

Management Board summary

3 September 2013

3 + 9 Forecast

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services welcomed the Head of Financial Planning and Analysis to the meeting and asked the Board to note the report outlining the financial performance for July and the 3+9 Forecast that was prepared for the first quarter.

Final confirmation of our funding, including our administration versus programme and capital versus revenue requirements, will take place in November and will be based on our mid-year (6+6) forecast.

The Board noted and approved the content of the report.

July Financial Performance update

For the four months to the end of July non-ringfenced net expenditure was slightly below forecast.

The Head of Financial Planning and Analysis explained that the majority of the underspend was timing related.

Staff costs were broadly in line with forecast but staff turnover was higher than expected and as a result core headcount is now down to 533, which is 6% lower than the same time last year.

The Board noted and approved the content of the report.

Online Bookshop

The Commercial Director introduced the Assistant Retail Manager to the Management Board and explained that the new online bookshop had just launched yesterday.

The Assistant Retail Manager explained that two key areas have been addressed. There has been an attempt to draw in our core market of genealogists and family history enthusiasts while improving the efficiency of the site, reducing the re-entering of information on the site

A simple hierarchical search has increased ease of use and The National Archives is fully embracing its unique selling point - its great degree of expert knowledge. The bookshop selects the best products to save time and staff reviews of books are planned to be available.

A Non-executive Director said that the online bookshop looked impressive.

The Commercial Director agreed to an update towards the end of the financial year.

The Board noted and approved the newly launched online bookshop

Triennial Review of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives

All non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) require periodically to be reviewed. A Triennial Review is a Cabinet Office mandated process for reviewing the functions of NDPBs, the appropriateness of the body's delivery mechanism and its governance arrangements.

NDPBs need to be reviewed every three years and therefore the Council's functions require to be reviewed again.

The process is split into two stages. Stage 1 looks at the core functions of the Council. If the conclusion of Stage 1 is that the Council should continue as a NDPB, Stage 2 will examine the control and governance arrangements in place to ensure that the Council is operating in line with government policy including good corporate governance, openness, transparency and accountability.

The Board discussed stage one of the review.

Command and House of Commons Papers

The National Archives has responsibility for the publication of Command and House of Commons Papers. The traditional approach had been to have a central contract between The National Archives and an official publisher. The approach now taken was to:

- utilise the existing Print Vendor Partnership (PVP) agreement which is managed by the Government Procurement Service (GPS) to produce and print Command and House of Commons Papers, and to incorporate the requirements of Parliament. These arrangements have been the subject of detailed discussions between The National Archives, Parliament, the GPS and the current contractor.
- make the print-PDFs of the Command and House of Commons Papers available for re-use through the Open Government Licence so that any Commercial Publisher can provide print copies for general sale.
- make the web-PDFs for the Command and House of Commons Papers available on .gov.uk.

The Director of Information Policy and Services advised that this had been a great example of working together with both the Government Digital Service and the Government Procurement Service.

Discovery maximising the benefits

The Director of Technology and Preservation introduced the Head of Systems Development to the Board.

The development of Discovery as an investment-funded project took three years of intensive work and culminated in the eventual switching off of the old catalogue on 30th April 2013. Now that Discovery has been operational for a number of months, the challenges and opportunities associated with having such a powerful, integrated service are beginning to be fully visible.

The Commercial Director explained that we assessed where we were, what was currently being developed and what the vision might be for Discovery in the future. A brief outline of the paper, previously distributed was given.

The Board discussed options for the future.

Redesign of nationalarchives.gov.uk

The Director of Technology and Preservation introduced the team running the project. The Board was informed that The National Archives website was being redesigned in order to improve the experience for all users. For most individuals the website is the first and only experience of The National Archives and therefore must be open, welcoming and inspiring.

20% of all visitors to the website use mobile devices, so we need to cater for a range of devices.

The newly designed web pages were demonstrated to the Board. The beta launch was planned for two weeks time with the live launch at the end of September.

The Board praised all the hard work that had been done to produce an impressive product.

Any Other Business

The Director of Public Services and Human Resources explained that the Railways Change lives conference was to take place at Kew on Saturday 7 September and the National Railway Museum, York on Saturday 14 September.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed.