

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

Management Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2014

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)

William Arnold

Chris Maile

Louise di Mambro

Olufemi Oguntunde

Martin Thompson

Ben Wilson

Alex Jablonowski (Non-Executive Director)

Kenneth Ludlam (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 24 July 2014.

2.1 The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

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 MB14/45.
- 5.2 KL queried the number of sitting days recorded.
- 5.3 KL noted that fees income throughout August was good even though the Court had not been sitting. JR explained that PTAs were still lodged even during the vacation period.
- 5.4 The Board noted the figures for the ICT Helpdesk continued to be good. PB provided a general update on the performance of the IT system and of the new arrangements that had been in place since 5 January 2014. The Board noted that the system was performing well, and that Justices and staff continued to be satisfied with the new arrangements and the levels of service they received. AJ pointed out that this had been made possible by the very capable IT staff employed by the Court, and that these were key posts from an operational point of view.

Action point: LdiM to investigate the recorded figures for sitting days.

6. Risk Register

- 6.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB14/46, and the covering note from JR.
- 6.2 The Board noted that it was desirable that any changes in the powers devolved to the Scottish Parliament, which impacted on the UKSC, should involve consultation with the Justices as to their practicality.
- 6.3 The Board noted the following –
 - Risk 1 - the score was likely to remain high in the run up to the General Election in May 2015 not least in case any manifesto commitments were made at party conferences that affected the UKSC.
 - Risk 6 - The score had been raised to reflect the situation in the Middle East, although security was vigilant in any event.

- Risk 7 - this risk had been added following discussions at the MB meeting and the MB Workshop that had been held in July.
- Risk 11 – this was being carefully monitored following the outcome of the Scottish Referendum and in the light of party conferences leading up to the General Election.

6.4 KL queried if Risk 4 (Finance) was a red risk. JR and OO explained that they had formed the view that we had reduced costs and expenditure as much as we could and there was now little scope to make any further reductions, but that our future settlement would be dependent on HMT accepting these arguments. For this reason they had kept the score at the current level of 4.

7. Finance and fees

7.1 The Board noted paper MB14/47 and in particular the following points -

- August had been a quiet month operationally, with a low number of invoices for payment received.
- Spend was broadly in line with the profiled budget.
- Contributions from the jurisdictions for the first two quarters had all been received. Invoices for the third quarter were being raised.
- Fee income for both the UKSC and JCPC continued to be higher than expected.

7.2 OO said that he would be re-profiling forecasts up to the end of the current financial year to reflect what we had spent and what we expected to spend.

8. Press and communications

8.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB14/48, and the following points –

- Lord Neuberger had visited New Zealand, Australia and Hong Kong over the summer and some of his speaking engagements had generated media coverage.
- Lady Hale had delivered a lecture on the Role of the Common Law which had been reported.
- Lord Neuberger was due to deliver other lectures later in the week.
- It had been a busy summer with visitor numbers being higher than ever, the numbers being boosted by the Open Days.
- The number of people visiting the website had increased.

9. Human Resources

9.1 The Board noted the following points –

- The 7 new JAs had started on 1 September and settled in well
- There had been three leavers just before the summer vacation. Two had transferred to another department and one had left the civil service. The moves to other departments had been on level transfer, although the other departments' pay scales for those grades were higher.
- The Events & International Visits Manager post would need to be filled and had been advertised.
- A fixed term appointment had been made to cover the Front of House vacancy until it could be filled permanently. If the advertisement for the vacancy generated the same response as previously (300+ applications), we would need help to sift the applications.
- The Justices PA vacancy was being filled by an agency member of staff until Christmas.
- Following the death in service of a member of the Registry team, the work was being picked up by other members of Registry staff. There was a need to improve resilience in the event that key members of staff were lost.
- A new civil service pension scheme, called ALPHA, would be launched in April 2015.
- Performance Management training had been arranged on 10 October for managers, in advance of the mid-year reviews being conducted.
- WA would be signing the 'Time to Change' pledge on 10 October.

- 9.2 KL noted that the two staff who had transferred had moved to a department that paid higher rates for staff in the same grade. KL queried how our pay scales compared generally to other departments. CM said our pay rates are in the mid-range when compared to other central government departments.

10. Parliamentary Questions and Freedom of Information

- 10.1 The Board noted that 4 FOI requests had been received in July and none in August. No PQs had been tabled.

11. Case update

- 11.1 The Board noted that the Prince Abdulaziz case would be heard on 13 October. The Islamic terrorist case had been listed and would be heard by 7 Justices.
- 11.2 Two very urgent cases had been added to the list and heard at the end of July.

12. Annual review of the Management Board Terms of Reference

- 12.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB14/49 and agreed the Terms of Reference.

13. Amended Complaints Handling procedure

- 13.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB14/50.

- 13.2 WA said the amendments had been made following an investigation by Philip Robinson into a complaint, which had raised a couple of points and the amended procedure addressed these.
- 13.3 The Board agreed the amended procedure and also agreed that, subject to any points Lord Neuberger might raise, this should now be published on the UKSC and JCPC websites.

Action point: Revised complaints procedure to be published on the websites

14 Action points arising from the Management Board Workshop

- 14.1 The Board noted the points listed in paper MB14/51.

15. AOB

- 15.1 The Board noted that the Accommodation report had been deferred until October.
- 15.2 MT advised that the updated telephone directory had been placed in the shared G:/drive, and was accessible to all staff and Justices.
- 15.3 An Office Notice covering Health & Safety had been published on the intranet on 1st October.
- 15.4 The Board noted the PAC Monitor that JR had circulated and that she considered to be potentially useful.

Following the meeting a demonstration was given to the Board of the e-bundle system to be used for the pilot.

UKSC
October 2014