

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting held in Portcullis House, on 27 November 2012 commencing at 12:30

Secretary of State (Chair)
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Advocate General

Alun Evans (Principal Accounting Officer)
Paul Johnston
Chris Flatt
Colin Faulkner
Michael Chalmers
Jan Marshall
Edward Adams

Item 1: Introduction & apologies

1. Apologies were received from John Aldridge and Margaret Porteous.

Item 2: Finance

2. The Offices' strategy for the remaining part of the spending round was reviewed. The Board noted the importance of maximising income from other departments for the services that the Offices provide to them.
3. It was reported that both Offices were bearing down on variable expenditure to ensure that the greatest economy was exercised without impacting adversely on business.
4. The Board agreed to keep the Offices' financial provision under close scrutiny.

Item 3: Communications strategy

5. It was noted that since this time last year the Scotland Bill had become law, an agreement had been reached with the Scottish Government to transfer the legislative competence to Holyrood to hold a referendum on independence, and the debate about independence had moved on significantly. The move to a central UK government website would gather pace in the next few months.
6. It was agreed that Scotland Office communications should cover all forms of media, including new media and local press.
7. Edward Adams noted that it was important to measure the effectiveness of the Offices' media initiatives.

Item 4: Ensuring that HMG delivers for Scotland

8. Chris Flatt and Michael Chalmers described the mechanisms for monitoring UK Government policy announcements and UK and Scottish Parliament legislation to ensure compatibility with the devolution settlement.

Item 5: Any other business and date of next meeting

9. There was no other business.
10. The Secretary of State noted that although the Offices' board operating framework specified quarterly meetings of the Joint Management Board, with the final one of each year being a ministerial meeting, the two ministerial meetings of the Board held to date showed that a better model would be for the Board to meet routinely with Ministers present. Board meetings should be held in the spring, summer and autumn. However the non-executive members of the Board should continue to feel free to approach him directly between meetings if they judged it necessary.
11. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Board would be held before the end of financial year when the Board would be able to review business plans and resources for the coming year.