



COURTS SERVICE  
*An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna*  
IRELAND

## SPENDING REVIEW 2017



July 2017

## Spending Review - Highlights

Annual  
Savings  
Generated  
€9.2m

Ratio of  
Court Sittings  
to Staff  
+25%

Ratio of  
Judges  
to Staff  
+20%

Court  
Venues  
Closed  
85

Court  
Offices  
Closed  
29

Current  
Expenditure  
Reduced by  
26%

Fee  
Income  
Increased  
13%

Fines paid  
Online  
36%

Electronic  
Data  
Exchanges  
2.1m

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## 1. Executive Summary

The aim of this Spending Review is to develop evidence which provides options for Government as part of the annual budgeting process. This Review was carried out under the Government's Public Expenditure Framework. It is intended to be a short assessment of a subset of spending areas and reform initiatives undertaken by the Courts Service. This report considers the rationale, sustainability, impact and efficiency of selected reforms. It also looks at future plans for further reforms.

The Courts Service was established under the Courts Service Act 1998. Its primary functions are to manage the courts and support the judiciary. Its functions do not include the administration of justice, which is a function exclusively carried out by the judiciary.

Since its establishment in 1999, the Courts Service has had a modernising agenda. With the onset of austerity measures in 2009, an internal report titled, Transforming Administration and Structures in the Courts (TASC) was approved by the Courts Service Board in 2010. This provided a Blue Print for Change which has been implemented over the past number of years. During that period the operating environment has been characterised by year on year increases in court sittings and legislative reform. While at the same time funding and staffing levels were reduced as part of the austerity measures implemented by the Government.

Very significant performance and efficiency improvements have been achieved over the past 5 years as a result of a wide range of change projects implemented. Increased productivity is evidenced by a 25% increase in the ratio of court sittings to staff, and a 20% increase in the ratio of judges to staff. This increased productivity has been enabled to a large extent by the reforms reviewed in this report.

Major reforms included the rationalisation of court venues, which saw a reduction of 85 venues between 2008 and 2014. This brought significant improvements in the utilisation of both judicial and staff resources and generated annual savings of €1.7m.

The deployment of technology is a key enabler in delivering improved services to court users and achieving improved efficiencies and value for money. Over recent years the deployment of courtroom technology particularly Digital Audio Recording and Video-link/Conferencing, has delivered significant benefits for the administration of justice, and generated savings for the Irish Prisons Service. The Criminal Justice Interoperability Project (CJIP) facilitated data exchange between An Garda Síochána and the Courts Service, which generated significant savings for both organisations. Court generated financial transactions valued at approximately €1.8 billion have been transformed and centralised in a shared service centre utilising modern financial accounting technology, and enabled the online payment of fines. Electronic filing is in place for Small Claims and Insolvency cases. It is estimated that annual savings in the region of €5.5m have been achieved from these technology programme initiatives.

A major organisational reform project saw the merger of local Circuit and District Court Offices, thereby reducing the number of provincial court offices from 62 to 33. Among a range of changes introduced was the implementation of a single management structure, which also released County Registrars from management

functions. While not all benefits can be measured in financial terms, it is estimated that annual savings of approximately €2m have been achieved by this project.

Significant progress was also made in the reform court procedures. These were aimed at addressing key obstacles to access to justice, including reducing delays, cost and complexity of proceedings. Progress was also made in promoting and facilitating recourse to alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

Finally the Courts Service supported major reforms to the administration of justice, including the establishment of the Court of Appeal in 2014, which saw the most significant change in the structure of the courts since the foundation of the State.

Based on the selection of projects reviewed and taking a conservative view, it is estimated that annual savings in the region of €9m have been achieved. Some 60% of these savings are attributed to technology driven projects, which highlights the huge potential in this area.

This report provides evidence of the excellent progress made by the Courts Service in implementing a range of reforms. However it has recognised that a more focused and structured approach is required to ensure maximum benefits are realised from future reform projects. In this regard a Change Management Office was established in March 2016 and a comprehensive Change Programme is now in place. This is aligned to the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016, the Department of Justice and Equality Statement of Strategy and other relevant reform plans.

Recognising one of the pillars of the Public Service Reform programme, ensuring greater openness and transparency, the Courts Service continues to progress improved reporting on a range of matters linked to the management and operation of the Courts. Further investment in change and project management skills, together with investment in technology, process improvement and learning and development, is required to build on the excellent achievements highlighted in this report.

Future projects are heavily focused on the delivery of improved services to citizens and court users, through optimising the use of technology and process reform. Examples include; electronic filing, epayment of fees, enhanced family law facilities, expanded use of courtroom technology and reform of probate services.

The Terms of Reference for this review are at Appendix A.

## **2. The Role of the Courts Service and its Relationship with the Judiciary**

Under the Courts Service Act 1998, the primary functions of the Service are to manage the courts, support the judiciary, provide information on the courts systems to the public and provide court buildings and facilities for court users.

The Service is governed by the Courts Service Board, chaired by the Chief Justice. The Board determines policy and strategy in relation to the Service and oversees the implementation of same by the Chief Executive, who is also the Accounting Officer.

The functions of the Courts Service do not include the administration of justice, which is a function exclusively carried out by the judiciary, who, under the Constitution, are independent in the exercise of their judicial functions. It is important to be aware that while it is the function of the Courts Service to provide resources and facilities that enable the administration of justice, the management of cases within the judicial process is a matter for the judiciary and the parties to a case. In this regard the Courts Service does not control matters such as waiting times for court cases.

The Courts Service provides a range of case-flow data including (a) average length of time of proceedings from issue to conclusion, (b) volume of incoming cases and cases determined by the courts or notified to the courts as resolved in each year and (c) waiting times to trial for various categories of proceedings and applications for the various jurisdictions. This data is made available to the judiciary and is published in the Annual Reports of the Courts Service.

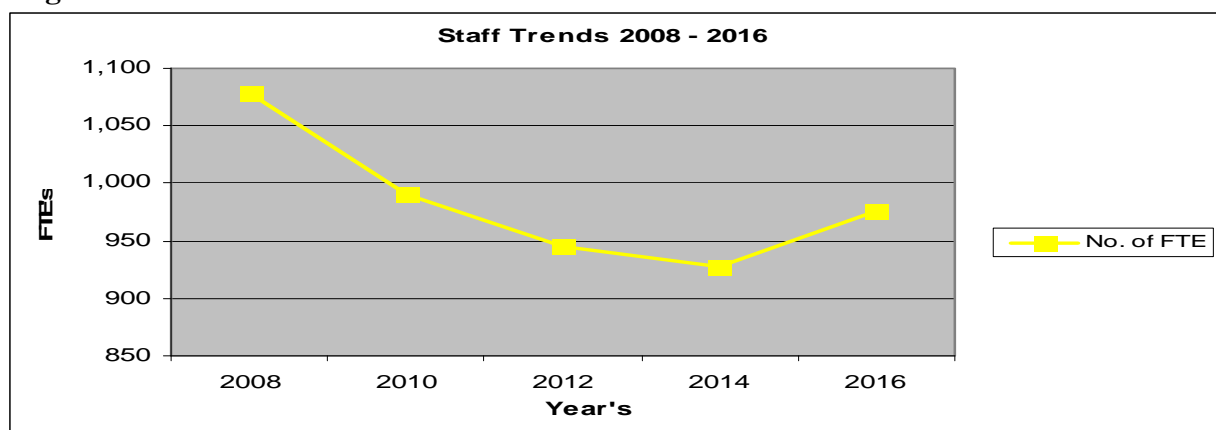
## **3. Operating Environment**

The current Courts Service Strategic Plan 2014-2017, focuses on six key priorities, which seek to build on the progress made in implementing a range of change initiatives in line with previous strategic plans. It also reflects the recommendations contained in the TASC Report (2010), a Blue Print for Change for the Courts Service. As set out in the current strategic plan the key priorities are:

