

CONSUMER FOCUS FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Director Finance and Operations: Graham Clark

1 ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE LAST BOARD MEETING

1.1 Finance

- Support GB budget holders in creating the Programme Management files for production of mid year forecast.
- Information on expenditure published for Government Transparency Agenda.

1.2 HR

- All staff communication on reduction programme and employees placed 'at risk' of redundancy
- Workshops to all nations on the next steps and progress to date
- Individual one-to-one consultations offered to all employees
- NUVOS pension benefits statements distributed
- Roll out of self-service of electronic HR system (HRpro) to each nation
- Completion of pay remit and appraisal process for 2009/2010

1.3 IT

- IT Service Desk: October – 489 incoming requests, 487 completed, 177 pending. November 541 incoming requests, 534 completed, 185 pending
- Service availability: October – 99.363%, November – 99.965% overall availability during operational hours
- Disaster recovery test undertaken. Overall the test was successful although some capacity and performance issues were identified; these are being addressed by installing additional memory and networking capacity in our standby servers.
- Plans to consolidate business systems (Service Mail, Charter, RightNow) have been cancelled, the return of investment for the cost of implementation are unlikely to be realised prior to abolition. The energy/post knowledge base (RightNow) subscription is being renewed at a much reduced costs (£12k pa instead of £27.5k pa)

1.4 Property and Procurement

- Delta House, Glasgow surrendered on 10th December 2010. Net saving £56K.

2 CHALLENGES RUNNING UP TO NEXT BOARD MEETING

2.1 Finance

- Support Wales & Scotland budget holders in creating the Programme Management files
- Complete forecast for rest of financial year
- Audit planning for both Internal and External audits
- Monthly work for transparency agenda

2.2 HR

- Consultation with Trade Unions over reduction programme
- Impact of budget cuts (when announced) on staffing levels and morale.
- Potential revisions to Civil Service Compensation Scheme and managing employee expectations.

2.3 IT

- BT ISDN capacity review to try to reduce fixed costs
- Planning for office moves
- Explore further ways to reduce fixed telecoms and data costs

2.4 Property & Procurement

- Move date for Fleetbank House and Portcullis House likely to be early March 2011.

2.5 Legal

Trademark Challenge

- In May 2010 Grant Thornton made a trademark challenge to the Consumer Focus logo on the basis of perceived similarity to their own brand device. After receiving their witness statement Consumer Focus submitted a response in which we resist the challenge. The deadline for Grant Thornton to submit further evidence to UKIPO is 18 December 2010. The tribunal is likely to consider the challenge early next year.
- Since the last Board meeting Grant Thornton contacted BIS through lawyers suggesting that Consumer Focus should not resist the challenge in light of our reported demise. I understand that BIS responded to that letter saying that the design of the device and our decision to resist the challenge was a matter for Consumer Focus.