

MANAGEMENT BOARD

Regional constituency roadshows—take note

Paper from Vasilis Gialias and Patsy Richards

For the meeting on 12 March 2015

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Board on the outcome and recommendations of a review of the pilot regional constituency roadshows, which were developed in direct response to the Members' interview work findings.

Action for the Board

2. To take note of the review of roadshows and the requirement to increase resources by approximately 1 FT equivalent if the commitment to deliver the 2015/16 roadshow programme is to be met.

Consultation and equality analysis

3. An equality analysis has been conducted and an initial screening draft has been approved by the D&I team. Following the 12 March Management Board meeting, the initial screening and the full Roadshow Review will be shared with WENs for their input. There are overall positive equality effects of taking our services to constituencies. Our review also included a consultation with House staff who helped deliver the roadshows, and was also based on feedback responses from 190 constituency based Members' staff.

Summary of findings and recommendations

4. A full review report is available is attached at annex A. In summary, 353 constituency based staff attended 10 pilot roadshows run between June 2014 and February 2015. Based on attendees' feedback, the roadshows have been a resounding success and have addressed a previously unmet need. Their success has been achieved through the personal efforts especially of Nitin Mehta in DIS, and John Owen, in OCE, and by adjusting content according to feedback received.

For example, next parliament, the popular slot on dissolution arrangements will be replaced with one on running a constituency office, delivered by constituency staff themselves. By refreshing content and offering training the roadshows will be attractive to repeat attendees; they are also, clearly, valued as networking events. They also meet an important customer service role of helping House staff interact directly with, and better understand, this important group of service users.

5. We plan to deliver 12–15 regional roadshows a year including some at Westminster, with annual attendance of 400 delegates. Other KPIs will be developed including measures of repeat attendance, delegate satisfaction and cost per delegate, including staff time costs.
6. We intended to proactively publish six monthly reviews including costs, so we need to obtain a HAIS code to collate spending for the roadshows (we have already had a request for this information from one Member).

Financial and procurement implications

7. In 2014/15, DIS and the OCE jointly met the costs of venue hire and catering. In 2015/16 the funding for venue hire and catering will be met from the General Election budget held by the OCE. Staff attending will continue to meet their travel, accommodation and subsistence costs from their own departmental budgets.
8. Additional staff resource of approximately 1 FT equivalent (see Annex 1 of Roadshow Review) will be required to meet the commitment made to hold 12–16 roadshows in 2015/16. DIS and the OCE will review current staff capacity in order to try to meet this need but it might be necessary to request some further resource.
9. If the roadshows are to continue in 2016 and beyond a bid for funding will need to be made through the usual departmental funding process.

Risk management

10. We are introducing an element of light-touch project management to better co-ordinate the roadshows, which will continue to be run jointly by the OCE/DIS. This will include a risk register to be reviewed and owned by the head of customer services, DIS and Deputy Head of Comms, OCE. The reputational risk of additional spending on these is mitigated by proactively publishing feedback and spending on these events. The review found they represented good value for money at £40–£80

per delegate including venue hire, and have helped to better advertise existing services, and represent an efficient way of delivering key messages and of engaging.

11. There will be a risk of raising expectations since we have already experienced demand from Members representing areas we have not yet visited.

Patsy Richards
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