- High Quality Service Delivery
- Supporting the Judiciary
- Skilled and Engaged Staff
- Technology
- Case Management, Collaboration and Reform
- Provide Suitable Court Accommodation

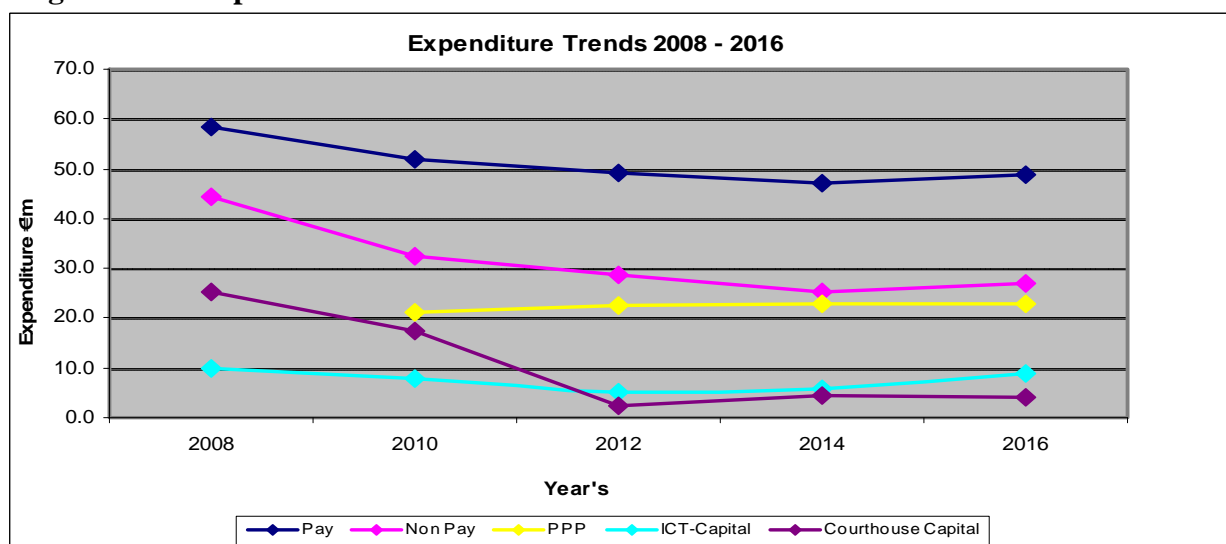
The Courts Service is a single programme Vote, for the purposes of *Managing the Courts and Supporting the Judiciary*. It represents circa 5% in funding terms of the overall Justice Sector Group of Votes, with total gross expenditure for €109.7m for 2016. Trend analysis of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff numbers and actual expenditure since 2008 is set out a Diagrams 3.1 and 3.2 below.

**Diagram 3.1 – Staff Trends 2008 -2016**



Source, Annual Appropriation Accounts, 2016 figures are subject to Audit by the C&AG

**Diagram 3.2 - Expenditure Trends 2008 -2016**



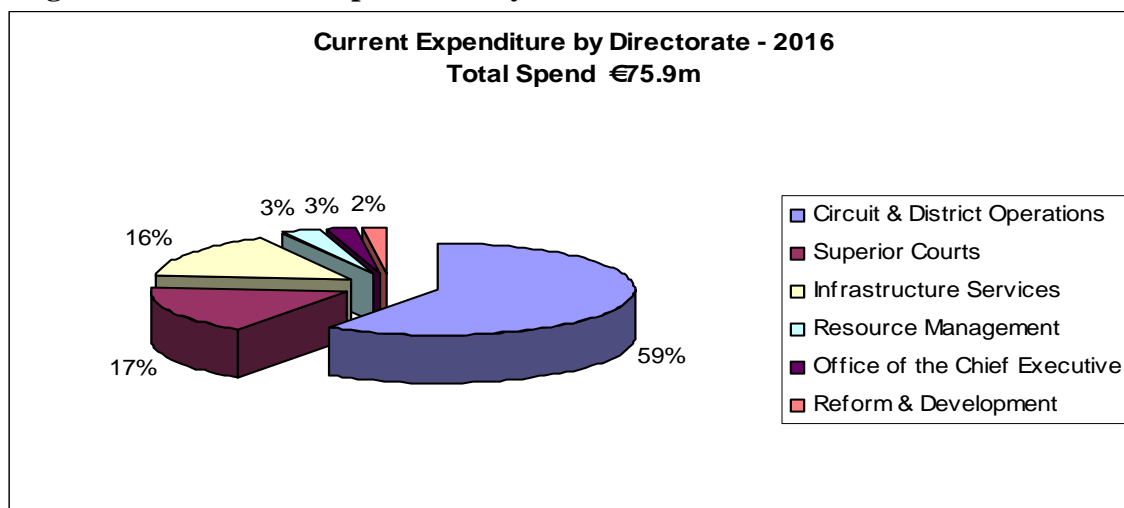
Source, Annual Appropriation Accounts, 2016 figures are subject to Audit by the C&AG

In line with all Government Departments and Agencies, the level of current expenditure incurred by the Courts Service had been reduced between 2008 and 2016. This was represented in a reduction from €103m in 2008 to €75.9 in 2016, a reduction of 26%. Furthermore, court fee income increased by 13% during this period. This amounted to €4m in 2016 and represents a significant element of our Vote and reduces the cost of running the Court Service to the Exchequer. This represents 58% of total current expenditure.

The reforms reviewed in this report made a major contribution to enabling the Courts Service maintain operations and indeed deal with increased workloads during this period.

A breakdown of total current expenditure (Pay and Non Pay), by Directorate for 2016 amounting to €75.9m is provided in Diagram 3.3 below.

**Diagram 3.3 - Current Expenditure by Directorate - 2016**



Given the key role the Courts Service plays in supporting access to justice, its work is often influenced by the government's legislative programme and programmes for government. In some instances this can result in resources being diverted from the Courts Service's own reform agenda. In recent years this has particularly impacted on the development of the technology programme.

Over the past number of years, the operating environment of the Courts Service has been characterised by year on year increases in court sittings, legislative changes as a result of government reform agenda, including addressing the fallout from the financial crisis. While workloads in the courts were increasing, funding and staff numbers were being reduced. In advance of the worst effects of the financial crisis, the Courts Service had outlined in its TASC Report (2010), how it would restructure and reform its operations to deliver improvements in efficiency.

