

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

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2011**

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)  
William Arnold  
Louise di Mambro (item 3 onwards)  
Sian Lewis  
Philip Robinson (Non-Executive Director)  
Alex Jablonowski (Non-Executive Director)  
Caroline Smith

Ann Achow (Secretary)  
Paul Brigland (observing)

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

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Olufemi Oguntude and Martin Thompson.

### **2. Approval of the minutes of the MB meeting held on 29 June 2011**

2.1 JR reported that an amendment was needed to point 13.1 of the minutes. Approval to be carried forward to the next meeting on 29 September 2011.

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

3.1 JR reported that a meeting had been held to discuss lessons learnt from the publication of the Annual Report and the timetable for the 2012 Annual Report and Accounts. This would now be scheduled to allow time for the Audit Committee to look at the accounts alongside the draft report.

3.2 JR reported that the debate in the Scottish Parliament of the McCluskey Committee's Interim Report had taken place on 30 June 2011.

3.3 JR reported that a further meeting to discuss UKSC funding had been arranged between JR, WA and MoJ officials for 28 July 2011.

3.4 JR reported that the House of Lords Constitution Committee had held three hearings to take evidence and consider the issue of judicial appointments. Witnesses at the first hearing, which had focused largely on the UKSC, had been mainly academics. Lord Kerr, Etherton LJ, Her Honour Judge Plumstead, the Secretary to the Council of Circuit Judges, and District Judge Jenkins, the Secretary to the Association of District Judges, had given evidence at the second hearing. JR had prepared notes of these hearings and could make them available to Board Members. The third hearing had heard evidence from various judges from England and Wales. JR had not attended this hearing and had not yet seen the transcript. Lord Phillips and Lady Hale were scheduled to give evidence at future hearings in

the autumn and Lady Hale and Lord Mance had submitted written evidence. Further hearings had been scheduled up to the end of the calendar year. The Constitution Committee would then produce a report.

#### **4. Scorecard report**

4.1 The Board noted the figures on the scorecard paper MB11/36. LdiM reported that the number of applications for Permission to Appeal (PTA) and refusals were holding steady. There were 20+ PTAs still with the Justices for decision.

4.2 One of the current Judicial Assistants had agreed to stay through August and would do an analysis of PTA trends (numbers accepted, numbers refused etc). This would be circulated to Board members once finalised.

#### **5. Risk Paper**

5.1 The Board considered the current Risk Register (paper MB11/37) and the following points were noted.

Risk 1 – JR had left this as it was, pending the meeting with MoJ officials on 28 July 2011.

Risk 2 – It was expected that this would be finished by the end of September 2011.

Risk 3 – The Board agreed that a future adjustment would be needed once the McCluskey Committee delivered its final report. JR reported that she would not now be present at the Review Team meeting, but had discussed the matter with Lord Hope who would be attending.

Risk 5 – WA reported that the interviews with prospective security guarding contractors had been arranged for mid-August, with a view to having a new contract in place by December 2011.

Risk 6 – The trend had been marked upwards owing to recent press coverage. The Board noted that, in general terms, initiatives undertaken by UKSC meant that UKSC decisions were not misunderstood.

AJ asked the Board to consider a more strategic position with reference to press coverage of some of the UKSC high profile cases. AJ said that it would also be useful to consider this alongside the strategic plan.

JR recommended that a workshop be arranged for October or November 2011 to look at Risk and the Strategic Plan.

**Action: JR to review risk 6 and consider any necessary action.**

**Action: PB to arrange Risk Register and Strategic Plan Workshop for October/November**

Risk 9 – JR reported that she, WA and MT had held a meeting with officials at the RCJ to discuss the UKSC’s Business Continuity Plan. Following this meeting a secure suite of rooms had been identified that could be made available to UKSC in the event of an emergency. MT was now arranging a date in September or early October for a test of the plan.

Risk 10 – Richard Susskind had provided his report and had been asked to make recommendations on next steps.

Risks 13 and 14 to be removed

## **6. Finance and fees**

6.1 WA presented OO’s paper MB11/38.

6.2 CS reported that a meeting had been arranged with MoJ Finance to ensure that the transfer away from Liberata’s accounting system did not have an effect on the payment of staff salaries.

## **7. Press and communications**

7.1 SL presented paper MB11/39 which comprised her press and communications update. The paper reported on activity over the past month and drew the Board’s attention to the coverage that Lady Hale’s two recent speeches had received.

7.2 The number of visitors was slightly up on the previous month and 13% more than in June 2010, although the number of paid tours was still subject to fluctuation.

7.3 Twenty two educational tours had taken place in June including a group from ‘Pathways to Law’ – an initiative to provide opportunities to students from state schools in England who were interested in a career in law.

## **8. Human resources**

8.1 CS gave her quarterly update on equality and diversity. She reported that work continued on implementing the physical and website access recommendations made by the RNIB. The website manager had been working on the UKSC and JCPC websites to enable them to work with screen readers. The issue had also been referred to the IT contractor to investigate amendments that could not be carried out in house.

8.2 CS had arranged training for the front of house staff to help them assist visually impaired visitors – RNIB would be delivering this training on 31 August.

8.3 David Bonnett who had advised on accessibility issues during the building’s refurbishment, was to bring a group of European architects to view this historic building’s successful adaptations for disabled access. JR reported that following a recent visit by members of both Houses of Parliament, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson had said this building was one of the best she had visited in terms of ease of access for wheelchair users.

## **9. Parliamentary Questions and FOI monthly report**

9.1 AA reported that the UKSC had received 1 PQ which had asked if the JCPC had sufficient funding to deal with death penalty cases. There had been no PQs received about the UKSC itself.

9.2 The level of FOI requests was steady with requestors seeking information on IT expenditure and Justices overseas visits

## **10. Case update**

10.1 LdiM reported that numbers continued to remain steady.

10.2 The Fees order which raised application fees to £1,000 from the current £800 was due to come into force on 5 August 2011.

## **11. Dates for 2012 Management Board meetings**

11.1 It was agreed that meetings for 2012 would continue to be arranged to take place on the fourth Monday of the month with a start time of 11.30am, subject to Bank Holidays, Christmas and members' availability.

### **Action: PB to circulate proposed dates for 2012 MB meetings**

## **12. Any other business**

12.1 JR reported that 4 Justices and WA would be visiting China, Mongolia and Hong Kong in September 2011. This was at the invitation of the relevant Governments/jurisdictions.

12.2 JR reported that, following a Selection Committee meeting, advertisements had been issued that day to fill two Justice vacancies.

12.3 JR reported that a briefing on Scottish issues and the Scottish Parliament had been arranged for Friday with Alastair Ross, Head of Public Policy from a Scottish solicitors firm which was represented on the UKSC User Group. All Board members were welcome to attend.

12.4 JR reported that this would be the last Board meeting attended by Ann and Caroline as they were leaving the UKSC in September. The Board expressed its thanks for all of the work that they had done to help establish the UKSC and wished them well for the future.

These minutes were approved by the Management Board on 29 September 2011.

UKSC  
July 2011