

Concise Minutes – Management Board

Meeting Venue:

Conference Room 4B – Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: Thursday, 23 March 2017

Meeting time: 11.00 – 12.30

MB 05–17

Attendance

Category	Names
Management Board Members:	Claire Clancy, Chief Executive & Clerk of the Assembly Adrian Crompton, Director of Assembly Business Non Gwilym, Head of Communications Mair Parry-Jones, Head of Translation and Reporting Service Mark Neilson, Head of ICT and Broadcasting Kathryn Potter, Head of Research Service Matthew Richards, Head of Legal Services Craig Stephenson, Director of Commission Services Sulafa Thomas, Head of Commission and Member Support Dave Tosh, Director of Resources Christopher Warner, Head of Policy and Legislation Committee Service Gareth Watts, Acting Head of Governance and Audit Siân Wilkins, Head of Chamber and Committee Service Lowri Williams, Head of Human Resources
Management Board	Liz Jardine (Secretariat)



Staff:	
Others in attendance:	

1 Introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies were received from Anna Daniel (Head of Strategic Transformation) and Nia Morgan (Head of Financial Services)

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Communication note to staff – Mark Neilson

1.1 Mark Neilson would draft a note of the Management Board discussion for the news page.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 2 March Management Board meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4 Interim Capacity Planning Review

Ahead of the new financial year and at the mid–point between the Annual Capacity and Service Planning exercises, Management Board had dedicated the meeting to an interim Capacity Planning Review. The objectives of the review were to check on the progress of the decisions made last October and to discuss any new, essential, requirements that have arisen since, that require a decision before the next annual review.

The Directorates had prepared a note to present at the meeting of:

- progress made on appointing to those posts approved at the Annual Service and Capacity Planning exercises and where appointments have not yet been made, details of why and whether the case for the post remained valid;
- any new resource requirements, arising since the last annual capacity and service exercise and that need an immediate decision, accompanied by a supporting business case; and

- a view of any expected capacity challenges, looking forward to the next annual capacity and service exercise.

Claire Clancy provided the context for the meeting, to provide a backdrop to all the decisions on capacity planning, stating that it had been a year of continuous growth in the organisation. It had been possible so far to keep pace with demand but it was becoming more difficult, with new work emerging fast.

The next year's budget would be tighter than in previous years and, whereas in the past it has been possible to deliver all that was planned, this year costs had been deliberately moved to the next financial year to stay within the 2016–17 budget. The consequence of this would be a tightening of next year's budget.

The IRB had decided not to do any work towards a supplementary budget in June but to consider that option again for January 2018.

In preparation of the Governance Statement for the Annual Report published in July, there was a heavy emphasis on competing pressures. It was, therefore, necessary to make prudent, efficient choices on the budget, ensuring they are robust and that we do not incur costs that are not absolutely necessary, and do consider alternative ways of meeting resource needs.

Claire asked the Directors to briefly outline the:

- total new bid for resources;
- the prioritisation, including drivers and evidence for why the new posts should be a high priority for the organisation; and
- suggestions for work that could be stopped, changed or delivered differently in order to release resources.

Commission Services

Craig Stephenson outlined the Commission Services Directorate bid. An Internal Communications role was currently being developed but was not yet part of the request. MBS was experiencing a peak in demand and consideration was being given to ways of working, particularly on HR matters, to accommodate the needs.

There had been a 15% increase in demand for simultaneous translation and the Record of Proceedings (RoP). Staff who were multi-skilled were being drawn in to support leaving fewer text translators and contractors were less cost effective and had some

resilience problems. The proposal was for additional trainees to support text translation.

As a result of the RoP review there had been some efficiencies, with some activities stopped; additionally, staff were not being released for recruitment boards and there had been a slow down on secondments. There had been collaboration on the events work and a proposed structure that would have potential savings, where staff in reception, for example, would be used differently to enable more resource in bookings.

Business Directorate

Adrian Crompton outlined the posts and identified the top priorities:

- Two G7 posts in Communications (News and Digital), which would result in only a relatively small additional cost;
- An HEO post project managing the Legislative Software project and a post in STS supporting MySenedd equivalent to EO/TS;
- Deputy Director post reporting to Director to provide support at senior level due to the amount of work needed on the reform agenda.

Efficiencies were being achieved through: reining back on new innovative initiatives; by being tougher on reviewing efficiencies and outcomes; and changing work patterns to give flexibility without losing effectiveness.

Further work was needed on supporting legislation. There had always been a dedicated team working on individual Member legislation, but there was also likely to be Commission-led legislation, together with Committee legislation, so there was a need to look at efficiencies. There were also new initiatives to resource that were driven by the aim for parliamentary excellence, with proactive engagement in communications and the development of networks with external research organisations.

Resources Directorate

Dave Tosh outlined the new bids, including those deemed essential:

- AV technician needed to cover the new committee rooms, events and functions to supplement the two currently in the team;
- Accommodation manager;
- dedicated senior resource for recruitment;

- temporary training and development post to give time to consider requirements.

An ICT restructure is due to take place, which may bring savings and efficiencies, with consideration across the Directorate of the use of flexi, leave and internal secondments to make efficiencies.

Summary

Claire Clancy summarised by commending the Board for doing a good job of presenting evidence as to why the resources were necessary that had been rigorously scrutinised within the Directorates. It would be necessary to make a compelling case in the new budget proposals to cover all of the resource requirements, with a clear evidence base. It would be necessary to demonstrate the need to invest in roles that would maintain the quality of services.

The case for the resources would need to highlight the levels of demand and pressures, and the determination to drive out inefficiencies with better collaboration and project management.

Due to lags in recruitment it may be possible to progress all the resource bids, but the work was so important to the future of Wales that it would be prudent to consider a supplementary budget if required in January and, if supported by a robust, evidence-based case, it was more likely to be supported by the Assembly.

It was also important to consider vulnerabilities of not resourcing appropriately or without a forward plan, such as the impact on staff motivation and morale.

Claire outlined her recommended actions for taking forward the capacity work, building it all into the budget, but possibly in a phased, prioritised way over a year, and

- Work out the costs and implications for 2017–18;
- Identify the uncertainties, and monitor until not uncertain;
- Prepare for a supplementary budget well in advance;
- Keep Suzy Davies, Commissioner, sighted on plans;
- Be transparent with PAC and Finance Committee;
- Keep workforce effective, possibly through the use of VES, recruitment to part-time or term-time posts and matching skills to tasks.

It will clearly be necessary to consider the constitutional, electoral reform, and Brexit work on the horizon. Work on the budget strategy for 2018–19 has started, but there may not be sufficient information on these to plan definitively, so scenario planning will provide Commissioners with options and assurance.