

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom Management Board

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2011

Attending: Jenny Rowe (Chair)

William Arnold
Sian Lewis
Larin Esan
Martin Thompson
Chris Maile
Philip Robinson (Non-Executive Director)
Alex Jablonowski (Non-Executive Director)

Paul Brigland (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 LdiM sent apologies for absence.

2. Approval of minutes of the Management Board Meeting of 28 November 2011

2.1 The minutes were approved, subject to two textual changes.

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

3.1 The following points arising from the minutes of the November Management Board meeting were discussed

- 8.2 – the word ‘agreed’ should be replaced with ‘suggested’ (“...it was *suggested* that the survey should include...”)
- 3.1 – The Board noted that JR had told MOJ officials she was not in a position to respond to their letter of 14 November 2011 on the Spending Review settlement until the Finance Director returned from his secondment. JR hoped to be able to update the Board at the January meeting.
- 7.3 – JR had sent the Communications Paper to Laurene McAlpine and Charles Winstanley, the Northern Irish and new

4. Scorecard report

4.1 The Board noted the monthly Scorecard report (paper MB11/58)

5. Risk Paper

5.1 The board considered paper MB11/59. The following points were discussed.

- Risk 1 was not changed as the work on this was not completed.
- Risk 2 had been amended slightly. It was agreed that this risk could now be removed in the light of the new security contract. It should be replaced by two new risks.

Action Point: MT to add draft two new risk entries for the register.

- Risk 4 was being kept under review.
- Risk 6 was being kept under review pending any moves towards a referendum on Scottish independence.
- Risk 7 was being kept under review. The Board noted that a number of amendments had been tabled in the House of Lords.
- Risk 8 was under review pending firmer proposals in the New Year.
- There were no changes to risks 3, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 12.

6. Finance and fees

LE presented paper MB11/60 and confirmed expenditure was broadly as had been expected. The underspend projection had been adjusted to take account of a downward trend in fees

6.1 The Board considered the following points

- Negotiations were still ongoing with HMT over the budget exchange. There was a discussion over what points should be made to HMT.
- It was noted that fees income had decreased and that this issue was being kept under review.
- The Board noted that the grant rate for PTAs had been estimated at 33%, but was currently running at approximately 25%. Further work was ongoing to analyse this trend.

Action point: LdiM to look at the grant rate and report back to the next Management Board meeting.

- Further work was being commissioned on ICT contracts. It was hoped that this would lead to future expenditure savings.
- The Board recorded its thanks to LE for his work over the last 3 months.

7. Press and communications update

7.1 SL presented paper MB11/61.

7.2 The Board noted the following points

- Cases coming to the UKSC continued to attract press coverage. In particular the case of Julian Assange v Swedish Judicial Authority had attracted considerable attention. This case was now listed to be heard on 1 and 2 February 2012.
- There had been coverage in the Guardian on how we explain refusals of PTAs.

- Diversity of Supreme Court Justices continued to be an issue with presentational challenges
- There had been positive coverage from Joshua Rozenberg of the recent announcement of the appointments of Lord Reed and Lord Justice Carnwath as UKSC Justices.
- Other items covered had been the recent speech by Jonathan Sumption QC, the announcement on court dress, Lord Phillip's appearance before the Joint Committee on Human Rights and the proposed reductions in the legal aid budget.
- The number of visitors was higher than the previous month but slightly lower than the corresponding period last year.
- Educational visits continued to take place.
- The number of visitors to the websites continued to increase.
- The Board also considered the recent coverage in the Scottish media of Lord McCluskey's comments about the UKSC. There was some discussion around how the UKSC engaged with the Scottish media and what response, if any, should be made to any public criticism of the UKSC expressed in Scotland.

8. Human resources

8.1 CM delivered an oral update to the board. It was noted that -

- There had been several pay issues recently which the shared service centre described as 'interface errors'. This had led to a discussion with Liberata regarding advance payments to staff.
- The Board discussed how much the UKSC were being charged by Liberata to run the payroll function. The Board discussed the future handling of payroll and noted that a move away from the current arrangement should be considered as an option for the future.

9. Parliamentary Questions and FOI

- 9.1 PB reported that no PQs had been received in the last month and that two FOI requests had been received and answered within the statutory deadline.

10. Case update

- 10.1 JR mentioned, in LdiM's absence, that the Julian Assange v Swedish Judicial Authority appeal had been received and was listed to be heard in February. The CPS had published a useful statement on their website about next steps depending on the outcome. JR said that LDiM would be able to give a fuller update of future cases at the next meeting.

11. Building Defects

- 11.1 MT presented paper MB11/62. The Board noted that some projects had been authorised. Particular note was made of

(a) the cost of new signage within the building, but it was accepted that there was no other option. However, the new signs would be cheaper and easier to maintain and update than the existing ones;

(b) the anticipated energy savings following adjustments in the heating and lighting around the building; and

(c) the potential changes in lighting in the library and exhibition areas.

Action Point: MT to seek further information of costs and report back to a future Board meeting about the options for securing a separate UKSC Facilities Management contract.

12. Staff Engagement Survey

- 12.1 CM introduced paper MB11/63. The Board noted the following points-

The survey had produced a 79% engagement score. The JAs had not been included in this year's survey, but consideration was being given to including them in future surveys.

The results overall were good, but there were some areas to address. These included career progression and internal communications.

CM had already asked for volunteers to serve on a working group to take forward any action points arising from the survey

The Board agreed that the results should be placed on the intranet, along with the analysis paper.

Action Point: CM to arrange publication on the intranet.

Action Point: CM to do a presentation at the next quarterly Staff Meeting and also ask for suggestions on improving internal communications.

13. Strategic Plan

13.1 The Board considered paper MB11/63. The Board was content with the draft strategic plan for the remaining three years of the Spending Review period, subject to an amendment to the wording of point 3 of the section 'Continuing to secure the Justices' constitutional and financial independence'.

13.2 The Board considered how progress on meeting the objectives should be monitored. It was suggested that the Board review progress every 6 months, looking at what had been achieved and how this aligned with the Annual Business Plans. It was also considered useful to have a Strategic Objectives scorecard for the Board to consider.

Action point: PB to add to the Management Board agenda twice yearly.

Action point: PB to draft a Strategic Objectives scorecard in consultation with WA for the Board's consideration.

13.2 The board considered if an objective covering use of the website and media should be included under the 'Promoting the importance of the Rule of Law' section.

Action point: SL, CM and PB to consider

13.3 It was agreed that the finalised version of the Strategic Plan should be circulated to all of the UK jurisdictions to allow comment and that a finalised version would then be published on the website in April 2012.

Action point: JR to circulate final version

14. Any other business

- 14.1 The Board considered the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 14 October 2011. There was a query over whether some of the Action Points were correct.

Action Point: PR to check and report back to JR/WA

- 14.2 JR reported that Jonathan Sumption QC would be sworn in on 11 January 2012. It was also likely that Lord Reed would be sworn in early in February 2012 and Lord Justice Carnwath at the start of the Easter Term 2012.
- 14.3 SL reported that the UKSC Twitter account would become active early in the New Year.

These minutes were approved by the Management Board on 23 January 2012.

UKSC
December 2011