

**The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom  
Management Board**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010**

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)

William Arnold  
Alex Jablonowski (Non-Executive Director)  
Sian Lewis  
Louise di Mambro (item 5 onwards)  
Olufemi Oguntunde  
Philip Robinson (Non-Executive Director)  
Caroline Smith

Ann Achow (Secretary)

**1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Martin Thompson.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the MB meeting held on 24 September 2010**

2.1 The minutes were approved subject to a correction to paragraph 3.5.

**3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the minutes**

3.1 The paper from Frank Cranmer was not yet available. As it was needed for the Awayday on 5 November, JR would contact him.

**Action: JR to contact Frank Cranmer for an update on progress.**

3.2 CS, who had not been present at the last meeting, queried the comment in 5.2 of the September minutes concerning HR and Finance needing to be on the same IT platform. Although this might be the best solution, it could limit flexibility in choosing providers. It was noted that it would be possible to have Finance and HR on different IT platforms. The disadvantage would be that robust reconciliation processes would have to be put in place, the impact of which would have to be included in assessing the value for money aspect of any changes.

3.3 The issue about the gas charges had been resolved.

**4. Spending review**

4.1 JR updated Board members on recent developments.

## 5. Shared services

5.1 JR reported that the Finance team were to visit the current contractor in November. Work was starting on the purchase of our own finance system with a view to it being used after the 2010/11 Annual Accounts had been produced. It was expected that this would realise an annual saving in the region of £60,000.

5.2 CS was working towards the changes to MOJ's HR delivery which was due to take place in May 2011. She was also keeping a watching brief on developments around 'next generation HR'. The plans were for some hubs to be running by 2012 with all hubs up and running by March 2013.

5.3 The Board briefly discussed IT issues and agreed that a fuller discussion would take place at the next MB meeting.

**Action: IT to be included on the November MB meeting agenda**

## 6. Review of charging options for visitors

6.1 SL presented paper MB10/52 which contained the visitor survey results on charging conducted during August and September. It proposed a way forward which involved charging for pre-bookable group tours but not for general visitor access. The Board recognised that, in any event, there could be no charge levied for access to court rooms when cases were being heard. Nor at this stage, did they wish to pursue the option to charge for general visitor access when the Court was not sitting. It was mentioned that there might be implications in terms of additional health and safety and fire safety requirements, if charging for general visitor access was brought in.

**Action: MT to investigate whether charging for visitor or group access had an impact on health, safety or fire requirements.**

6.2 After detailed discussion the Board decided to accept the recommendation to charge for guided tours. Subject to demand there would be three tours a day on Fridays during term time and every day during the recesses. Mondays to Thursdays during term time would be used to give free tours for educational (e.g. schools and colleges) visits.

6.3 The paper made it clear that further work was needed on the practicalities of charging for tours including exemptions for distinguished visitors, neighbours, invited guests etc. A re-draft of paragraph 5.3 was needed before the paper was more widely distributed within the Court. It was expected that charged tours would be available from April 2011 subject to the preparatory work being completed. It was agreed that tours booked before the charging arrangements were publicised would not incur a charge.

**Action: SL to re-draft para 5.3 of the paper before JR circulates it to the Justices.**

## 7. Awayday agenda

7.1 The draft Awayday agenda was discussed and approved, subject to a minor change. It was important that clear outcomes were set for the day. These would include the impact of

the Spending Review settlement, thinking around future issues which could impact on the Court's work, and further work on the medium to long term strategy.

7.2 JR mentioned that the Civil Service Code was being re-drafted. It was important to ensure that the statement concerning the court's staff made by Lord Bach on the floor of the House was reflected in the re-draft.

