

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting held in Portcullis House, on 5 March 2013 commencing at 12:45

Secretary of State (Chair)
Advocate General

Alun Evans (Principal Accounting Officer)
Michael Chalmers
Margaret Porteous
Colin Faulkner
John Aldridge
Edward Adams

Item 1: Introduction & apologies

1. Apologies were received from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Chris Flatt and Jan Marshall.

Item 2: Minutes of the meeting of 27 November 2012 and matters arising

2. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting. There were no matters arising requiring further action.

Item 3: Offices' strategy and current policy

3. Alun Evans reported that the launch of the Scotland analysis programme on 11 February had been very successful with a high quality paper.
4. He also reported that the Cabinet Secretary and the Head of the Home Civil, Service had visited Edinburgh on 21 February. Their programme had included a session with SO and OAG officials in Melville Crescent.
5. Michael Chalmers described the role of OAG in ensuring that the legal content in the Scotland analysis papers was of the highest quality. At the same time OAG was maintaining its regular work on legislation, devolution and other litigation work, and the Partnership (Prosecution) (Scotland) (Bill).
6. The Secretary of State and the Advocate General placed on record their awareness of the success of the two Offices' in delivering on their objectives. The Secretary of State singled out the successful provision of an emergency towing vessel in the northern waters around Scotland.
7. John Aldridge noted that the Audit Committee had been concerned that constitutional policy work might be reducing the Offices' capacity to fulfil their other functions but had been reassured when it had examined the Scotland Office's work on economic analysis, the Scottish Business Board and other economic policy focussed work.

Item 4: Draft business plans for 2013-14

8. Alun Evans reported that the SO draft plan had been drafted by a cross office team of officials. He thought it important that the plan should be subject to approval by the Board and that the Board should receive routine reports on the achievement of objectives.
9. Michael Chalmers reported that the OAG business plan had been drafted in the autumn following a similar process. It would now be subjected to minor revisions to bring it up to date for 2013-14.
10. The non-executive members of the Board noted the importance of deadlines for achieving targets and methods for measuring the achievement of outcomes.

Item 5: Financial resources

11. The Offices are in regular contact with HM Treasury officials to ensure that the most efficient use is made of public funds. The Board noted the work that is being done to reduce costs without impacting adversely on business. It also noted that at the end of the current spending round departments would be expected to reduce their spending further and that preparations need to be made during this round to ensure that the Offices can comply appropriately.

Item 6: Financial controls

12. The Board reviewed the financial controls in operation in the two Offices. It was agreed that the Audit Committee and Internal Audit had an invaluable role to play in providing assurance to Ministers and the Principal Accounting Officer. The role of the Audit Committee was not understood among all staff and should be communicated more widely.

Item 7: Any other business and date of next meeting

13. There was no other business.
14. The next meeting would be held before the summer recess.