

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

## **Management Board**

### **Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2015**

Attending: Mark Ormerod (Chair)

William Arnold

Chris Maile

Olufemi Oguntunde

Martin Thompson

Ben Wilson

Stephen Barrett (Non-Executive Director)

Kenneth Ludlam (Non-Executive Director)

Paul Brigland (Secretary)

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Louise di Mambro.

#### **2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 27 July 2015**

- 2.1 The minutes were approved subject to one amendment relating to a question raised by SB over security considerations.

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

- 3.1 The Board noted that all of the action points arising from the last meeting had been dealt with or actioned.
- 3.2 The situation detailed in 9.1 of the July minutes had changed. The judicial PA who had resigned would not be replaced and the judicial support unit would operate with 4 members of staff instead of 5 for the time being. The situation would be reviewed later in the Michaelmas Term to see if this was viable on a long-term basis.

#### **4. Declaration of conflicts of interests**

4.1 No declarations of conflicts of interest were made.

## **5. Monthly Information Dashboard**

5.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB15/48, and in particular the following points –

- The Board discussed the handling of PTA applications over the summer vacation.
- Finance – the number of invoices received in August was lower than usual but not unusual for the summer vacation.
- The number of sick absence days had risen in August but was still lower than the average for central government.
- £9,824 had been spent on staff training so far this financial year. SB asked if the training was general or discrete modules for individuals or teams. CM said that it was a combination of both.
- FOI requests had shown a rise in August, with 17 being received.

5.2 PB said that he had consulted colleagues with entries on the Dashboard about items to include in the proposed quarterly trends report. He was now considering what data to include and how to display it. A report, along with a draft trends report would be presented to a Board meeting in the near future. The Board noted that work was being carried out to add ‘RAG’ status flags to those field of the Dashboard where this was appropriate.

## **6. Finance and fees**

6.1 The Board noted paper MB15/49 and the attached spreadsheets (Annex A). The Board noted the following points -

- The figure of £88k quoted as a potential overspend in the event that we do not receive the MoJ contributions should read £113k
- The words “in real terms” should be added to the final paragraph of page 3 of the report after the words “represents a 5% reduction”.
- Fee income continued to be above the projected figure Gross year to date spend was 2% under budget, which was in line with expectations.
- Contributions for the second quarter had been received from the jurisdictions in July as expected.
- Fee income for both the UKSC and JCPC continued to be above the level projected.

- WMI income was lower than projected but it was hoped it should pick up by the end of the financial year. However, it was probable that it would still not meet the target.
- 6.2 BW pointed out that the target had always been ambitious, and WMI income was up by 25% on last year. However, we would need to consider carefully what target was set for next year.
- 6.3 SB said that the Finance Paper included a lot of data to consider and asked if we had clarity, as a Board over what the key issues on finance were and what needed to be considered and monitored at Board level. It was suggested that it might be useful to have a pictorial representation that allowed Board members to focus quickly on the main issues.

**Action point: OO to consider these suggestions and report back to the November meeting.**

## **7. Press and communications**

- 7.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB15/50, and the following points –
- There had been significant and positive coverage of the Magna Carta events staged over the summer.
  - There had been reviews of the latest book published by Lord Sumption. BW updated the Board on the issues that had arisen following Lord Sumption’s interview with *The Guardian*, which had led to a significant amount of work for the Communications team.
- 7.2 Visitor numbers remained high, although slightly down on last year. The Magna Carta exhibition had been well received and had attracted positive feedback. Discussions were ongoing with the Parliamentary Visitors Unit and consideration was being given to better signage and how we publicised events and exhibitions.
- 7.3 MO commented that he had been very impressed with all the events that had been held over the summer and the Board expressed its appreciation for the Communications Team’s efforts.
- 7.4 SB said that this was a very helpful report and we clearly had a good team dealing with engagement. He asked if we had any way of

assessing what was achieved by undertaking the outreach programme and whether the Justices were aware of the work being undertaken.

