

Land & Property Services

Minutes of Management Board meeting

Thursday, 25 February 2021 (via Microsoft Teams and WebEx)

Present:

Ian Snowden	Chief Executive (Chair)
Judith Andrews	Director of Revenues & Benefits
Alan Brontë	Director of Rating Policy
Christine Farrell	Director of Registration
Nigel McVittie	Director of Digital Services
Angela McGrath	Director of Valuation
Jim Lennon	Chief Survey Officer, Ordnance Survey
Claire Jordan	Service Support & Improvement Team (Items 1 - 3 and 8 - 11 only)
Gillian Blair	LPS Finance Business Partnering Team
Joanne McCarthy	HR Business Partner (Items 8 - 11 only)
Ian Gordon	Secretary

Welcome/Conflicts of Interest

Ian Snowden welcomed colleagues to the February Management Board meeting.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous Management Board meeting, which occurred on 28 January 2021, were agreed as an accurate record.

2. Matters Arising and Action Points

The schedule of action points were reviewed and updated, where appropriate, to convey the current position.

3. Contract Management Team

Ian Snowden and Nigel McVittie provided Management Board colleagues with a verbal update on the development of the proposal to create an LPS Contract Management Team which had been discussed at the November Management Board. They updated the Board on the proposed composition of the team, which would include members with experience in legal matters, accounts and procurement.

Nigel McVittie reminded colleagues that there is a commitment within the new Nova contracts for LPS to undertake certain tasks and an obligation to have certain skill sets available to work with the new supplier. With the awarding of the new R&B solution contract expected by the end of March, the emphasis now has to be getting the team in place for the start of the new financial year.

If it is to work effectively and support the organisation, the roles and responsibilities of the new team and the other parts of LPS that it will interact with need to be clarified. Claire Jordan asked that as part of this it was clarified where the Service Support & Improvement team fitted in and what the expectations would be around service design. Discussion then followed amongst Board members to what training might be required and to the specific roles of team members.

Ian Snowden summarised the main points of the discussion as follows: it was agreed that the team should be established; the team must add value and not simply act as a postbox for returns; roles and responsibilities including decision making authority need to be clarified; and the form of reporting to Management Board needs to be decided. Further meetings will be arranged with Judith Andrews, Christine Farrell, Angela McGrath and Claire Jordan.

Action Point: Ian Snowden / Nigel McVittie to organise meetings to have further discussions around the Contract Management Team.

4. LPS 2020/21 Frontline Operations Report

Judith Andrews advised Management Board that progress around the Rates Collection continued to be good and the target was on course for achievement, but the Debt target will not be achieved. Judith explained that the reasons for this were complex and work was being done to better understand what was occurring. However, she advised that the larger portion of the debt increase was in domestic rates and other relevant factors were the rates holiday and lower write-off levels.

Performance on the Housing Benefit targets had slipped slightly when compared to the previous year, but the team was still on track to achieve the target. This was a very positive achievement given the circumstances of the year to date.

The Penny Product situation remained the same as last month, with ten of the councils projected to have a positive settlement and only one in potential clawback position that is well within the tolerance limits.

Christine Farrell noted continuing good performance against the Dealings of Whole target, which is now marginally under the percentage set at the start of 2020-2021. Priority search registrations are also on course for achievement, although there has been a surge in priority search work as the end of the Stamp Duty holiday approaches. As a result, monthly work stocks are rising as staff have been redirected from casework to priority search registration. Agreement has been reached with Trade Union Side for forthcoming overtime to ease the pressure.

Jim Lennon confirmed two of the Ordnance Survey targets continue to be on course for achievement. As discussed at the previous Management Board meeting it is now clear that the mapping income target cannot be achieved.

Angela McGrath advised that the two Valuation Corporate targets now have Red RAG status and it was unlikely that either would be achieved. The Director advised colleagues that the Hard Charged Income figure should have referred to £ 1.94m being achieved as of January and not have included the December total.

Angela McGrath suggested that LRSS work should be reported to MB as part of the Frontline Operations Report.

5. LPS Nova Programme Manager's Report

Nigel McVittie reported that the first draft of the Final Business Case for the Revenues & Benefits Delivery Partner Project has been received and this will be reviewed prior to submission to the DoF Economist. A meeting with the preferred bidder is scheduled for next week.

Nigel advised that stage 1 of the Land Registration Delivery Partner Project has now closed.

The Director mentioned that a report on development of a Data Work Plan for the Integration Partner Project is now underway.

6. LPS Corporate Business Plan - Monthly Report

Management Board noted the content of the performance against corporate targets as at the end of January. There had been no significant change in the status of most

targets in the previous month, with a slight increase from five to six in those having Red RAG status.

7. Finance Report

Gillian Blair's latest paper provided Management Board with a summary of forecast spend compared to the budget as of 31 January.

The Annual Resource budget of £215,236k, with an outturn of £213,981k providing an easement of £1,255k. It was noted that the budget and expenditure figures for 2020/21 are substantially inflated by the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme grants that are being paid by LPS.

The Annual Capital Budget, as at 31 January 2021, was £1,814k representing the Monitoring Round position, with a forecast outturn of £111k.

Gillian encouraged Directors to consider if there are any additional expenditure requirements that may use up some of the current easements. Ian Snowden asked if there was any budget left for bonuses. Gillian Blair said she would look into this and report back.

Action Point: Gillian Blair to confirm the budget remaining for bonuses.

Angela McGrath drew attention to the table for Direct Award Contracts and asked that the one relating to external advice be removed as it had now expired.

Management Board noted the content of this paper.

8. HR Information & Analysis Report

Joanne McCarthy confirmed that all successful Grade 7 candidates have been allocated a position. Phase 3 of the Staff Officer Competition has been paused due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

Judith Andrews asked if there was a live list of EOIs. Joanne McCarthy said that there is currently only a limited supply available.

Nigel McVittie asked about the leave balances carried over at the end of January, given the effort that had been put in by LPS to ensure took leave over the Christmas break period. Joanne McCarthy undertook to look into this and provide information.

Action Point: Joanne McCarthy to provide information on leave balances and carry over into 2021-2022 and provide a breakdown of the numbers by business area.

9. Team Brief - Key Messages

The key messages for publication in the next Team Brief are:

- Thank staff for completion of the Digital Skills survey. A high percentage of LPS staff have undertaken this.
- Thanks also to staff for ensuring they have reduced their annual leave entitlement to no more than nine days for 2021-2022.
- Continuing to prepare for a Staff Engagement session being rolled out.
- Establishment of a Contract Management team for LPS
- Work on the refurbishment of the 4th Floor in Lanyon Plaza to begin this spring.
- A reminder to staff to come in and ensure they clear out their tambour units; and
- Retirement of Noeleen Bingham

10. Any Other Business

Claire Jordan advised Management Board of upgrades happening for the Contact Centre in March. A tender has also been published for the Contract Centre replacement.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 25 March 2021.