

**MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD**

**4<sup>th</sup> February, 2019**

**The Courts Service Board met on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2019.**

**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 Meeting, 3<sup>rd</sup> December and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018
- Minutes of the Family Law Court Development Committee, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018
- Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee , 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 and Report on Protected Disclosures

**The Board considered and approved the following Reports:**

**Report on Membership of the Board and Committees of the Board**

The Board noted and approved

- the election of Judge Conal Gibbons to the Board to replace Judge Gerard Haughton as the elected representative of the Judges of the District Court and
- the appointment of Her Honour Judge Sarah Berkeley to the Family Law Court Development Committee as the nominee of the President of the Circuit Court.

**Report on the Appointment of a Chief Executive Officer**

The Board considered the report and appointed a Committee for the Recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer on the retirement of the Mr. Brendan Ryan on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The recruitment process will include a shortlisting exercise followed by Preliminary and Final Interviews. A report and recommendation will be brought to the June Meeting of the Board.

**Report on Expenditure 2018 and Budget 2019**

The Board considered on Expenditure 2018 and Budget 2019, as circulated. The Board noted:

- **Financial position to end December 2018** – the Financial position for the year ending 2018 represented an overall successful outturn for the year through the effective management of the available funding. Gross expenditure at end 2018 was €137.511m. with an underspend of €0.665m. (0.5%) as compared to the revised budget for the year. Appropriations in Aid amounted to €48.880m which after adjusting for the technical Supplementary showed revised income exceeded target by €0.311m (0.6%). The net position therefore showed total net expenditure of €88.631m. resulting in a net underspend of €0.976m. (1.1%) which is available to meet the surrender balance as required under government accounting guidelines.
- **Budgets for 2019** – The Board approved the 2019 Budget in December and budgets have now been allocated to Heads of Directorate for their area of responsibility. Expenditure will be monitored closely throughout the year and a review will be carried out as part of the budgetary management process in June.

#### Presentation by Mr. Paul Burns, Head of Infrastructure Services

Mr. Burns gave a presentation to the Board outlining the remit and role of his Directorate; the work of the component Units – Estate Management, ICT and the Information Office - and key issues and projects for 2019.

- The Estate Management Unit has responsibility for the capital building programme and property management and maintenance. Key projects for 2019 include
  - a post project review of the 7 PPP projects which have moved into the 25 year operational phase and, in accordance with the approval by the Board, finalisation of the outstanding claims with BAM following agreement of a revised schedule of payments to 2021. BAM have in the last week won an award as the best Public Sector Facilities Management Project for the 7 PPP projects.
  - the Hammond Lane project
  - Acquisition of sites for future courthouse developments outside Dublin – sites have been acquired in Wicklow and Roscommon and a site have been agreed for Portlaoise. Work is continuing in relation to the acquisition of suitable sites in Tralee and Galway.
  - A range of works are underway in Dublin including the provision of additional chambers for the Court of Appeal and the conversion of the former restaurant into accommodation for judicial assistants. Following the recent security incident in Phoenix House, security equipment has been installed and security work is under consideration for Dolphin House and Chancery Street.

- A major condition survey of court buildings is expected to be completed by the end of the year and will inform a proposed new maintenance contract for court buildings around the country.
- A new estate strategy will be drawn up later this year following on from the long term strategy currently under development and will be discussed with the Building Committee prior to being brought to the Board.
- The ICT Unit is currently engaged in
  - A major programme of upgrading ICT infrastructure including ICT security e.g. the new firewall which will be completed shortly; an upgrade of desktop equipment commencing later this year and improved ICT equipment available to judges .
  - Digital Audio Recording equipment in courtrooms around the country was completely upgraded last year and the availability of video technology around the country has been boosted by the installation of video conferencing and evidence display equipment in the PPP projects and the refreshment of the equipment in the CCJ.
  - Work on a range of new digital systems – Leave to Appeal in the Supreme Court, eLicencing and the Legal cost Adjudicators system – is underway in conjunction with the operational directorates and
  - A review of the skills, structure, organisation and governance of the ICT Unit is underway and will be completed in the coming months.
- The Information Office is continuing its work in managing the website and providing information about the workings of the courts. The key project for the Unit in 2019 is
  - The redesign of the website to develop a new look and feel for the website An extensive consultation process with users internally and externally is underway at present and significant improvement in usability are expected to come on stream later this year.