As mentioned above, the TASC report has been the key focus of policy and strategy development since 2010. The recommendations made in that report included:

- Establish multi-jurisdictional court office in each county town
- Expand the adjudicative role of the County Registrars
- Rationalise the number of court venues
- Standardise and streamline processes, including centralisation where possible
- Maximise the use of existing technology

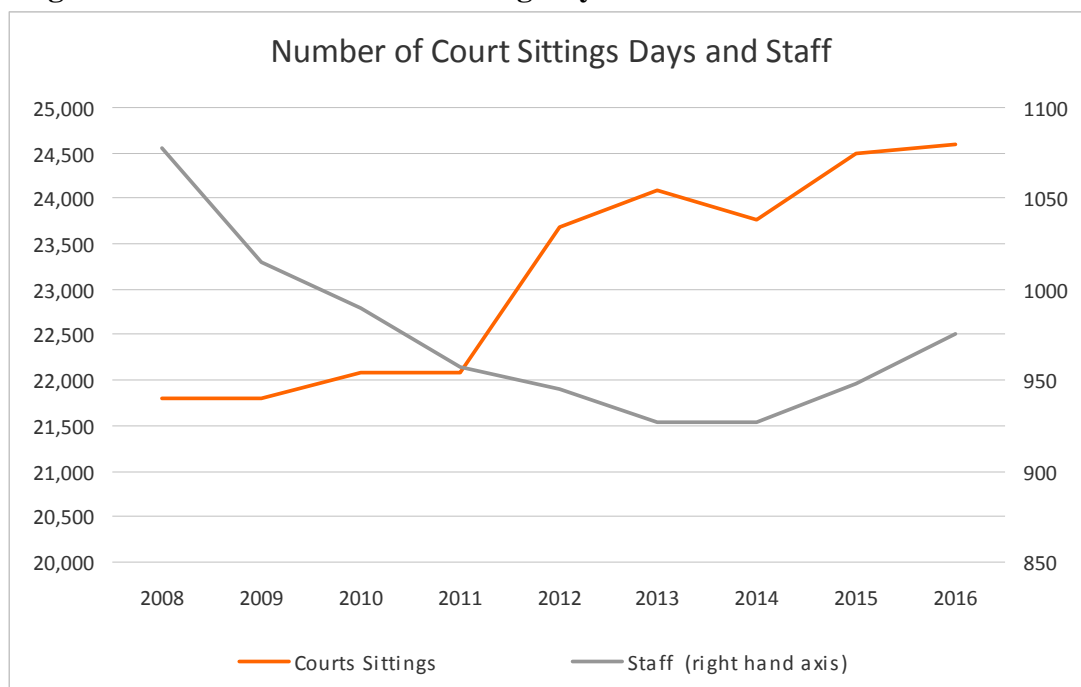
In looking at the operation of any organisation it is important to be aware of the key drivers of activity, expenditure and resources. In the case of the Courts Service, given that its primary functions are managing the courts and supporting the judiciary, the number of court sittings is a key indicator of productivity. Court sittings represent the number of days judges sit to hear cases. Each court sitting must be supported by a court registrar. Court sittings also generate significant pre and post court work.

It should be noted that while staff numbers were being decreased under the government's Employment Control Framework, during the period 2009 to 2015, at the same time additional judges were appointed. This enabled more cases to be heard, resulting in more court sittings to deal with case backlogs.



It can be seen from the Diagram 3.4, below, that court sittings have increased from approximately 21,800 in 2008 to circa 24,600 in 2016, an increase of 2,800 (13%). At the same time staff numbers (Full Time Equivalents) fell from 1,078 in 2008 to 976 in 2016, a reduction of 102 (9.5%).

**Diagram 3.4 - Number of Court Sitting Days and Staff**



Over the same period the overall number of serving judges increased from 145 in 2008 to 165 in 2016, an increase of 14%.

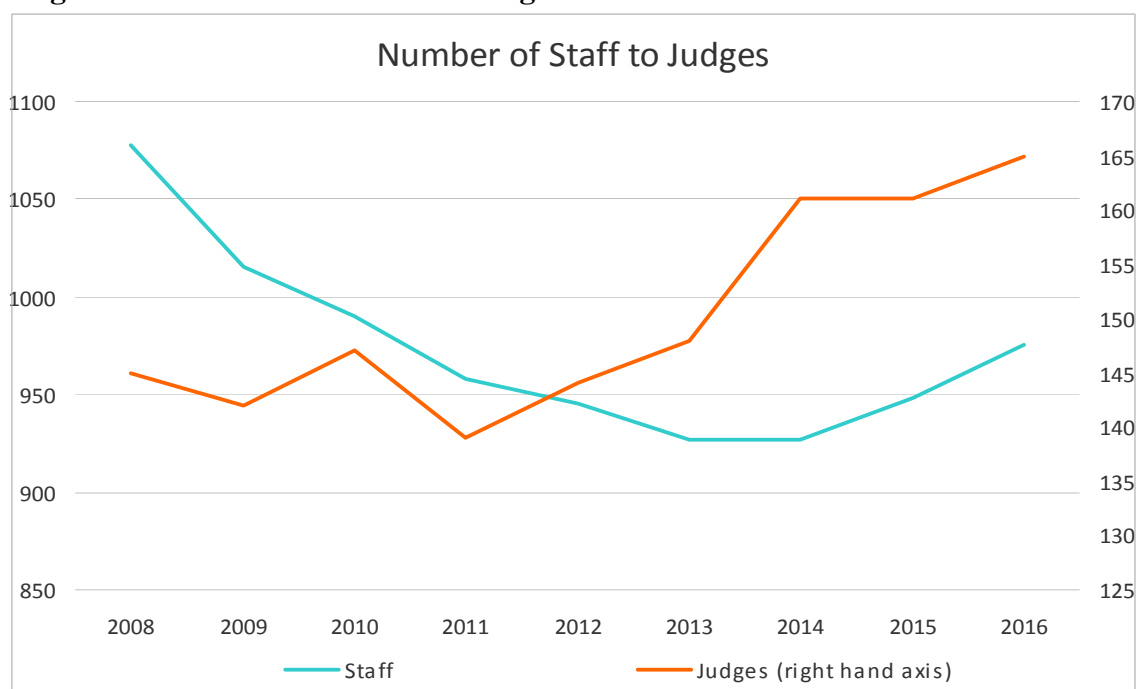
The workload of the Service can be impacted by a range of factors, including: the number of judges and courts sitting days. The ratio of staff to judges is also a key measure of productivity and is set out in Diagram 3.5.

The ratio of staff<sup>1</sup> to judges has moved from 7.4 in 2008 to 5.9 in 2016, a productivity increase of 20%. While at the same time the ratio of court sittings to staff has increased from 20 in 2008 to 25 in 2016 an increase of 25%.

On both counts this represents a very significant increase in productivity. At the same time our non-pay funding which meets the day to day running costs of the Service had reduced by circa 31%. The reforms undertaken by the Courts Service over a number of years, particularly since the TASC report in 2010, have created the conditions for much of this increased productivity.

<sup>1</sup> Refers to all staff in the Courts Service

**Diagram 3.5 – Number of Staff to Judges**



Another key aspect of the operating environment is the impact of new legislation. This is another example of how the Service has supported the implementation of major reforms as a result of the Government’s legislative programme, including:

- Court of Appeal Act 2014, provided for the establishment of an entirely new jurisdiction.
- Personal Insolvency Act 2012, (establishment of the Insolvency Service of Ireland) – involving the Courts in adjudicating on applications for personal insolvency arrangements, an entirely new area of law.
- Fines (Payment & Recovery) Act 2014, (commenced January 2016) – diverts fined persons away from prison and introduces new payment options and a new enforcement regime.
- Road Traffic Act 2017, 3<sup>rd</sup> Payment option for payment of fixed charged penalty.
- Children and Family Relationships Act, 2015 – obliges the Court to hear the voice of the child in proceedings which affect them, particularly in family law proceedings.

New legislation reform that will be supported in the near future includes:

- Assisted Decision Making Capacity Act 2015 - greatly broadens the numbers of people who must apply to court for protection where they require the assistance of others to make decisions.
- Legal Service Regulation Act 2015, establishing the office of the legal cost adjudicator.
- Domestic Violence Bill 2017 – expands the range of people who can apply for domestic violence relief and will bring into law, the entitlement of applicants to appear by video-link when seeking an order.

It should also be noted that reforms implemented by the Courts Service, including investment in technology, deliver significant benefits for other Justice Sector

Agencies, such as An Garda Síochána (AGS) and the Irish Prisons Service (IPS). Examples include:

- Investment in Video Conference technology has had benefits for the IPS, AGS and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) office.
- Establishment of the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) complex has transferred jury minding service from AGS to the Public Private Partnership Company that manage the CCJ. Jury hours in 2016 were circa 12,500 (12 % increase on 2015).
- Criminal Justice Interoperability Project (CJIP) eliminated duplication of data entry and improved data integrity and has freed up significant resources in AGS.

