

# **The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom**

## **Management Board**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013**

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)

William Arnold

Chris Maile

Louise di Mambro

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 25 November 2013.**

2.1 The minutes were approved.

#### **3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

3.1 There were no matters arising.

#### **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 MB13/673, and in particular the following points –
- the average number of sick leave days was down, but CM said he had flagged up in the annual return to Cabinet Office that that the overall yearly average (currently 6.6 days) was due to a member of staff being on long term sick leave
- 5.2 PR noted that the statistics as recorded in the new Dashboard format were increasingly helpful.

## **6. Finance and fees**

- 6.1 The Board noted paper MB13/74, and in particular the following points –
- Spend at the end of November was £8.17m.
  - An increase in expenditure on stationery and office supplies was expected in January as new stationery would need to be ordered showing new website and email addresses.
  - Fee income was above what had been expected.
  - OO expected to soon be issuing invoices to the jurisdictions for the January contributions.
  - At the current rate of expenditure it was projected that the annual spend at the end of the financial year would be £12.7m.
- 6.2 OO said that the supplementary estimate proposals had been submitted to HMT and we awaited their agreement. OO said that he had taken the opportunity to formalise the MoJ £100k contribution towards the IT project.
- 6.3 The Board noted that in the autumn statement the Chancellor had told government departments to make a reduction of 1.14% in their DEL for the 14/15 and 15/16 financial years. This means that the UKSC budget has been reduced by £50k for each of these financial years.

6.4 The Board noted that we were on target to end the financial year in good shape and recorded its thanks to OO and the Finance team.

6.5 The Board considered the Wider Market initiatives and noted that there would be a push to increase event hire booking in 2014.

## **7. Press and communications**

7.1 The Board noted paper MB13/75, and the following points -

- There had been widespread coverage of judgment in the Bull v Hall case.
- Lord Neuberger had given an interview to the Evening Standard.
- There Law Society Gazette had given some coverage to the IT project and change of suppliers.
- There had been 45 educational tours during the month, which was very high.

## **8. Human Resources**

8.1 The Board noted the following points –

- The campaign to recruit the next round of JAs would be launched in January. Lords Kerr and Clarke would be sifting the applicants. The Board discussed the approach to advertising the JA vacancies and also how feedback from outgoing JA's was captured. Any feedback was then taken into consideration when recruiting future JAs. CM said that he thought some consideration needed to be given over what we expected of JAs and what they expected to be doing.
- CM said that representatives from My Civil Service Resourcing would be visiting in January and representatives from My Civil Service Pension also planned to visit.
- The NAO had asked to see a copy of our whistleblowing policy in the summer. They had produced a report comparing and contrasting the policies across departments and the |UKSC policy

had been rated as 'Good to Excellent'. A copy will be placed on the NAO website as a good example for others to follow. PR said that a note should be done explaining why we are satisfied with the 'Good to Excellent' rating, especially in the context of the Staff Engagement Survey results.

**Action point: JR asked that this be added as an item on the agenda of the next Audit Committee**

## **9. Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information**

9.1 PB reported that 6 FOI requests had been received in November. A contribution to a PQ had been requested by the MoJ. They had received a question which asked about the diversity of applicants for judicial posts.

## **10. Case update**

10.1 LdiM reported that the list for the next term would go onto the website in early January. A lot of the cases that had been listed had now settled. She would, where possible, fill the gaps. This was sometimes possible if the case settled 2 months before the expected hearing date.

10.2 The Board noted that a further Welsh Reference case had been received and LdiM had offered a date in early March.

## **11. Risk Register – quarterly review**

11.1 The board considered paper MB13/76 and noted –

Risk 1 – JR said that this would possibly need amending to show the trend was rising, particularly in light of expected announcements by political parties.

Risks 2, 4, and 10 – PB said that all of these risks would need to be considered and probably re-scored early in the New Year after the new IT systems had been implemented.

Risk 3 – The Board noted that Business Continuity testing would have to wait until the new IT system was in use and had bedded in. It was anticipated that the test would be able to be conducted from any internet enabled building.

Risk 5 – No change at present

Risk 6 – The score had been adjusted following discussion at the November MB meeting. JR would continue to monitor.

Risk 7 – No change at present.

Risk 8 – The Board considered that this was an ongoing risk. Proposed changes to Legal Aid remained the biggest one at present. Some cases were being challenged in the lower courts and could potentially end up here. The Board discussed the issue of litigants in person, and considered if that would need to be added to the register as a separate risk. The Board noted that a guide to litigants in person was being produced and would be available via the website.

Risk 9 - No change at present.

Risk 11 – would be considered along with item 12

Risk 12 – this might need amending in light of the new Welsh reference.

Risk 13 – It was hoped that this could be reduced or even removed soon.

Risk 14 – this remained dependent on the outcome of the Scottish Referendum in 2014.

## **12. JCPC jurisdiction (bi-annual update)**

12.1 The Board noted the updated position and considered this against Risk 11 on the risk register.

12.2 It was not clear if the debate had actually taken place in the Jamaican parliament and BW was seeking clarification.

### **13. Accommodation report**

13.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB13/77 and in particular the following points-

- It was planned to install the secondary double glazing on the windows between Court Room 3 and the café in early January. Listed Building Consent had been obtained and Westminster City Council were awaiting the letter from English Heritage.
- Listed Building Consent for the CCTV signs was still going through, but was making slow progress.
- The H&S audit results had been good.
- The London Living Wage increases were being implemented across all of the new contracts.
- There would be a power down test over the weekend of the 18/19 January. This test the resilience of the new lifts and the new IT system.
- There had been seven responses to the PQQ stage of the Catering Concession exercise and it had been decided to allow all seven to progress to the next stage. The Board noted the potential new forms and literature relating to room bookings.
- The Board noted that one organisation bidding for the catering concession wanted to include the running of the gift shop in their bid. The Board discussed possible options over the future running of the gift shop.

**Action point: MT to prepare a paper for the User Group and a future Justices Meeting.**

### **14. ICT Project and Domain Name**

14.1 PB updated the Board on the timetable for implementing the new IT systems over the Christmas recess. The Board noted that the building would be closed to Justices and staff from 5.00pm on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December, and would re-open on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December.

14.2 The new IT system would not become fully operational until Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January, in advance of the registry re-opening on the 8<sup>th</sup> January.

14.3 The Board noted that Nominet had finally granted the new domain names, but had not done so until Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December, which had delayed the setting up and testing of some key elements of the new system.

## **15. Staff Engagement Survey**

15.1 The Board noted the results of the survey. CM reported that we had achieved a good result and had, again, attained a higher score than almost any other government department.

15.2 The Board considered areas identified in the survey that would require further work and that the Results into Action team would need to take forward.

15.3 The results would be posted on the intranet and discussed at the next All Staff meeting in February.

## **16. Any other business**

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