

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT MANAGEMENT BOARD

Meeting held in the Secretary of State's room, Dover House, on 19 June 2012 commencing at 12:00

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

Alisdair McIntosh (Principal Accounting Officer)
Paul Johnston
Margaret Porteous
Chris Flatt
Michael Chalmers

Item 1: Introduction & apologies

1. Apologies were received from John Aldridge, Edward Adams, and Colin Faulkner.
2. The Secretary of State reported that he had met the two non-executive members prior to the meeting and they had discussed with him their views on the management of the Offices.

Item 2: Role of the meeting of the Ministerial Joint Management Board

3. The Secretary of State emphasised the value that he and his Ministerial colleagues placed on the work of the Offices' management teams and corporate services.
4. Alisdair McIntosh described the steps that the Offices had taken to bring the Offices' corporate governance into compliance with the requirements of the Government's new corporate governance code. As a consequence it had been agreed that the Offices' Joint Management Board would meet with Ministers annually before the end of each financial year to review the year to date and set the strategic context for the coming year.

Item 3: Implementation of strategic priorities for 2012-13

5. Paul Johnston described the work that OAG had undertaken to redefine its overall purpose and priorities. Its purpose is to provide high quality legal services that secure the UK Government's objectives in Scotland.
6. Its priorities are:
 - o Advice on policy and legislation affecting Scotland - supporting colleagues in all UK Government departments on the implications of their policies for Scotland, and helping to ensure that the implications of Scottish legislation are understood, and that competence issues are addressed.

- Protecting the UK Government's interests in the courts – including litigation for Departments such as Home Office and HMRC.
 - Scotland's place within the UK - implementation of the Scotland Act 2012, work to secure a legal referendum on independence and contributing to the cross-Government work on the positive case for the UK
 - Ensuring that devolution works - facilitating co-operation between Scotland's two administrations, particularly on issues that straddle the boundary between reserved and devolved matters.
7. Alisdair McIntosh described the Secretary of State's priorities:
- The implementation of the Scotland Act 2012 and the provision of a legal, fair and decisive referendum
 - Supporting the Scottish economy and working with stakeholders on the Government's welfare reforms
 - Making the positive case for Scotland's place in the UK
 - Effective handling of issues with an impact on reserved responsibilities in Scotland.
- The policy teams had recently been reorganised to enable them to respond better to these priorities.
8. In discussion it was agreed that
- the two Offices needed to work closely to implement Ministerial priorities,
 - the Offices needed to be proactive in identifying issues that impact on reserved responsibilities and engage appropriately with the relevant departments,
 - Ministerial external engagements should be focussed on Ministerial priorities.

Item 4: Engagement strategy for 2012-13

9. Margaret Porteous and Michael Chalmers described the Offices' engagement strategies. The Scotland Office was adopting an account management model to improve engagement with other Government departments and OAG had integrated engagement as part of its routine provision of legal advice. The Offices were now planning engagement better, analysing and acting on the lessons, and delivering more targeted messages. The Advocate General and OAG officials were engaging more systematically with the legal and academic communities.
10. In discussion it was agreed that Ministerial and official, and SO and OAG, engagement strategies should all be integrated closely.

Item 5: Resources and finance

11. Chris Flatt reported that the Offices had achieved an underspend in 2011-12. It had not been necessary to use the contingency fund, Parliamentary Counsel's fees for drafting the Scotland Bill had been less than anticipated, spending had been controlled rigorously, and income from the provision to other departments of legal services and accommodation had increased. In the course of the current year the Offices would need to decide whether to apply to HM Treasury to use the budget exchange mechanism and thus carry forward up to 2% of provision. The Offices would remain in close touch with HMT about their resources for the rest of the spending round.

12. The Board agreed that the Offices should have fit for purpose ICT and video conference facilities to enable them to communicate internally and externally effectively and economically.
13. Ministers expressed their gratitude to the SO Finance Manager and the OAG Business Manager and their teams for their scrupulous and rigorous management of the Offices' finances.

Item 6: Any other business and date of next meeting

14. Advice would be provided to Ministers on the process for the appointment of new non-executive members of the board once the new Principal Accounting Officer was in post.
15. The Secretary of State noted that this was Alisdair McIntosh's final meeting of the Board and thanked him for his diligent work as Accounting Officer.
16. The next meeting of the Ministerial JMB will be arranged for before the end of the calendar year.