The impact of new legislation for example, the introduction of the Fines (Payment & Recovery) Act 2014, creates significant additional work for both the Courts Service and the Courts. Similarly the impact of investment in court buildings by the Service leads to benefits to all court users and other agencies. For example better custody facilities are of direct benefit to AGS and the IPS.

On a more general basis the Courts Service interacts with other elements of the justice system at a number of levels:

- Locally in dealing with all stakeholders in managing the Courts throughout the country, working with AGS, IPS, Probation Service, Legal Aid Board, TUSLA, both through daily informal contacts and through more formal User Group Meetings.
- Nationally through participation in Justice interagency groups dealing with a range of topics in the criminal and civil justice areas to seek efficiencies and to input into legislative developments where appropriate.
- Interaction with victims.

#### **4 Key Drivers of Demand**

The demand for the services provided by the Courts Service is influenced by a range of factors. At a high level drivers of demand include:

- Societal, population and demographics, including age profile of population.
- Economy and economic development, affects the number and type of cases before the Courts, e.g. the recent financial crisis had a significant impact on the number and type of cases coming before the courts.
- Government policy leading to legislation e.g. Personal Insolvency legislation, Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014.
- Other Government policies such as increasing the number of Garda could result in more crime being detected resulting in more court cases.
- EU policy and legislative developments.

All of the above impacts the volume and mix of cases in criminal, family law and civil cases across all jurisdictions. Generally there is a time lag between the societal, economic and political developments and their impact on the court system.

Furthermore it is not possible to fully predict the impact such events can have on the demand for services provided by the Courts Service.

The Department of Justice and Equality have been working on the development of the first iteration of an end-to-end model of the criminal justice system. The aim of the model is to provide an evidence base and analytical capacity to assess the likely impact of proposed policy changes or changing external factors in terms of impacts across the criminal justice system. Further and more detailed development work is required for the model to produce reliable and robust data findings. It is expected that this model will draw on real-time data transferred to the Criminal Justice Operational Hub, which is also being developed by the Department of Justice and Equality.

## 5 Origins and Impact of Previous Reform Initiatives

### 5.1 Rationalisation of Court Venues

On its establishment in 1999 the Courts Service inherited an estate of around 250 designated court venues. In many cases the maintenance of these buildings had been the responsibility of local authorities, but many had fallen into disrepair due to lack of investment.

A major building/refurbishment programme was undertaken to upgrade a number of court venues. It was also recognised that many court venues were not fit for purpose, with court sittings being held in sports halls, hotels, etc. Also many smaller venues only held court sittings once a month, with a relatively small caseload. In conjunction with the refurbishment programme, a programme of rationalisation and closure of court venues was undertaken.

While significant progress had been made in reducing the number of court venues, between 1999 and 2008, one of the key recommendations in the TASC report was the further rationalisation of the number of court venues. This was primarily focused on increased utilisation of court venues where significant investment had been made, and which allowed for the administration of justice in more suitable and dignified settings. It was also focused on making the best use of staff and judicial resources. This would be achieved by the concentration of higher volumes of cases in larger venues, mainly in County Towns.

By year end, 2014 the number of venues outside Dublin had been reduced to 85, a 50% reduction from the number in 2008, see Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 – Number of Venues Closed 2008 – 2014**

| Year     | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | Total |
|----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Closures | 13   | 24   | 15   | 6    | 16   | 2    | 9    | 85    |

Note - Two of the 85 closed venues were in Dublin.

The concentration of court business in fewer venues, which are equipped with courtroom technology, enabled significant benefits in the management of court cases, and has in many instances result in direct savings for the IPS and AGS.

The financial benefits and opportunity costs of the court venue rationalisation programme can be summarised as follows:

- **Maintenance Costs.** Are estimated to be approximately €10,000 per venue per annum. Based on the closure of 85 venues since 2008, this amounts to annual yearly savings of €0.850m. Over a ten year period this would represent a saving of €8.5m.
- **Time freed up.** Based on one full day court sitting per month for a judge and court registrar for 11 months of the year this represents 22 man days. With the closure of 85 venues this free up the equivalent of 1,870 man days per annum.
- Excluding judicial time, Court Service staff time freed up was circa 935 days, equating to 4.1 FTE, giving estimated payroll savings of €0.145m annually. Over a ten year period this equates to a saving of €1.45m
- **Saving on Travel & Subsistence (T&S)** - Indicative T&S savings of €0.110m per annum, (100 kilometres round trip for both the judge and registrar, 11 months of the years across 83 venues).
- **Reduced Risk** - Closure of outlying venues also reduces the risk associated with handling cash.
- **Opportunity Costs** - Refurbishment of Venues – A court venue on a green field site, comprising of 1 courtroom, administering District Court business, with 2 consultation rooms and holding cell - based on OPW 2009 estimates would cost in the order of €2.0m to refurbish.
- **Opportunity Cost - ICT**- There is increased pressure for all court venues to be equipped with ICT. The current cost of which is circa €5,000. The associated costs of courtroom technology, based on one courtroom, would be in the region of €6,000 for Digital Audio Recording in addition to €100,000 for video conferencing facilities. Annual ICT maintenance is estimated to be in the order of €7,000 per annum. The indicative annual savings on ICT maintenance based on 85 venues is in the order of €0.595m. This excludes the upfront ICT capital cost which would be in the order of €0.120m per venue.

Based on the above, annual savings of €1.7m are estimated across maintenance, travel & subsistence, technology and staff time. This excludes the opportunity costs avoided by not having to refurbish and equip closed venues.

## 5.2 Technology Programme

*"Technology is a powerful enabler that can empower courts to meet core purposes and responsibilities, even while severe economic pressures reduce court staff, reduce hours of operation, and even close court locations." - National Centre for State Courts-*

### Technology in the Courts Service

The Courts Service has recognised the vital role technology can play in maximising efficiency and providing improved services to court users. The Service has a proven track record in implementing a range of reforms that have been significantly enabled by the use of technology. Examples include:

## 5.2.1 Financial Management

The Courts Service manages in excess of €1.8 billion of court funds in value and some 360,000 transactions, generated from the operation of the Courts. This is entirely separate from the funds voted by the Oireachtas to the Courts Service. Prior to the implementation of this project, very substantial financial operations were managed in local Court offices, using inefficient manual systems. This project saw the implementation of a modern financial accounting system (Agresso), which enabled the centralisation of all financial operations from the then 42 local District Court Offices and 26 Circuit Court Offices. A new Court Funds Office was established resulting in the following benefits;

- 36% of fines paid online
- Significant work has been removed from local offices, thereby freeing resources. It is estimated that approx 45 FTE<sup>2</sup> (€1.6m in payroll savings annually) have been released from financial operations in local offices and redeployed within offices to concentrate on core court work.
- Consistent approach to the investment of court funds on behalf of some 20,000 beneficiaries, rather than a wide range of local arrangements
- Improved risk management due to significantly reduced cash handling in local offices.