**Actions:**

**(1) AA to circulate a revised agenda.**

**(2) JR to write a 'headlines' paper to help focus the discussion.**

**(3) JR to keep a watching brief on the re-drafting of the Civil Service Code.**

## **8. Scorecard report**

8.1 The Board considered paper MB 10/53 which contained scorecard figures up to and including September 2010. WA, LdiM and AA had met to discuss how best to capture any peaks and troughs in the number of Permission Applications received. It was a simple statistical exercise to extract this information - the figure at 30 September being 11. This additional information would be included in future scorecards. As it was not straightforward to provide more complex or qualitative analysis in the scorecard such information would be covered in LdiM's monthly oral report to the Board.

**Action: AA to include an extra line in the operational quadrant of the scorecard.**

## **9. Risk**

9.1 The Board discussed paper MB10/58 which comprised the current risk register. It was thought that the weighting and trends of some risks should be diminishing over time owing to the actions taken to manage them.

**Action: Risk owners to pay particular attention to weightings and trends when completing the next month's register.**

## **10. Finance and fees**

10.1 OO presented paper MB 10/54 which contained a full financial information pack to the end of September.

10.2 The key points for the Board to note were as follows:

- year to date expenditure was running at 3% below profile. A full review of forecast to the end of the year had been carried out in September with re-profiling where appropriate
- fee income was running at £20,000 above budget

Management team members were reminded to discuss any issues concerning their area's profiled forecast with OO.

## **11. Human Resources**

11.1 CS presented paper MB10/55 which comprised the quarterly review of progress against the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2010-12. Highlights included the successful roll-out of an

e-learning package to all staff, the launch of the staff survey, publication of the conduct policy, recruitment guidance and information about Trade Union Side and staff networks. The impact of the new equality legislation, which came into force on 1 October, was being assessed.

11.2 CS also presented paper MB10/56 on work experience and marshalling. The Board's policy, decided a year ago, was that the Court did not have sufficient resources to offer work experience or marshalling placements. The present alternative of providing organised tours for student and school children had been very successful with an average of 20 such groups visiting each month. The paper proposed four options for dealing with work experience requests.

11.3 Following a detailed discussion the Board decided that it would still not be possible to offer marshalling opportunities or traditional work experience placements. However, further consideration would be given to the option which proposed quarterly one day interactive visits for 14-18 year olds. Experience of the recent visits of sixth form college students organised in conjunction with the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law could feed into the development of this option.

**Action: CS to give further consideration to option 4 for dealing with work experience requests.**

## **12. Press and communications**

12.1 SL's communications update (paper MB 10/57) highlighted case coverage, interviews and commentary in the media, visitor and website visitor numbers.

12.2 The number of individual visitors to the court was lower than in the previous two months but higher than in June. The number of organised school visits was lower than in previous months, reflecting the start of the new school year. The number of separate visits to the website in September was 20,431, an increase on the figures for July and August. Visitor and group figures were available for the first full year and showed that 55,391 members of the public had visited the Court as well as 273 groups and 211 school and student parties.

12.3 A highlight of the month was the Open House weekend when architectural tours of the building were given by Hugh Feilden, the architect for the refurbishment of the building. The two days following the Open House weekend were 'public access days' when the library was open to the general public.

12.4 It was expected that the 90 minute Channel 4 documentary on the Court would be ready to view in the next few weeks. JR reported that BBC 4 are planning a series on justice next year and wish to produce a programme on the Court as part of the series. SL was preparing a note on this for the Justices.

## **13. Parliamentary Questions monthly report**

13.1 There had been no new PQs received.

13.2 The flow of FOI enquiries had continued to decrease. All requests had been answered within the 20 day deadline.

#### **14. Case statistics**

14.1 The update on the large number of Permission Applications received was covered during the discussion on the scorecard at 8.1 above. In future the 'Case Statistics' item would be re-titled 'Cases update' and would provide a qualitative update to the case statistics presented in the scorecard.

#### **15. Any other business**

15.1 JR said that the first anniversary seminar attended by judges, academics and practitioners had been a success. Some attendees were working on papers and articles which would be published in due course. As these become available hyperlinks would be added to the Court's website.

These minutes were approved by the Management Board on 22 November 2010.