

Note of the Executive Board Meeting held on 29 July 2009

Present:	Jim Martin Niki Maclean David Robb	Ombudsman (Chair) Head of Services Director of Policy and Development
In attendance:	Emma Gray Iain Law Judy Saddler Kathleen Steindl Annie White Fiona Paterson	Communications & Outreach Manager Investigations Manager Investigations Manager Investigations Manager Casework Knowledge Manager. Senior Personal Assistant (Secretary)

Actions

1. The meeting opened at 10:30 with no apologies.
2. The minutes from the meeting held on 3 June 2009 were agreed with minor amendments.

The KPI target figures were updated following the meeting to:
 - KPI 1 will measure complaints not for this office, or not for this office yet (OOJ & premature - 90% cases closed within two weeks);
 - KPI 2 will measure complaints for this office but not formally reported to Parliament (80% cases closed within four months);
 - KPI 3 will measure formally reported cases to draft report stage, but not including any cases more than nine months old at 1 April 2009 (90% cases drafted within 12 months).
3. Action points held over from previous meetings were reviewed.
4. The Board noted significant upcoming meetings on the Board members' calendars.
5. **Performance Update**
The Board welcomed the new format for showing performance against the Business Plan, and in more detail against casework targets.

The Board requested that those areas not yet recording a measure for Q1 on the Business Plan Performance Summary is completed and additional explanatory text is added on the Casework Performance Summary.

**MT and
FP**

6. Progressing Strategic Objectives

6.1. Old Cases

The Board noted the paper and commended the excellent progress against this objective. The Board requested that the management team continue careful monitoring of all cases over nine months old, and implement a process for managing these at-risk cases.

MT

6.2. Implementing Parliamentary and Government Bills

The Board noted the paper and were given a verbal update on the Scottish Parliament RSSB Committee Bill and Scottish Government Public Services Reform Bill currently in progress. The Board noted the current priorities.

The Ombudsman informed the Board that FP will assist the DR and the Research and Policy Officers with project management of the seven work-streams. DR outlined the next steps and stakeholder meetings being undertaken to progress the recommendations.

The Ombudsman emphasised the implications of these Bills on the business over the next 12 months, and the challenges to the management team during this transition to ensure the business is ready and working at a high standard in all areas and the integrity of the office is maintained. The Ombudsman stressed the importance of maintaining a high standard of performance in the core business while preparations are made for the new roles.

6.3. Stakeholder engagement

EG provided a verbal update on the importance of linking the stakeholder engagement strategy with the policy work underway on the Parliamentary and Government Bills. This will be particularly vital where engagement concerns stakeholders who are likely to fall under the SPSO's widened remit.

7. **Management Information**

The Ombudsman outlined the business risks of the upcoming changes to the SPSO and identified 12 immediate issues to be addressed in the next 12 months. His priorities will be to work through the critical issues identified, create and embed best working practices before the acquisition of additional jurisdictions and to devolve the decision-making process. The goal is to create an organisation that is an example of best practice.

8. **Progress against Business Plan**

8.1. **A. Operational Report**

The Board noted the operational performance report and discussed the issues raised.

The Board congratulated GR on his recent appointment as part-time Gateway Officer. KS is currently drafting operational guidelines for Gateway, which will be followed by a Gateway operational plan by which to measure success. **KS**

The Board discussed the difference in the QA reports tabled for the quarter. JS explained the need to further develop service standards and guidance to assist the QA reviewers. **JS**

Casework Guidance is in the process of being updated by IL. The draft will be circulated for comment by the end of August and issued in September. **IL**

B. Communications and Outreach Update

The Board noted the communications and outreach activities undertaken in the previous month and key upcoming events. The Board congratulated EG and her team on the very successful Local Government Liaison Officer Conference held in June.

The Board noted the excellent media coverage on recent health reports, but also noted this may have implications for local resolution. Incoming calls are being monitored to note if there is any increase resulting from this coverage.

C. Knowledge Management

The Board noted the update on CKM activities, and in particular the issue dates for Annual Letters.

The Board requested monthly reports on high profile / high risk cases. **FP**

D. Training Unit

The Board noted the update on the Training Unit and referred the question of when to begin internal recruitment for trainers to a discussion between the Ombudsman, DR and KB. **JM, DR**

8.2. Replacement of ICT Infrastructure and CHS

The Board noted the update on outstanding WorkPro issues and the current situation regarding these issues. SPSO are assisting CAS with prioritising issues and signoff will not take place until fixes are tested. Once the project has been signed off, SPSO will be given authority to make changes to templates.

WorkPro team experts will meet regularly to discuss ongoing issues raised by colleagues. There will be an audit to assess user understanding undertaken in Q2 followed by training where required.

8.3. People and Human Resources Report

The Board noted the paper and were informed of inaugural meeting of the Learning and Development Plan working group. A draft proposal incorporating the high quality feedback received on the plan will be circulated, outlining priorities as linked to the Business Plan.

The Board requested that the HR statistics are broken down by headcount and FTE.

NM

8.4. Financial Performance

The Board noted the current position against budget. The 2010-11 budget submission is due to be submitted to the SPCB by 13 August.

8.5. Risk and Audit

The Board noted the current significant risk areas and the three documents accompanying the paper:

- 2008-09 Risk Register update
- Pandemic Flu Action Plan
- SPSO Personal Safety Policy

The Board requested that the management team take particular note of the checklist of action points in the Pandemic Flu Action Plan.

ALL

9. AOB

9.1. Report from returning secondees

GR and CG were invited to the Board meeting to discuss their findings from each of their secondments and provide any insights for organisational learning. Particular points and suggestions of note include:

- SPSO source/target secondments to support management priorities to enhance organisational benefits, e.g., knowledge gaps, relationship building, skills acquisition;
- Clear stated objectives for secondments for both organisations are agreed up-front;
- Consider alternative methods of secondment that are sustainable and don't impact on the core business.

NM

These will be considered as part of the 2009-10 Learning and Development Plan.

The meeting closed at 13:00.