## 5.2.2 Courtroom Technology

In line with international best practice of utilising technology to improve the efficiency of the justice system, and to reduce cost of the end to end court process, a programme of deploying courtroom technology has been ongoing over a number of years. This included; Video-Link/Conference systems and Digital Audio Recording (DAR). The benefits of these are summarised below:

### Digital Audio Recording (DAR) -

DAR is a system that provides a digitised record of court proceedings and stored on a central database. DAR was introduced at a time when the need for stenography services in criminal courts was significantly increasing due to an increase in the number and duration of trials and a requirement for overnight transcripts by the judiciary and parties to the case. DAR is now the standard method of recording for all cases and is used to produce transcripts of court proceedings and is available in all courtrooms. DAR has delivered many benefits including:

- Judges can access recordings of proceedings in chambers
- Judges can make notes of the time different parties spoke which allows them to locate specific parts of a recording easily
- Registrars can ensure Court Orders are correct by referencing the case recordings
- Judicial Reviews may be supported by court recordings being available
- The production of transcripts can be provided in a timely manner to a high quality in particular for criminal trials and appeals
- Court Recording is managed in a centralised, secure and flexible manner.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a study of a number of offices following the deployment of the Agresso system

When DAR was initially deployed and to assist in the production of transcripts and tracking of evidence provided, persons known as loggers, provided by an external service provider, were engaged to 'log' (note) certain information in court in addition to the recording available from DAR.

A project, to substitute court registrars for external loggers commenced in 2013. This was initially piloted in Dublin Circuit Court, the Central Criminal Court, and Cork Circuit Court and was subsequently extended to criminal sittings of the Circuit Court countrywide. Full deployment is expected by the end of 2017.

The removal of loggers from Circuit Court and the Central Criminal Court saves the Service approximately €0.360m per annum. The total estimated saving since the start of the pilot in 2013 and its subsequent roll-out is approximately €1.1m.

**Video Link/Conferencing facilities.** This technology is widely used internationally by courts administration authorities. It enables more efficient use of court time, reduces the need to have prisoners physically present in court and also enables expert witnesses, witnesses from abroad and vulnerable witnesses to give evidence from a location other than the courtroom. All of these enhance the administration of justice and contribute to reducing the cost of the legal process. Video-link/conferencing continues to be used successfully, not just in criminal cases, but also in commercial, non-jury, chancery, and personal injury cases in the High Court. The benefits can be summarised as follows:

- The installation of video link technology between prisons and courtrooms can in certain circumstances eliminate the requirement for prisoners to be transported to and from prisons to attend court, with a consequent saving in time to the IPS. In a ten week period in Galway where video conferencing was used, the estimated cost saved for the IPS was in the order of €18,000. Savings will vary depending on number of prisoners being remanded and distances being travelled. The extrapolation of this example could be used to give an indication of the likely full financial benefits.
- In 2016, in the CCJ, there was a total of 2,955 appearances by video-link in 9 prisons to 10 courtrooms, an increase of 35% on 2015. This represents the number of occasions where the logistics of bringing a prisoner to court was avoided.
- Significant reduction in security risks to the Courts Service, IPS, AGS and the public.
- Reducing the need for witnesses to attend court in person. This is particularly relevant for vulnerable/underage persons who can give evidence from another location within the courthouse or for witnesses located abroad who can give evidence from that location. This is used extensively in criminal trials and in civil cases where witnesses have given evidence from multiple locations from as far away as the United States and Australia thereby generating efficiencies and savings for parties to cases.
- The taking of evidence in Courts in this jurisdiction for trials in other countries where it is viewed by video link is provided for under international and EU mutual assistance arrangements.

It is likely that the demand for the use of video link in giving evidence will increase in line with Government policy, as recent and forthcoming legislative provisions extend the right to give evidence by video link to victims of domestic abuse and to all victims of crime. The Courts Service is continuing to invest in video link/conferencing equipment in courts to ensure that cross justice sector savings and efficiencies are maximised.

The extent of the use of video conferencing is not only dependant on the number of sites where the equipment is deployed but also largely determined by legislative provisions. For example the use of video conferencing between the Courts and Prisons for court appearances by persons in custody is limited by the provisions of Section 33 of the Prisons Act, 2007. The Courts Service in conjunction with the with IPS has made proposals to the Department of Justice and Equality to expand these provisions which would increase the number of court appearances by video link thereby generating further efficiencies.

The demand for video conferencing will also increase with the recently enacted Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017, and soon to be enacted Domestic Violence Bill 2017 and the Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Bill 2017 which will significantly expand the number of victims who can give evidence by video link without attending court.

Furthermore the use of digital presentation of complex evidence has been very effectively used in a number of fraud trials in the Dublin Criminal Court. There was also an eCourt pilot in the Supreme Court in 2016 where iPads were used to display and review documentation in a civil appeal to the Supreme Court.

### **5.2.3 Criminal Justice Interoperability Project (CJIP) – Data Exchange between Justice Agencies**

CJIP has transformed the exchange of information between AGS and the Courts Service in respect of District Court outcomes and summonses. Prior to this initiative a significant range of documents were exchanged between the two agencies. This was inefficient and led to duplication of data entry and was prone to error. CJIP has eliminated 75% of the administrative process steps with an integrated electronic information exchange. CJIP has also delivered improvements in the timeliness, accuracy and quality of criminal prosecution data.

CJIP currently processes 2.1 million messages per annum between AGS and the District Courts, including Summons Applications, publication of Court Hearing Schedules, publication of Court Outcomes, Bail, Warrants, Appeals, Appeal Outcomes and Adjournments.

CJIP eliminates 90% of the duplicate effort while supporting well established business processes between the Courts Service and AGS in respect of court outcomes at District Court level and in respect of summonses. CJIP has reduced data entry requirements for both agencies, and it is estimated that over 114 full time resource equivalents has been saved, generating a minimum of €3.5m in savings annually across both organisations.



Significant benefits have been realised for both AGS and the Courts Service. These include:

- Reduction in administration overhead
- Quality, completeness and timeliness of data transmission
- Reduced back logs of summons applications awaiting entry to Criminal Case Tracking System (CCTS)
- Eliminate the pressure on staff in local offices to enter cases for court sittings in respect of summons to CCTS within a 3 day timeframe.

CJIP statistics are set out in the Table 5.2.3 below.

**Table 5.2.3 CJIP Statistics**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Summons Applications</b> | <b>Outcomes/Warrants/Bail etc</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2014        | 118,976                     | 1,869,682                         |
| 2015        | 107,813                     | 1,727,887                         |
| 2016        | 116,000                     | 2,031,306                         |

The next phase in the development of CJIP is the electronic receipt of charge sheets from AGS to the Courts Service. It is anticipated that this will form part of the first phase of development of the wider Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH) initiative now being lead by the Department of Justice and Equality. Electronic issuing of court results from the higher courts is also a priority for this wider project.

The Department of Justice and Equality is progressing the development of a Criminal Justice Operational Hub (CJOH), a central data hosting framework which will, inter alia, enable the efficient and secure exchange of appropriate data and information within the Criminal Justice Sector. The CJOH will allow for the automated exchange and uploading of operational, and specifically, case management data and forms such as charge sheets, warrants, criminal legal-aid payments, court and prison outcomes, and exhibit tracking records.

This will facilitate improved case management and related communications i.e. case tracking and management, inter-agency communication and document sharing, transmission of outcomes etc. Ultimately, the CJOH will enable the effective ‘end-to-end’ management of cases and persons through the criminal justice system.

The proposed CJOH will also greatly reduce duplication, errors and delays and will generate substantial savings by freeing up administrative resources. It will also enable timelier, more extensive and more sophisticated data collection, management information and analysis – facilitating better-informed research, evidence-informed decision-making and policy development across the criminal justice sector.

Other projects under consideration that will see further exchange of data electronically with other Departments and Agencies, such as Revenue, include: Reform of Probate Services and the new Legal Cost Adjudicator regime. Also projects are under consideration/initial development that would enable direct online applications by legal practitioners and members of the public.

## 5.2.4 Courts Service On-Line (CSOL)

The CSOL project aims to deliver a single case management system to provide a common platform for the civil processes for all jurisdictions. The new system has already replaced a number of existing systems across all jurisdictions and incorporates the facility to make applications and fee payments online, collect orders and file certain documents electronically.

