

**Land & Property Services (LPS)**

**Minutes of Management Board meeting**

**Thursday, 20 December 2023**

**in Lanyon Plaza, Atrium Conference Room and by Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Angela McGrath	Director of Valuation / Commissioner of Valuation
Christine Farrell	Registrar of Titles
Suzanne McLaughlin	Chief Survey Officer
Sharon Magee	Director of Rating Policy
Nigel McVittie	Director of Digital Services
Chris Rooney	Director of Revenue & Benefits
Claire Jordan	Service Support & Improvement
Tracey Newell	Head of LPS Corporate Governance
Michael Thompson	LPS Statistics
Judith Baker	LPS Statistics

Gillian Blair	LPS Business Partner (Item 9 only)
Joanne McCarthy	HR Business Partner (Items 9 and 10 only)

Ian Gordon	Secretary
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**Apologies**                      None

**Welcome/Conflicts of Interest**

Angela McGrath chaired the meeting, and welcomed everyone to the latest LPS Management Board meeting. Ian Snowden has been temporarily promoted to Permanent Secretary role in DfE.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 26 October 2023, were accepted as a true record.

## **2. Matters Arising and Action Points**

All closed.

## **3. Information Assurance Six Monthly Update**

Tracey Newell gave an overview with the key points in this report relating to System Accreditation, the low-level nature of recent data breaches and work with the Departmental Protection Officer to overhaul the LPS Risk Register.

Discussion then followed on the ongoing System Accreditation acting as a reminder that there will be an onus on LPS to be ready for the GovAssure exercise that will occur in 2024.

Management Board noted the contents of the paper and the LPS position regarding IT Health Checks and the replacement of the Accreditation process with GovAssure.

## **4. LPS Workforce Planning 2023-2024 Quarter 2 Review**

Tracey Newell's paper provided a summary of workforce planning in LPS throughout the second quarter of this year. The paper alluded to the number of vacancies submitted by LPS in response to the NICS HR exercise commissioned in July. The paper noted the timely progress being made with non-general service competitions for Valuation and Ordnance Survey.

The paper then went on to look forward to the third quarter and highlighted that LPS currently has 210 vacancies (148 of which are general service). The paper also referred to six initiated LPS competitions with NICS HR for progression.

Tracey Newell concluded by drawing Management Board's attention to the significant issues LPS will face over the remainder of this fiscal year and 2024-2025. This led on to a discussion about the need for Administrative Officers for Land Registry. Tracey Newell was asked to make enquiries as to whether LPS could use the Department for Communities Alternative Working Pattern competition as a method of filling these vacancies.

**AP: Tracey Newell to ask Chris Smart to see if there is any scope for LPS to use the DfC AWP competition.**

## **5. LPS Frontline Operations Report**

Chris Rooney began by providing an overview of Revenue & Benefits latest position against the Directorate's targets. Satisfactory progress was being made against the collection targets. Three of the eleven Councils were still in a clawback position,

however LPS continue to meet with Councils and review the position on a regular basis.

Angela McGrath highlighted a generally positive position for the Valuation targets. However, she acknowledged the new build cases for 2023/2024 and the 2020 Valuation List appeals targets are unlikely to be achieved.

Sharon Magee focussed on policy development, legislation and submissions to the Permanent Secretary currently being undertaken by Rating Policy Division.

Christine Farrell confirmed that Land Registry targets are all on track for achievement.

Suzanne McLaughlin advised that the status of the Orthophotography target has changed to Amber. The Director further advised that Ordnance Survey may fall slightly short of their 2023-2024 costs through fees and charges.

Michael Thompson, Tracey Newell and Claire Jordan provided the respective updates of their branch progress against their targets.

## **6. NOVA Programme Monthly Report**

Nigel McVittie confirmed that the overall RAG status remains Amber.

Beginning with the Land Registration Delivery Partner Project, Nigel McVittie mentioned that the contract was scheduled to be awarded in March 2024 subject to approval of the Full Business Case. However, there is still a possibility that one of the unsuccessful bidders may make a legal challenge before the standstill period ends.

As part of finalising the Full Business Case there is a need to review the benefits realisation plan to ensure they all remain relevant and achievable. A meeting to discuss the benefits with the SRO and Project Team will be arranged.

Nigel McVittie continued by advising Management Board colleagues that the RAG status for the Valuation Delivery Partner Project and Integration Implementation Project remain Amber. The Director hoped that both projects would become Green early in the new year.

Nigel McVittie then went on to update attendees on the latest position regarding the Revenue & Benefits Delivery Partner Implementation Project, where the RAG status remains Red. The latest draft Implementation plan indicates an extended delay to

the planned go live date. The Project team and LPS Contract Management Unit are working extensively with the Supplier to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

## **7. LPS Governance Strategy**

Claire Jordan advised that the LPS 2027 Governance Strategy has now been drafted and advised upon the next stage, which would allow for this to be published and that a Governance Steering Group be established. This latter group would comprise staff from all Directorates within LPS.

Angela McGrath queried whether there was an appetite across the organisation for a Steering Group. She suggested that it may be of benefit to discuss this aspect further with Colm Doran who is joining LPS as Director of Transformation.

Management Board approved the draft LPS Governance Strategy.

## **8. LPS Governance & Control**

Nigel McVittie outlined the need to introduce two further governance groups to provide assurance that the intended outcomes of the LPS 2027 Strategy are achieved. Nigel continued by explaining the rationale behind both the Strategy & Transformation Board and the Business Design Authority.

Management Board noted the contents of this paper and agreed to the establishment of the LPS Strategy & Transformation Board and the Business Design Authority.

## **9. Finance Update**

Gillian Blair's latest monthly paper drew particular focus to the 2024-2025 budget and commissioning exercises for future years.

The commissioning exercise for next year's budget outlines three budget scenario positions based upon a flat cash baseline, a flat cash baseline less 2% and a flat cash baseline less 5%.

Finance Business Partners will be collaborating with Directors and there is a strong emphasis upon savings being needed to be identified.

## **10. HR Update**

Joanne McCarthy commented upon the latest position regarding resourcing, employee relations, ER, learning and development, along with a series of other HR related matters.

Tracey Newell advised Joanne that she will be chatting with Chris Smart in relation to the DfC AWP competition.

Chris Rooney asked Joanne McCarthy about the Parental Leave Policy, and enquired how other business areas across the Department were managing the policy.

Joanne McCarthy said she was unaware of any known issues but would talk to ER and get back to Chris in early 2024.

**AP: Joanne McCarthy to update Chris Rooney.**

## **11. Team Brief - Key Messages**

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

- Success of the LPS Charity Day;
- Staff reminded to complete Term Time applications for 2024
- Management Board approved the LPS 2027 Governance Strategy;
- Thanks to Ian Snowden for his hard work and leadership of LPS; and
- Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all LPS staff

## **12. Any Other Business**

Tracey Newell advised Management Board of the possibility of Industrial Action taking place on 18 January 2024

## **13. Date of Next Meeting**

29 February 2024.