

# CONSUMER FOCUS FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

## Director Finance and Operations: Graham Clark

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### 1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST BOARD MEETING

#### 1.1 Finance

- First Draft Budget agreed at SMT
- GIA Claims - Final claims for 2009/10 Financial Year submitted to BIS – Legacy has been paid, waiting for Core
- Monthly management accounting process up and running, process refinements will continue
- External NAO Interim Audit completed
- Fixed Assets – data 95% collected, 66% matched to previous records

#### 1.2 HR

- Equality audit carried out in relation to recruitment and selection conducted since the start up of Consumer Focus and system developed to ensure ongoing maintenance.
- All policies are now complete and are at different stages of the consultation process. The staff handbook available via the internet contains a full suite of policies that are currently in use and are being replaced as consultation is completed. This is an ongoing process due to the nature of employment legislation.
- Pay remit implemented in February's pay run and explanation letters sent on an individual basis to all employees. (Only 3 queries received!)
- Agreement reached in relation to trade union recognition agreement in principle, some minor points of detail to be adjusted before final signatures.
- Appraisal process training has commenced and is on target to complete in readiness for start of appraisal cycle.
- Revised pensions benefits statements issued.
- Equality & Diversity training completed for all Cardiff staff, London with Glasgow scheduled for this week. Various job specific training courses completed across the organisation.

#### 1.3 IT

- IT Service Desk completed 516 requests during February
- Overall system availability during February was 98.956%
- Internal audit of Network Controls underway
- Penetration testing of IT systems underway
- Wide area network acceleration device testing in progress
- Redundant IT kit disposed of from Belgrave Road and Delta House
- Successful restore of database system after data corruption has proved the effectiveness of the new backup configurations
- Hardware audits complete for London, Glasgow and Cardiff offices

#### 1.4 Properties

- 20 Grosvenor Gardens and Belgrave Road cleared ready for reversion to landlords
- Part ground and fourth floors of 28/30 Grosvenor Gardens let. (Saving 108k).

#### 1.5 Legal

- Legal case now likely to go to mediation

## 1.6 Procurement

- Since 1<sup>st</sup> February Procurement have let 19 consultancy and research contracts for Consumer Focus and NSMC totalling £700k.

## 2 CHALLENGES RUNNING UP TO NEXT BOARD MEETING

### 2.1 Finance

- Budget - SMT level reviews of submissions
- Budget – Detailed cost centre budgets to be created to support SMT agreements
- Fixed Assets – Complete data collection and matching
- Fixed assets – upload data to COA system (currently technical issue to resolve)
- Year end preparation
- Pick up responsibility for GPC cards – complete process of changing provider initiated by procurement and review control procedures
- Ensure all tasks are picked up from 3 fixed term contract team members leaving in March and April.

### 2.2 HR

- Recruitment of additional members of HR team (failed to recruit during last process)
- Maintaining continuity of service and ‘first point of contact’ approach during period of temporary staff leaving and new staff being recruited.
- Maintaining momentum with trade unions and embedding consultation processes whilst there are a lot of areas requiring consulting ‘peaking’ at the same time.
- AOC paperwork in relation to our delegated responsibilities for pensions administration to be completed and signed off by end of March 2010
- GB restructure and corresponding change management process and consultations.

### 2.3 IT

- Local Area Network redesign at Artillery House and the Park Royal data centre to remove bottle necks and improve resilience scheduled for 20th March
- Implementation of wide area network acceleration (initial trial results are very promising)
- Disposal of redundant IT kit from 20 Grosvenor Gardens
- Testing of terminal services compression technology to improve performance for remote desktop users
- Further investigation and changes required to enable offline email for laptop users

### 2.4 Legacy Properties

- Conclude transfer of ex-Postwatch properties to Royal Mail (saving £1.1M)
- Revert Belgrave Road to landlord (saving £200k)

### 2.5 Legal

- No actions expected until May. Need approval to settle before going to mediation

### 2.6 Procurement

- Procurement surgeries have been arranged for staff in the London office and this is to be rolled out to the Cardiff office from April. The first training session with Scotland has been scheduled for 28<sup>th</sup> April, with follow-ups planned.