To date CSOL has been implemented on a modular basis, as follows:

- **Insolvency Cases** – Submission and collection of all documentation, together with the exchange of case results, are done electronically with the Insolvency Service.
- **eSmall Claims** – Claims can be lodged and fees paid online. Tracking progress of claims is possible via unique personal identifier. As of year end 2015, 46% of all claims were received online. This is a significant citizen focused project, which provides speedy access to justice for claims up to a value of €2,000
- **eLicensing** – This project is currently at pilot stage and will facilitate online applications by the owners of licensed premises or their solicitors for late bar extensions and other matters. Licensing application and renewals account for circa 50,000 applications in the Circuit & District Court per annum. It is expected that the system will be available to solicitors firms in respect of licensing applications in 10 counties by the end of 2017. This project will reduce the cost of making a license application and will reduce workloads in court offices.
- **Case management systems** have been deployed in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

Benefits of CSOL include:

- On-line applications, filing and search facilities means less staff time required to process and manage Insolvency, Small Claims and eLicensing cases
- Standardised controls for data entry and validation reduce the time needed to produce statistics and performance indicators.
- Electronic filing services such as eFiling, service of documents, data exchange and ePayment, have significant benefits for the citizen and for business.
- CSOL, when fully utilised, will make the courts system more transparent, accessible, and help reduce waiting times for certain services.
- It will also help lower the costs to process cases to the benefit of litigants.
- For eLicensing, once fully deployed and assuming an 80% uptake, annual savings would be in the order of 4.5 FTE (€0.16m).

## 5.3 Organisational Reform

### 5.3.1 Combined Court Offices

This was one of key recommendations from the TASC report, and has seen the most fundamental restructuring of Circuit & District Court Office structures since the foundation of the State. This project, which commenced in 2011, coincided with the worse economic downturn in decades. Without this project, which facilitated better

utilisation of scarce and reducing resources, the operation of the courts would have been jeopardised. A comprehensive review of this project is currently underway and the results of that review will be available later this year.

The objective of this project was to replace the single jurisdictional provincial Circuit and District Court Office network with a combined multi-jurisdictional court office for each County. One of the most significant changes was the introduction of a new management structure, with a single office manager covering the combined Circuit and District Court Offices in each county. This meant that County Registrars no longer carried out the administrative task of managing the Circuit Court Office, and would allow County Registrars to take on more judicial and quasi-judicial functions.

The Combined Office Project was completed in 2014, with the following efficiencies:

- The restructuring of 62 Circuit & District Court Offices to 33 between 2010 and 2014.
- New management structure, with a single manager responsible for all aspects of the combined office.
- Facilitated the continued support of increased courts sittings and increased judges, for the Circuit & District courts. Court sittings increased by 12% from 16,300 to 18,200 between 2009 and 2016.
- Estimated savings in the order of €m<sup>3</sup> across a number of areas including travel & subsistence, maintenance, leases and payroll.

### 5.3.2 LEAN

LEAN is an internationally recognised methodology aimed at achieving standardisation of processes, eliminating inefficiency, improving performance and service delivery. This methodology was successfully piloted in 5 Combined Court Offices, referred to at 5.3.1 above. A review estimated, that with full deployment of LEAN across all Offices savings of the order of one FTE per office, equating to circa 25 staff (circa €1.0m in payroll savings) would be realised. This is significant, particularly when operating in an environment of reducing staff and increasing workloads.

However due to a lack of resources it has not been possible to sustain this excellent initiative. LEAN has been identified as a key initiative under the new Change Programme and it is planned to re-launch LEAN in 2018, subject to available resources. Accordingly we have requested additional funding as part of the 2018 Estimates. The key immediate priorities for the deployment of LEAN would include:

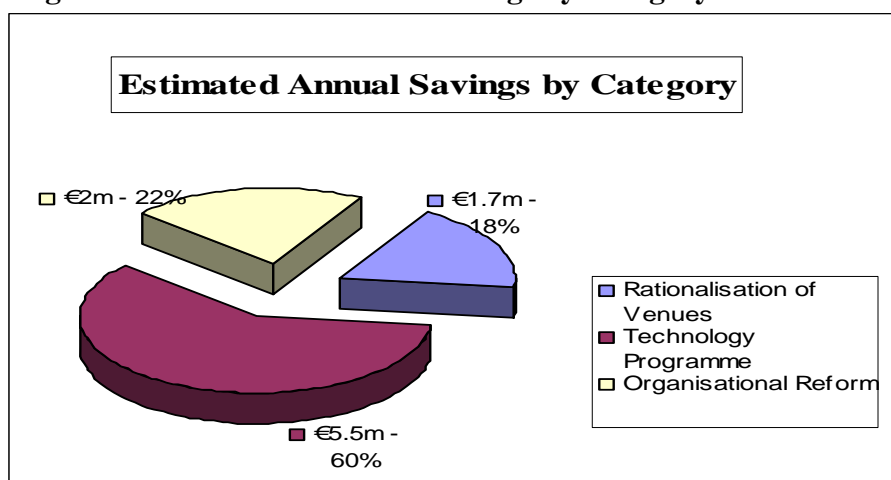
- Carry out an audit of all Combined Court Offices to re-establish the application of LEAN and provide necessary training and support.
- Review practices and procedures in other offices of other jurisdictions, such as the General Solicitors Office and Probate Office in the High Court.

The total estimated annual savings from the initiatives reviewed in this report amount to €9.2m. These summarised by category in Diagram 5 below.

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<sup>3</sup> Annual Report 2014

**Diagram 5 – Estimated Annual Savings by Category**



## 5.4 Court Procedural Reform

Civil procedure reforms in Ireland, promoted by the Courts Service, in collaboration with the Court Rules Committees, have sought to address key obstacles to; access to justice; delay, cost and complexity of proceedings, while at the same time promoting and facilitating recourse to alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Procedural reform has also taken place against the back-drop of jurisprudence under Irish constitutional law and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and in particular regarding the requirement that court proceedings be tried within a reasonable time. Examples of mechanisms used to address the obstacles referred to above are outlined below:

**Delays** - Various sets of procedural rules were introduced in the Superior Courts the Circuit Court and the District Court to:

- ensure that the types of proceedings to which they applied were adequately prepared for trial,
- meet the obligation of the State under the Constitution to ensure that a case is disposed of within a reasonable time,
- reduce the volume of interlocutory applications occupying the time of Circuit Court judges at the expense of time devoted to trial work by affording an opportunity to have these, where appropriate, disposed of by County Registrars.

In criminal proceedings, the Courts Service has supported the Circuit Court judiciary in preparing and introducing pre-trial hearings regimes under practice directions to enable oversight of the preparation for trial of cases triable on indictment in the Dublin Circuit and in selected Circuits outside Dublin.

**Cost** – Changes aimed at reducing the cost of litigation have been introduced to:

- ensure that Calderbank-type letters (i.e. offers to settle a claim made “without prejudice save as to costs”) may be taken into account when awarding costs
- provide greater transparency for all parties as to the costs cumulatively incurred during the course of a case, by empowering the Court or a County

Registrar, at any stage of the proceedings, to require the parties to produce and exchange with each other estimates of the costs incurred by them.

**Complexity of proceedings** - Measures have also been taken to:

- standardise and rationalise the forms of application which may be made to the courts, and
- align the procedures across jurisdictions consonant with the nature and degree of complexity of the proceedings categories concerned.

The Rules on Statutory Applications and Appeals applicable in the Superior Courts and the Circuit Court introduced various templates. These include originating notices of application and appeal and a template pre-trial procedure for the myriad of applications and appeals which the Oireachtas has been adding to the Court's jurisdictional remit. The District Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2014 effected a full reform and consolidation of the District Court Rules, the opportunity being taken to align the procedures of the District Court, as far as appropriate, with those of the Circuit Court, in light of the increase in the monetary threshold for the former Court's jurisdiction.

