



**SCOTTISH COURT SERVICE BOARD**

**MEETING: FRIDAY 11 MARCH 2011 in HAMILTON SHERIFF COURT**

**Present:**

Rt Hon Lord Hamilton, Lord President, (Chair)  
Rt Hon Lord Gill  
Mark Higgins  
Tony McGrath  
Elizabeth Carmichael CBE  
Debbie Crosbie  
Johan Findlay JP  
Sheriff Derek Pyle  
Rt Hon Lord Reed  
Robert Milligan QC

**Also Attended:**

Neil Rennick, Executive Director Strategy & Infrastructure, SCS  
Eric McQueen, Executive Director Field Services, SCS  
Margaret Peattie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCS, (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

Sheriff Iona McDonald  
Eleanor Emberson  
Sheriff Principal Alastair Dunlop QC

**1. Minutes of the Meeting of 7 February 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/Mar11/06 and SCS/Mar11/07)**

***Budget 2011/12***

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

***Draft Business Plan***

3.7 The Board commented on the draft internal 2011/12 Business Plan for the organisation which sets out corporate objectives for the coming year aligned to the SCS's 3 year Corporate Plan 2011-14. Directorates and business units within the Executive would develop their own business plans in support of the corporate objectives and local delivery priorities. Subject to the amendments discussed, the Board **agreed** the structure of the Business Plan.

#### **4. Corporate Plan 2011-14 (SCS/Mar11/08)**

4.1 The Judiciary & Courts (Scotland) Act 2008 conferred upon the Scottish Court Service a statutory requirement to submit a Corporate Plan to Scottish Ministers for approval before the end of March. Following consideration of an earlier draft at the February Board meeting, the Executive presented a near final draft of the Plan for the Board's consideration. This had already been circulated to Scottish Government officials for comment and, subject to a small number of amendments suggested by the Board, it was **agreed** that this should now be submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval.

#### **5. Board Appraisal and Forward Planning (SCS/Mar11/09)**

5.1 In earlier discussions the Board had agreed to the development of a system for assessing its overall effectiveness and the individual contribution of its members in accordance with good practice standards for public bodies. The proposals for the assessment process were discussed and the Board **agreed** that this would comprise:

- a written self-assessment by each member reflecting on their individual contribution and also on the overall effectiveness of the Board;
- a one-to-one meeting with the Chair using that self-assessment as a basis for their discussion; and
- collation of views on Board effectiveness to form an overall assessment and action plan for any areas identified for improvement.

Arrangements for taking this forward would be put in place shortly.

5.2 An outline forward plan of key strategic matters to be brought to the Board for consideration by the end of 2011 was also discussed and **agreed** with some additional items suggested by members.

#### **6. Risk and Audit (SCS/Mar11/10)**

6.1 A paper setting out the overall framework for the management of risk by the SCS was presented to the Board. The role of the Audit Committee in that process was also described.

6.2 The Board heard that the Audit Committee had asked the Executive Team to review and rationalise its identified list of corporate-level risks and the overall approach to risk management. The Committee had spent some time in making sure the risks were fully articulated and the Board was content with the proposed list of corporate risks and with the procedures described for managing risk in a controlled manner.

#### **7. Update from Committees/Working Groups**

##### **Audit Committee**

7.1 Two external members of the Audit Committee had now been offered appointment. Both had professional accountancy skills and experience as members of other Audit Committees and Boards. The Committee had appointed Elizabeth Carmichael as Deputy Chair.

7.2 The Terms of Reference had been refreshed and members were invited to comment on them. It was noted that proposed arrangements for Scottish Government Internal Audit activity may be brought back to the Board for discussion at a later date.

##### **Estates, Health & Safety, Fire and Security Committee**

7.3 The new facilities management contract would be signed shortly. Work had started on developing a new Estates Strategy for the organisation and one of the main challenges would be managing pressures with significantly reduced capital funding.

7.4 Interviews for external members had been concluded and Sheriff Iona McDonald had been appointed as Deputy Chair.

7.5 Discussions with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service on shared services were ongoing and the Committee was overseeing how this dialogue was developing. Final decisions on the shared service proposal would be brought back to the full Board for consideration.

#### **People Committee**

7.6 This Committee had met recently when the two new members, Sheriff Nikola Stewart (Sheriff at Lanark) and Jean Lindsay (HR Director, Forestry Commission) were in attendance. Johan Findlay had been appointed as Deputy Chair.

7.7 At that meeting, Members of the Mainstreaming Equality Project Board had given a presentation and the work they had done to bring forward an equalities statement and guidance for the SCS was commended by the Committee.

7.8 The results from the recent staff survey had been considered and the Committee had expressed concern about the number of staff (c.15%) reporting that they had experienced bullying and harassment. The Executive had already put in place an action plan to address areas where improvement was required and the Committee would consider this again in more detail over the coming months.

#### **Performance Management Working Group**

7.9 This short-life working group had completed its review of performance management and had now been stood down. One of the outcomes had been the development of a strategy map. From this a set of key performance measures had been put in place, although it was recognised that some would require to be revisited once the organisation had evolved over time.

7.10 One of the important elements of this work was ensuring the quality of information which would be routinely presented to the Board and the Chair thanked Tony McGrath and the members of the working group for their input into this important piece of work.

### **8. Any Other Business**

8.1 None.

8.2 In closing, the Chair thanked Fiona Fraser, Sheriff Clerk at Hamilton, and her staff for hosting the meeting in the sheriff court and accommodating a tour of the building and the civil court annex at Birnie House.

### **9. Date of the Next Meeting**

9.1 Friday 6 May 2011 – venue to be confirmed.