

MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD
3rd February 2020

The Courts Service Board met on 3rd February 2020.

Minutes and Documentation from Committees of the Board

The Board noted minutes and reports of meetings of Committees of the Board as follows

- Minutes of the Finance Committee – 2nd December 2019
- Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee – 2nd December 2019
- Minutes of Family Law Court Development Committee – 14th October 2019
- Minutes of the Building Committee – 23rd July 2019

The Board considered and approved the following Reports:

Report on Financial Outturn 2019 and Proposed Budget 2020

The Board considered the Report on Expenditure and Budget 2019, as circulated. The Board noted:

- **Financial position to end December 2019** – Gross expenditure to 31st December 2019 was €39.43m showing a gross underspend of €1.475m made up of an underspend on Pay of €2.257m and an overspend on non-pay of €0.746m and a marginal overspend of Capital of €0.35m. Appropriations in Aid (Income) to the end of December recorded a shortfall against profile of €0.697m primarily relating to Court Fees. Overall, the budget was very closely monitored.
- **Proposed Budgets for 2020** – There was gross funding allocation for the Courts Service in the 2020 Estimates was €156.378m has been confirmed. The Service will keep a close watch on expenditure and will report to the Board regularly on its adherence to budgets.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The Board considered and approved the Report by the Chief Executive Officer and noted major issues including:

- **Fines (Payment and Recovery) Act 2014:** – The application of the Act has continued to attract significant press enquiries, driven by the publication of the exchange of letters between the service and the Public Accounts Committee.
- **Modernisation Committee** – A new Committee of the Board has been established to oversee the Service's Modernisation Programme. The Service intends to develop a detailed business case to support the modernisation programme in time for early summer.
- **Probate** - The Revenue Commissioners are proceeding with their plan to digitise the CA24 process and hope to have the project completed in the autumn. Once this is done, this will have very significant benefits for the Probate Office as well as the local probate registries..
- **Assisted Decision Making Act 2015** - The Service continues to play an active part in the planning committee. However, much work still has to be done and there are up to 60 legislative amendments required by the Decision Support Service.
- **Recruitment** - Arrangements are in place to finalise the recruitment of new Judicial assistants..
- **Website redevelopment** - Subject to testing of the legal diary going well, the new website will be launched at the end of February.
- **Hammond Lane** – the Service has continued its communications with the Department of Justice & Equality and the development of a family law facility at Hammond Lane with the available budget.
- **Provincial sites: Roscommon** – a suitable venue has been identified for a temporary courthouse and negotiations with the owner are on-going.

Corporate Business Plan

The Board considered the Corporate Business Plan and noted its contents.

External Review of Board

The Board agreed to engage an outside agency to conduct an external evaluation of the Board's operations, as required under the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*.