Another mechanism used for resolving cases is alternative dispute resolution (ADR). This has seen benefits for example in the area of Family Law, where ADR has been used successfully. Specific benefits include:

- Offers an alternative to a court determined outcome and a more appropriate means of resolving certain family disputes.
- Significant benefits for the parties involved with significant societal benefit.
- Resulting in savings, in both judicial and staff time, where cases are dealt with by mediation.

Based on the Dublin initiative (Dolphin House), it is estimated that average annual savings to the State of; Judicial, Courts Service and Legal Aid Board time are as follows:

- Courts and Courts Service      €10,000
- Legal Aid Board                      €20,000

The associated average annual cost to the Legal Aid Board of the initiative for mediator and clerical support is approximately €30,000 per annum. Netting the costs and savings indicates an average annual financial dividend of €100,000 accruing from this single initiative alone. Other similar initiatives are underway in Cork, Naas, Limerick and Tipperary, Ennis, Dundalk and Tralee.

The number of parties attending information sessions over the period 2014 to 2016 is averaging 2,200 with on average agreements being finalised in circa 20% of cases.

## **5.5 Court of Appeal**

Following the passing of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 2013, the Court of Appeal was established in October 2014. This marked the most significant change in the structure of the Courts since the establishment of the State. The Court of Appeal was established to deal with the backlog of cases, awaiting hearings before the

Supreme Court, where waiting times were in excess of four years. Since the establishment of the COA the waiting time for normal appeals to the Supreme Court is now 18 months.

Supporting the Judiciary in setting up this new court and in establishing a new office with new processes, ICT systems and staff was a significant change project for the Courts Service that had to be achieved within a very demanding timescale. These changes also involved the Supreme Court Office and its practices.

In advance of the establishment of the Court of Appeal:

- procedures were put in place to transfer cases (over 1,300 civil cases and 600 criminal cases) from the Court of Criminal Appeal and Supreme Court to the new Court of Appeal,
- a new office of the Court of Appeal was established with new a staff complement to provide administrative support to the court,
- court rules setting out procedures for the court were drafted and agreed,
- a new Court of Appeal Civil Case Management System was developed
- the old Public Records Office in the Four Courts campus was substantially refurbished to provide two courts and judicial accommodation for hearing civil appeals. Criminal appeals continued to be dealt with in the Criminal Courts of Justice.

As part of these arrangements new court rules streamlining Supreme Court procedures were also developed and agreed for that Court and a new case management system introduced.

## 6. Performance Data

One of the mandates set out in the Courts Service Act 1998 is to provide information on the courts system to the public. This is mainly achieved through a range of publications, the Courts Service website ([www.courts.ie](http://www.courts.ie)) and the Courts Service Annual Report.

In line with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, an Agency Framework Agreement is in place between the Courts Service and the Department of Justice and Equality. The Courts Service reports regularly to the Department in relation to ongoing developments and delivery of projects and other initiatives.

As part of our performance budgeting template which supports the annual Estimates process performance data is also provided. This provides, key high level metrics, e.g. relating to number of sittings supported. It also provides a selection of data for Civil - Non Litigious cases in addition to other operational data including: On Line Business and Fines Collection Rate. An extract of the Performance Budget Template which forms part of the 2017 Estimates is provided at Appendix B.

Measures of performance of judicial systems while not within the control of the Courts Service are provided for the purposes of:

- **The European Commission for the Evaluation of the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)** – CEPEJ promotes improvements in the administration of justice in Members States of the Council. The Service continues to liaise with the Department of Justice and Equality on the provision of annual caseload and

other court related statistics to CEPEJ. The statistics are included in CEPEJ's biennial report *European Judicial Systems* (the latest edition of which was published in 2016 based on 2014 data). The Service continues to engage in improving the capacity of its case processing systems to provide a wider range of caseflow data for its own needs as well as for these publications.

- **EU Justice Scoreboard** - The Service participates with the Department of Justice and Equality regarding national Justice systems which assist in developing *the EU Justice Scoreboard* and promotes the exchange of best practice on the efficiencies of justice systems. The *Scoreboard* is an annual published comparative information tool which provides data on the quality, independence and efficiency of justice systems in all EU Members States

One of the obstacles to the production of timely and relevant key performance indicators is the proliferation of standalone IT systems used for a number of operational functions in Court Offices. This requires a lot of manual intervention, use of spreadsheets, etc, to collate data and statistics. To address this problem a fully integrated case management system is required.

As part of the Change Programme, Performance Reporting is identified as a significant element of this programme. Once this is addressed it will provide a database of accurate and timely operational data. This combined with financial data will enhance the reporting capability of the Service, and allow for more accurate and frequent reporting for example on cases, sittings and cost per case. It will support improved key performance indicators.

## **7. Opportunities for Further Reform and Efficiencies**

The Courts Service fulfils a unique role in supporting the third branch of government. A modern and efficient Courts Service is vital to the effective operation of the justice system, enabling access to justice and supporting the judiciary. The interests of citizens and court users are our primary focus and we will seek to deliver further improvements in the operation of the criminal, civil and family courts.

We recognise the importance of responding proactively to the constantly evolving environment we operate, including; public service reform, the need for more a “user-friendly” experience, increased efficiency, transparency and accountability.

While very significant progress has been achieved by the Courts Service in implementing a range of reforms, some of which are outlined in this brief review, it is aware that a more focused, structured approach is required to ensure maximum benefits are realised from future change projects. In response to this a Change Management Office was established in March 2016. A comprehensive three year Change Programme was put in place in 2016, which sets out the context and rationale for a comprehensive change and reform agenda. This is aligned to the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016, the Department of Justice Statement of Strategy and other reforms plans. It places particular emphasis on four key areas;

- *Service Delivery,*
- *People,*
- *Technology and*

- **Structures.**

The range of initiatives and projects are summarized in Table 7.1. The implementation of much of this Change Programme is dependent on the necessary investment in resources, including the availability of enabling technologies.

In addition, in relation to a number of reforms, the pace of that reform is dictated by the Government’s legislative programme and Departmental priorities. For example there has been a lack of progress on:

- Revised Prisons legislation to allow more extensive use of video conferencing. These amendments were proposed in 2012.
- Proposals submitted to the Department to amend the Ministerial Direction<sup>4</sup> as regards committals and remands would generate significant efficiencies for both the AGS and IPS in 2012.
- Debt Claims On-Line (DCOL) which would provide for the Statement of Truth and allow the entire transactions to be completed online. This is provided for in the Courts & Civil Law Miscellaneous Provision Bill 2017, however it was first included in the legal services regulation legislation planned for 2011 but did not progress
- Centralisation of certain business of the Courts e.g. jury selection would also be provided in the Courts & Civil Law Miscellaneous Provision Bill 2017.

**Table 7.1**

| <b>Courts Service Change Programme 2016 -2019</b> |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Customer Service</b>                           | Enhanced Dublin Family Law facilities, (e.g. new children’s Courts) | Implement e-licensing system nationally                               | Establish Centres of Excellence for areas such as probate and family law              | Review centralisation of services, e.g. jury summoning,   |
| <b>Technology</b>                                 | E-Filing of Licensing applications, and e-payment of fees,          | On-line filing – DCOL including e-judgements                          | Interoperability and exchange of data with AGS, IPS & P.S and other government bodies | Develop new Family Law case management system   |
| <b>Leadership &amp; Renewal</b>                   | Develop HR Strategy to include workforce planning                   | Continue Implementation of Management Coaching Programme              | Establish Change Governance Structures  | Implement Technical Skills Programme and eLearning Programme  |
| <b>Efficiency</b>                                 | Expansion of video link and video conferencing the IPS              | Collaborative work on data sharing with AGS and other agencies        | Re-launch LEAN Business Process Efficiency Programme                                  | Review implementation of the Combined Court Offices   |
| <b>Openness and Accountability</b>                | Court Performance Reporting Metrics                                 | Monitor and measure Customer Satisfaction and court user requirements | Reporting to the Dept of Justice and Equality under the Agency Framework Agreement    | Implement actions to ensure compliance with the revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies |

This is an extract from the Change Management Programme 2016-2019.