The Board considered the presentation, noted the work being carried out by the Directorate in terms of day to day support for the courts and the strategic development of the organisation.

### **Chief Executive Officer's Report**

The Chief Executive presented his report as circulated, which was considered and approved by the Board. The Chief Executive briefed the meeting on some of the major issues outlined in his report including:

- **Implementation of the Corporate Business Plan 2018** – a report on the implementation of the Corporate Business Plan 2018 appended to the Report shows significant progress in implementing the objectives with the majority of the objectives achieved or on target.
- **Protected Disclosures** – the Protected Disclosures Policy is in place and operating effectively. No protected disclosures were made to the organisation in 2018.
- **Human Resources** – Staff numbers increased by 30 during 2018 and a tailored induction programme through Clerical Officer and Executive Officer academies is being implemented. There will be internal promotion competitions held in Q1 this year and arrangements are being made for recruitment for specialist finance and Judicial Assistant posts.
- **Judicial Assistants** – the full complement of Judicial Assistants is now in place and new competitions are scheduled. The new Head of Legal Research has been appointed and will work with the judiciary to enhance the service provided and management of the resource.
- **Security Incident in Phoenix House** – security has now been installed in Phoenix House and the measures required for Dolphin House and Chancery Street are being examined.
- **Waiting Times** – the report outlined the waiting times for each court jurisdiction. The Courts Service continues to work with the judiciary and the Presidents of the Courts in ensuring waiting times are kept to a minimum within the resources available.

### Corporate Business Plan 2019

The Board considered and approved the Annual Corporate Business Plan 2019

The Corporate Business Plan is a key part of the business planning cycle for the organisation and is required under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. It identifies priorities and actions for the Service in 2019 and informs Directorate and Unit business plans for the year. The actions and objectives in the Corporate Business Plan are linked to the recommendations of the Organisational Capability Review and identify the actions to be taken in 2019 to implement them.

### Amalgamation of the District Court area of Westport with the District Court area of Castlebar.

The Board considered and approved the amalgamation of the District Court area of Westport with the District Court area of Castlebar with the permanent transfer of Westport Court business to Castlebar and the transfer of the courthouse to Mayo County Council.

### **Extension of Managed ICT Infrastructure Support Service**

In accordance with the Board Governance procedures, the Board considered and approved the proposed extension for a 1 year of the existing ICT Infrastructure Managed Service contract with ATOS as provided for in the contract.

### **Extension of Contract for the maintenance support and installation of video link and evidence display.**

In accordance with the Board Governance procedures, the Board considered and approved the proposed extension for a 1 year of the existing contracts with Fitting Image for the maintenance, support and installation of video link and evidence display as provided for in the contract.

### **Report on the Operation of the Board 2018**

The Board considered a report on the operation of the Board and Committees in 2018.

### **Contract Register**

The Board noted the Contract Register which set out the contracts entered into by the Courts Service since the previous meeting.

### **Retirement of Judge Gerard Haughton, Judge of the District Court.**

The Chief Justice on behalf of the Board expressed sincere appreciation and gratitude to Judge Haughton for his longstanding and sterling contribution to the work of the Board and Committees. His commitment and dedication will be missed.

## ATTENDANCE

**Present:** The Hon. Mr. Justice Frank Clarke, Chairperson  
The Hon. Mr. Justice George Birmingham  
The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter Kelly  
The Hon. Mrs. Justice Elizabeth Dunne  
The Hon. Mr. Justice Seamus Noonan  
The Hon. Mr. Justice Ray Groarke  
Her Honour Judge Rosemary Horgan  
Judge Gerard Haughton  
Mr. Brendan Ryan  
Mr. Micheál P. O'Higgins S.C.  
Mr. Michael Quinlan  
Mr. Damien Downey  
Ms. Carol Baxter  
Ms. Karen Kiernan  
Ms. Patricia King  
Ms. Deirdre Kiely

**Apologies:** The Hon. Mr. Justice Michael Peart

**Officials Present:** Mr. Paul Burns, Head of Infrastructure Services  
Ms. Marie Ryan, Secretary