning was being taken forward to consider accommodation needs for the next number of years. It was also noted that:

- It had been decided to move the remaining staff out of Oxford House to other city centre LPS buildings by the end of October 2011, and consultation had begun with TUS and a Whitley Accommodation Group established to take forward the relevant issues.
- The Board also noted ongoing work in Boaz House.

Finally, the Board agreed arrangements to conduct a 'light touch' post occupancy evaluation of the move into the new accommodation at Marlborough House.

9.3. LPS Corporate Balanced Score-card Monitor

Management Board reviewed the current status of the Corporate Balanced Score-card, in particular, changes to the projection to year-end status, which included that Target BP1c: to reduce the value of end-dated accounts within Abbacus, was now projected as 'would not be achieved at year-end'. The Chief Executive would discuss this with the Director of Revenues and Benefits.

The Board also noted that Target BP4: LPS readiness for the introduction of Universal Credit, was projected as requiring monitoring, and agreed that the wording of the explanation in connection with this should reflect the current lack of certainty regarding the policy to be implemented. Finally, the Director of Mapping and Valuation advised the Board that he expected that Target C2 in connection with Largescale Mapping would revert to a projection of being achieved at year-end.

9.4. CCCU and IMU statistics September 2011

Management Board noted the latest positive position on performance against the management of Assembly Questions, Private Office correspondence, complaints, DFP Committee queries and data protection requests. The Board thanked Directors, senior management and teams throughout LPS for ensuring that the timescales were achieved.

9.5. Revenues and Benefits Performance Report

Management Board considered the monthly update from Revenues and Benefits, including that:

- Progress on the net collectable rates target was ahead of profile by 2.7%.
- As at 30th September 2011, monies transferred to the Paymaster General's Account was £23 million, 3.5% ahead of the profiled target.

It was also noted that the debt position at 4th October 2011 was £552 million, £32 million higher than the forecasted amount of £520 million. The Board reviewed the reasons for this shortfall, which included issues in connection with the introduction of Rating of Empty Homes (REH) with regard to landlords, and the steps that were being taken, including close monitoring over the next weeks. It was agreed that the costs and implications of the introduction of REH such as this should be incorporated in the submission being prepared to the Minister.

The Director of Revenues and Benefits provided the Board with an update on the August 2011 Actual Penny Product forecast information. The Board noted the current position, and that a submission had gone to the Minister, which would be followed by letters to the councils. The Board also discussed write-off and noted that IRRV would provide advice and information on levels of write-off and carry over of debt in comparable GB authorities.

9.6 Registration Work Stock Reports

Management Board reviewed the position of Registration work stock as at the end of September 2011, and was pleased to note that use of e registration had risen even further to 75%.

9.7 Mapping and Valuation Performance Report

The Director of Mapping and Valuation updated the Board on progress in his Directorate and outlined the importance of, and challenges involved in, balancing the different aspects of work, as meeting some priorities could mean that other targets could be missed. The Board discussed these difficulties and the importance of keeping LPS clear of backlogs. A further aspect that needed to be taken into account was the possibility of a revaluation. The Board agreed that the Chief Executive and the Director of Mapping and Valuation should meet to discuss balancing priorities in terms of their value and impact.

10. Review of matters arising and action points

The action points from previous meeting were reviewed and progress noted. The attached schedule was updated accordingly.

11. Key issues for the next team brief

The Board agreed that key issues for the next Team Brief should focus on how the organisation was developing and the good progress made, particularly in relation to people development and culture. The Chief Executive would discuss this further with Marcomms.

12. Any other business

The Chief Executive outlined a number of items of any other business, including:

- That he would look at the LPS complaints management system.
- That he had had a meeting to discuss the next steps regarding leadership development and how this could be brought into 'normal business'. There would be further discussion regarding this at Directors' Weekly Meetings.
- Discussions regarding Direct Award Contracts, and that a paper would be brought to the next Board meeting regarding this issue.
- The Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on the previous day. He stressed the importance, in the light of earlier conversations regarding resources to manage commitments, of the LPS capacity plans.
- The Eurogeographic Conference, which had been a huge success. Thank-you notes had been sent to the staff who had worked very hard in connection with the conference.

13. Date of the next meeting

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 24th November 2011.

The meeting was followed by a discussion of the arrangements for the AA/AO workshops that would take place from the following week.