



SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE BOARD

MEETING: 10 OCTOBER 2011, KILMARNOCK SHERIFF COURT AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT

Present:

Rt Hon Lord Hamilton, Lord President, (Chair)
Rt Hon Lord Gill, Lord Justice Clerk
Eleanor Emberson
Rt Hon Lord Reed
Robert Milligan QC
Sheriff Iona McDonald
Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop QC
Elizabeth Carmichael CBE
Mark Higgins
Johan Findlay OBE JP
Tony McGrath
Debbie Crosbie
Sheriff Derek Pyle

Also Attended:

Neil Rennick, Executive Director Strategy & Infrastructure, SCS
Eric McQueen, Executive Director Field Services, SCS
Stephen Coulter, Director Planning and Performance, SCS
Bridget Campbell, Director Justice, Scottish Government (Item 5 only)
Margaret Peattie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCS, (Minutes)

Apologies:

None

1. Minutes of the Meeting of 8 August 2011

1.1 The Minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 There were no matters arising which would not be discussed elsewhere on the Agenda.

3. Strategic Planning (SCS/Oct11/29, SCS/Oct11/30 and SCS/Oct11/31)

Spending Review 2011

3.1 The outcome of the Spending Review had been announced since the last meeting in August. It was noted that the overall revenue budget had been reduced by 11.1% on the allocation for 2010/11. Taking into account projected inflation, the real terms reduction in revenue funding over the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 was 20%.

3.2 The Board discussed the impact the settlement would have on future budget planning and whether a further Voluntary Early Release (VER) scheme should be initiated for all staff. It was **agreed** that there should be no further VER scheme within the current financial year.

3.3 Options for allocating further resources from the anticipated reserve for 2011/12 were presented to the Board. It was **agreed** that priority be given to estates compliance and investment projects and that business cases for two spend-to-save projects be considered by the Estates, Health & Safety, Fire and Security Committee, to which the Board delegated decision making authority.

Corporate Plan Delivery Status Report

3.4 The Board received an update on progress in delivering commitments set out in the SCS Corporate Plan 2011-14. Key achievements included:

- confirmation of carbon savings of 6% realised in the year 2010/11 against a target of 5%;
- completion of Phase II of the Parliament House redevelopment programme;
- initiation of the Leadership Through Coaching project and the delivery of coaching workshops to the Executive Team, Directors and senior managers; and
- the establishment of a new Court Programming Guide aimed at improving the consistency, efficiency and effectiveness of court programmes.

3.5 A number of projects were well underway and the Executive Team had recently completed a programme of visits to all courts, the Office of the Public Guardian, the Judicial Office for Scotland and HQ business units to brief staff and to receive feedback from them on the challenges faced by SCS.

Decision Tracker

3.6 A draft Decision Tracker had been developed to capture key decisions and track the progress of actions taken in response to implementation of those decisions. The Board was content with the draft and it was **agreed** that, as the tracker rolled forward, historical detail of decisions taken more than three months prior to meetings would be retained but not reproduced in the tracker issued for scrutiny.

4. Future Court Structures (SCS/Oct11/32)

4.1 *The record of the discussion under this agenda item is considered confidential and exempt from publication.*

5. Scottish Government Policy Update

5.1 Bridget Campbell joined the meeting to provide an update on plans and policy priorities affecting the SCS.

5.2 The Board heard that the Scottish Government had set up a Justice Working Group to provide a new approach to decision making in a policy delivery setting. This Group, of which Eleanor Emberson was a member, would oversee a number of discrete change programmes across the justice portfolio. This approach was designed to provide high level oversight of how each programme was connected and ensure that things were kept on track, as well as the balance between change and business as usual. This would also provide clarity on the collective demands being made on each justice organisation.

5.3 A summary of progress on projects under the Making Justice Work Programme was circulated to the Board. Other matters referred to included:

- Civil Courts Review, with work progressing towards a consultation Bill;
- Review of Sheriff & Jury procedure which would be subject of a Bill in 2013; and
- Tribunal Reform.

5.4 The consultation on the creation of a Civil Justice Council was discussed. It was recognised that the task of establishing a single set of rules would be considerable.

Resources would have to be found to achieve that objective but, if achieved, would deliver substantial benefits.

5.5 The Chair thanked Bridget Campbell for attending the meeting to brief the Board on the Scottish Government's plans and priorities.

6. ICT Strategy – Implementation Plan (SCS/Oct11/33)

6.1 At its meeting in May the Board approved the three year ICT Strategy for the SCS. The Executive had now brought forward for consideration an Implementation Plan for 2011/12 which included performance measures, targets and milestones, the IT architecture and a summary of the project portfolio and deliverables, which the Board requested when considering the Strategy document.

6.2 The Board was content that the Plan provided assurance that on-going commitments within the ICT Strategy and Corporate Plan were being managed and progressed appropriately in the current financial year.

7. Judicial Survey Proposals (SCS/Oct11/34)

7.1 The Board heard that the Executive had set up a judicial reference group to help develop the format and questions for the judicial survey. A near final draft was circulated before the meeting and was discussed.

7.2 It was **agreed** that the survey should now be finalised, taking into account the Board's comments, and that it be conducted between October and December 2011. The Board would receive a report on the outcome in due course.

8. Committee Matters (SCS/Oct11/35)

People Committee

8.1 The Committee brought forward a proposal to change the Committee's Remit in relation to scrutiny of policy matters within its delegated authority. The Board **agreed in principle** that the Remit be changed and that the revised Remit would be brought back to the Board for scrutiny and exception reporting only in December.

Action: People Committee to revise its Remit and bring back to the Board in December as a paper for Scrutiny/Exception Reporting only.

8.2 The Committee had been looking at the detail of a draft People Strategy which would be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

Estates, Health & Safety, Fire and Security Committee

8.2 The Committee recognised the considerable challenge it faced in light of a significant reduction in the SCS capital budgets announced in the Spending Review for the next three years.

8.3 Delivery of Phase II of the Parliament House redevelopment project on budget and ahead of time had been welcomed by the Committee. The Board commended the work of the contractor, the project manager and all staff involved in this significant achievement.

Audit Committee

8.4 The Committee would engage in a training session facilitated by the Scottish Government's Director of Procurement after its next meeting.

8.5 The Committee's annual report to the Board would be submitted for consideration at the next meeting in December.

Action: All Committee Chairs to ensure that the annual reports are submitted for consideration by the Board at its meeting in December.

9. Any Other Business

Justice Committee - Evidence on the Spending Review & Draft Budget

9.1 The Executive had been asked to provide a contribution to written evidence called for by the Justice Committee and circulated a draft response at the meeting. The Board was invited to comment on the draft in light of discussions at today's meeting.

Action: All to consider the draft written evidence to the Justice Committee and provide the Executive with any comments by close of business on Friday 14 October.

9.2 In closing, the Chair thanked the Sheriff Clerk, Chris McGrane, and his staff for hosting the meeting and recorded the Board's appreciation of his informative presentation on business volumes and issues affecting Kilmarnock Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court.

10. Date of the Next Meeting

10.1 Monday 5 December 2011 in Parliament House.