- 7.5 BW explained that it was difficult to measure but an anonymous survey was run annually using YouGov. This tested respondents' awareness of the UKSC, what we do and how we are perceived. BW suggested he could provide an annual report on the results of this survey. It was suggested this could include comments from the Justices who sometimes pass on feedback they receive when attending conferences and giving speeches and lectures at law schools and universities.

**Action point: Annual report on the YouGov survey to be included in the sequencing of Board Papers (BW/PB)**

## **8. Human Resources**

8.1 The Board noted the following points –

- The new Chief Executive had started in September.
- The 7 new JAs had started on 7 September and were settling in well.
- Interviews would be held for two temporary promotion posts in the Registry. This was part of the ongoing Registry restructuring aimed at improving resilience.
- A temporary case manager post would be advertised.
- A review of some other posts in Corporate Services was ongoing.
- Following the resignation of one of the Judicial PAs, the Judicial Support Team would be trialling operating as a smaller team rather than immediately filling this post.
- MyCSP were undertaking a further data cleansing exercise as there were still problems with accuracy of the data they held. CM would be meeting with three senior managers from MyCSP in October to consider if they can offer a more bespoke service to the UKSC.
- A benchmarking meeting had been arranged for all managers on the 9 October. This was in advance of mid-year reviews and would cover the new four box marking system.
- Internal Audit would be starting a review of our performance management policies and procedures in the following week.

- An updated reward & Recognition policy was being prepared for the Remuneration Committee to consider. £1050 had been spent on R&R in the current financial year.
- The annual staff survey would be launched on 16 October and a summary report would be presented to the Board in December.
- A new No-Smoking policy for the building had been produced, which would be considered by the Health and Safety Committee on 8 October.

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

- 9.1 The Board noted that 17 FOI requests had been received in August but no PQs had been tabled. This showed a marked increase in FOI requests above the numbers received previously.

## **10. Case update**

- 10.1 BW covered in LdiM's absence. It was expected there would be interest in the joint enterprise case listed for the forthcoming term.

## **11. Review of Management Board Terms of Reference**

- 11.1 It was agreed to defer this item until a later Board meeting.

## **12. Risk Register quarterly review**

- 12.1 The Board noted paper MB15/52. MO said his initial observation was that while the register detailed the risks it did not always make clear the consequences.

- 12.2 The Board noted the following points –

Risk 1 – The new Permanent Secretary of the MoJ was coming to see the President in October. The President had had his regular meeting with the Lord Chancellor.

Risk 3 – MO had held a number of introductory meetings with contacts in parliament, MoJ and the UK jurisdictions.

Risk 4 – the wording for this entry was being worked upon. However, the media coverage of Lord Sumption’s comments highlighted the potential risk.

Risk 8 – This had been covered in the HR update, but the Board were reminded of the challenges around resilience faced by a small organisation with a number of critical posts.

Risk 14 – the issue of holding a referendum on withdrawal from the JCPC was due to be debated in the Jamaican Senate on 16 October.

Risk 16 – the Board considered if this risk should be removed but concluded it should not.

- 12.3 The Board considered if 17 risks was too many and meant that the Board’s attention was not focused on critical risks. It was considered that issues had been confused with risks and it was suggested that the number of entries on the Register could be reduced.

**Action point: MO/WA/PB to consider the structure and content of the Risk Register and report back to the October Board meeting.**

### **13. Quarterly Accommodation report**

- 13.1 The Board noted the contents of paper MB15/53 and in particular, the following points -
- Re-carpeting of some public areas would be going ahead in the New Year.
  - The lighting upgrade in the court rooms was dependant on listed building consent being received from Westminster City Council.
  - Estimates for the lighting projects were being reviewed.
  - The replacement of door ironmongery was a possible vfm justified project to bring forward in the event of any underspend towards the end of the financial year.
- 13.2 SB asked if we were clear on why we undertake some projects (i.e Things we do to preserve a listed building v Things we do to enhance

the building), and on that basis asked how essential it was to have replacement door ironmongery.

**14. AOB**

14.1 No other business was raised.

UKSC  
October 2015