<sup>4</sup> Direction under Section 17(3) of the Criminal Justice Administration Act 1914



The Change Programme also recognises the wide range of legislation, both existing and proposed to be implemented, including:

- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity ) Act 2015
- The Children and Family Relationships Act 2015
- Fines (Payment & Recovery) Act 2014
- Legal Service Regulation Act 2015, which establishes the Office of the Legal Cost Adjudicator.
- Establishment of a Judicial Council

The successful implementation of the Change Programme will be subject to appropriate ongoing resources and funding being available. A number of these items form the basis of the Courts Service 2018 Estimates submission. This submission has primarily focused on the minimum essential funding required to support the establishment of the Change Management Office, further investment in Learning and Development and LEAN, and the commencement of a planned maintenance programme for Court Buildings. The latter was identified as a major issue by the C&AG in the audit of the Appropriation Account for 2015.

In the medium term investment in technology will be critical to the ongoing reform of the Courts Service.

It is evident from this review that reforms undertaken by the Courts Service, whether that be investment in courtroom technology, structural reform, court procedural reform, etc, that very significant improvements and benefits have been realised. Very often those benefits accrue to other stakeholders, including other justice sector agencies and court users. In this regard it is essential that an overall justice system view be taken when considering future reforms, to ensure that maximum benefits are realised for all stakeholders.

It should also be noted that pursuant to the commitment in Action 20 of the Civil Service Renewal Plan, the Court Service has been selected by the Civil Service Management Board, to undergo a Capability Review. This review is underway and is expected to be completed by December 2017.

## **Appendix A – Terms of Reference**

### **Background**

The aim of the Spending Review is to develop evidence which provide options for Government as part of the annual budgeting process. In keeping with previous reforms of the Public Expenditure Framework, these are intended to be short assessments of spending areas covering a subset of potential themes such as rationale, sustainability, efficiency as well as impact issues.

### **Rationale**

The activities and outputs undertaken by the Courts Service lend themselves well to review as they involve services to the citizen and in the past have been the subject of successful reform initiatives. This is also an area where spending pressures could emerge from increased investment or legislative change within justice agencies namely the An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prisons Service or other government departments. The impact of which can lead to more demands in the courts. For these reasons, a review in the Courts Service has been selected.

While the focus of the review is current and future and in general covers a period of 5 years, it has been necessary in some cases to extend this period to provide appropriate context.

### **Terms of Reference**

- The role of the Courts Service and its relationship with the Judiciary
- Describe the origin and impact of previous reform initiatives in the Courts Service
- Develop options to improve efficiency/enhance productivity
- Identify any steps necessary to facilitate implementation of possible reform proposals

### **Methodology**

Methodology is based on an assessment of the following source documents and material.

- Previous Annual Reports and Strategic Documents
- Workforce Plan
- Financial analysis – expenditure by programme etc
- Trend performance data
- Literature review – published data on reform initiatives in other jurisdictions

## Appendix B - Performance Budgeting Template

### Context and Impact Indicators-

| <b>Context and Impact Indicators</b> |  |                |                         |   |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Programme A</b>                   | <b>2013</b>  | <b>2014</b>    | <b>2015</b>             |   |
| <b>1</b>                             | <b>Number of Offences:<br/>- Criminal– Incoming<br/>(Resolved*)</b>  | 343,861        | 454,659 (343,716)       | 436,471 (324,298)   |
|                                      | Criminal by Jurisdictions – Incoming (Resolved): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Court Crime</li> <li>• Circuit Court Crime</li> <li>• Special Criminal</li> <li>• Central Criminal</li> <li>• Court of Appeal (Criminal)</li> </ul> |                |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 405,007 (298,797)</li> <li>• 28,978 (23,441)</li> <li>• 45 (29)</li> <li>• 1,579 (839)</li> <li>• 862 (1,192)<br/>1</li> </ul>                         |
|                                      | Criminal Offences and Appeals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offences</li> <li>• Appeals</li> </ul>  |                |                         | <b>436,471 (324,298)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 420,720 (310,220)</li> <li>• 15,721 (14,078)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>2</b>                             | <b>Number of Cases:<br/>- Civil – Incoming<br/>(Resolved*)</b>   | <b>148,268</b> | <b>143,466 (83,378)</b> | <b>248,245 (190,763)</b>  |
|                                      | Civil by Jurisdictions – Incoming (Resolved): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District Court</li> <li>• Circuit Court</li> <li>• High Court</li> <li>• Court of Appeal</li> <li>• Supreme Court</li> </ul>                                    |                |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 147,617 (119,894)</li> <li>• 57,161 (37,865)</li> <li>• 42,717 (31,730)</li> <li>• 641 (750) <sub>2</sub></li> <li>• 109 (524) <sub>6</sub></li> </ul> |
|                                      | Family Law – Incoming (Resolved*) <sub>3</sub>   | 44,813         | 60,694 (52,455)         | 62,408 (54,171) <sub>3</sub>  |
|                                      | Personal Injury Incoming (Resolved*) <sub>4</sub> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District Court</li> <li>▪ Circuit Court</li> <li>▪ High Court</li> </ul>  |                |                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,142 (501)</li> <li>• 10,631 (5,399)</li> <li>• 7,219 (4,191)</li> </ul>  |
|                                      | Commercial Courts Incoming (Resolved*) <sub>5</sub>  |                |                         | ▪ 148 (111) <sub>5</sub>  |

| <b>Context and Impact Indicators</b> |  |             |                 |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>Programme A</b>                   | <b>2013</b>  | <b>2014</b> | <b>2015</b>     |
| <b>3</b>                             | <b>Civil – Non Litigious (Resolved*) including:</b>        |             |                 |
|                                      | - Probate: Grants of representation                        | 14,892      | 15,776 (15,747) |
|                                      | - Enduring Power of Attorney                               | 542         | 650 (620)       |
|                                      | - Persons declared Wards of Court                          | 321         | 429 (322)       |
|                                      | Licensing – Incoming (Resolved*)                           | 53,127      | 49,040 (49,040) |
| <b>4</b>                             | <b>Other Operational Data</b>                              |             |                 |
|                                      | Online services (On Line Fines)<br>% of Fines paid on line | 32%         | 35%             |
|                                      | Fines Collection Rate                                      | 76%         | 90%             |
|                                      | Ratio of Fee Income as a % of Gross Current Expenditure    | 42%         | 44%             |
|                                      | Ratio of Staff to Judges                                   | 6.3         | 5.8             |
|                                      |  |             |                 |

\* Data on number of resolved cases/applications/offence provided from 2014 with a further detailed analysis provided for 2015

\*\*The collection rate for 2015 exceeded that for 2014 due to: (a) higher level of reversals and (b) a reduction in the volume of fines imposed.

1 There were 862 new offences for the Court of Appeal (Criminal), this excludes pending cases from the Court of Criminal Appeal. The resolved figure includes some of these pending offences

2 The 750 includes 109 pending appeals between October and December 2014

3 Family Law is included within the Civil figures

4 Personal Injury is included within the Civil figures

5 Commercial Court is included in High Courts Civil figures

6 The Court disposed of 447 legacy appeals during 2015