

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

Management Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2013

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)

William Arnold
Chris Maile
Olufemi Oguntunde
Martin Thompson
Ben Wilson
Alex Jablonowski (Non-Executive Director)
Philip Robinson (Non-Executive Director)

Paul Brigland (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 No apologies were received.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 23 September 2013.

2.1 The minutes were approved subject to some minor textual corrections.

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

3.1 In connection with point 10.2 of the September minutes, The Board noted that the Welsh reference case would now be heard in February 2014. The Lord Chief Justice would sit on this.

4. Declaration of conflicts of interests

4.1 No declarations of conflicts of interest were made.

5. Monthly dashboard

- 5.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB13/60, and the quarterly summary for the jurisdictions attached.
- 5.2 The board noted the amendments made to the layout and information recorded following discussions at the September MB meeting.
- 5.3 CM said that the 'Our People' section might need amending, in particular the information covering training days.
- 5.4 Members agreed that the MB needed to ensure that staff were being given adequate opportunities for training and personal development, but needed to decide how this should be monitored. CM suggested he could do a quarterly update or provide a monthly oral report to supplement the dashboard.

Action point: CM/MT to consider further.

- 5.5 The Board discussed how the PTA year to date figures and the 12 working week figures were calculated.
- 5.6 LdiM pointed out that the figures did not reflect cases that were given priority or treated urgently and were dealt with very quickly.
- 5.7 PR said that the KPI's were what we had told the outside world we would deliver and recording these figures was proof of delivery.

Action point: MT to consider how describe the Working Week columns e.g. Sitting Weeks (SW), or Term Time Weeks (TTW).

- 5.8 OO said there were some points he wished to clarify, and that some additional columns may be needed, but that he would discuss this with MT outside of the meeting.

Action point: OO/MT to discuss structure and format of the finance section.

- 5.9 The Board noted that note 3 (relating to room hire under the Wider Market initiative needed amending.

Action point: MT to amend note 3.

- 5.10 The Board noted that the Average Sick Days line was coloured red. This was due to a member of staff who had been absent on long term sick leave. However, this member of staff was now undertaking a phased return to work and it was expected that this should return to green within the next two months.
- 5.11 The Board noted that the DSE figure was also showing red, but MT said that the reason for this was explained in the report to be considered at item 12.
- 5.12 The Board agreed that the dashboard contained much more relevant data than the old scorecard and was a positive step forward.
- 5.13 The Board asked that its thanks to MT for all of the work he had undertaken on the dashboard be recorded.

6. Risk Register

The Board noted paper MB13/61.

7. Finance and fees

- 7.1 The Board noted paper MB13/62, and in particular the following points –
- OO had conducted a comprehensive mid-year review of expenditure and re-profiled budgets accordingly
 - The IT project required £320k be transferred to capital expenditure, but the Board noted that the MoJ had now confirmed its £100k contribution towards the cost of the project.
- 7.2 The Board agreed projects should be undertaken if they either represented value for money or were considered to be necessary works. The Board discussed some of the proposed projects including the new reception desk and the replacing of worn carpets in some areas. It was suggested that in some ‘high traffic’ areas wooden flooring might be more appropriate than carpets.

Action point: MT to investigate the options of wooden flooring in some public areas.

- 7.3 The Board noted that the suggested archive of recordings of cases had not yet been agreed and would require further discussion.
- 7.4 The Board agreed that subject to further work on the areas identified above, it was content to proceed with the projects listed.
- 7.5 The Board considered the statement of the Trading Account. It was noted that approximately £33k had come in and that 50% of this was from the sale of gift items. PR asked if the profit margin was consistent with last year. OO said it was slightly lower, possibly due to dropping the price of some items. JR asked for comparative figures to be produced (comparing 2012 and 2013)

Action point: OO to produce figures comparing the profit margin on the sale of gift items in 2012 and 2013

- 7.6 PR said that he thought it made sense to write stock down in light of the current financial position, and that we should consider down valuing anything that, for example, carried details of our website address, as this would no longer be valid after Christmas.

Action point: OO to consider what gift items could be written down.

- 7.7 OO said that the forecast for income generated by room hire had been reduced following a discussion with the Events Manager. The Board noted that a concerted effort would be made to increase the number of room hire events under the Wider Market initiative.
- 7.8 The Board noted that the Supply Estimate figures would be discussed with HMT in November.

8. Press and communications

- 8.1 The Board noted paper MB13/63, and the following points -

- The Dewani case was subject to a further hearing at the High Court to determine whether that court would certify a question that might be considered by the Supreme Court.
- An order had been issued the previous day refusing the right to appeal in the NI case involving adoption rights for gay couples.
- The Board noted the ongoing public debate over membership of the ECtHR.
- Lord Neuberger and Lady Hale had held a successful press conference earlier in the month, which would be reported on more fully in next month's report.
- September had seen the Court receive a record number of physical visitors for that month.
- The Court was supporting a project led by Egham Museum and Royal Holloway University where school students were exploring the issues of fundamental rights, and seeking to draw up a modern-day Magna Carta.
- The Board noted the figures recording the number of visitors to the websites and the further increases in the proportion of visitors accessing via mobile devices.

9. Human Resources

9.1 The Board noted the following points –

- There were no vacancies for permanent positions, but a temporary Assistant Librarian would be recruited to cover the post until June 2014.
- The new HR system would commence a period of parallel running in October and would go fully live in January 2014
- The annual Staff Survey would be launched on 25 October. It contained a new section on benefits of working at the Supreme Court/JCPC

- Performance Management workshops had been held and a further two were planned before Christmas to take things forward with senior managers.

10. Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information

10.1 PB reported that three FOI requests had been received in September. No PQs had been tabled.

11. Case update

11.1 The Board noted that the linked assisted suicide cases had been listed in the final sitting week before Christmas.

12. Health and Safety

12.1 The Board noted paper MB13/64.

12.2 Paragraph 3 of the paper referred to the plans for the new reception desk and MT circulated plans for the proposed desk. This had been designed to address health and safety issues of reception staff. It was expected that the designer would provide cost estimates shortly.

12.3 The Board also noted the following points-

- The invacuation exercise had been conducted.
- Safety inspections would now be carried out on a four weekly basis.
- The independent audit of H&S measures had been carried out
- Contractors were now providing monthly H&S reports.
- The General Risk Assessment had been approved by the H&S Committee.

12.4 The Board discussed the issue of conducting tests of the invacuation and evacuation procedures. It was suggested that a 'friends and

family' test could be done to simulate dealing with members of the public and court users in emergency situations.

Action point: MT to discuss testing procedures with Auditors.

13 Quarterly Energy Consumption Report

13.1 The Board noted paper MB13/65

14 Catering Concession PQQ stage

14.1 The Board noted paper MB 13/66. It was expected that potential bidders for the catering concession would be shortlisted by end of November 2013.

15. Amended Management Board Terms of Reference

15.1 The board noted paper MB13/67 and agreed the amended terms of reference.

16. AOB

16.1 No other business was raised.

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