

MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD

1st June 2021

ICT Security update

Mr. Owen Harrison, spoke on this report which outlines the Courts Service response to the cyber security incident impacting the HSE which had brought with it immediate and catastrophic effects. Mr. Harrison assured the Board that the existing Courts security meant we weren't vulnerable to an attack from the particular family of ransomware used in the HSE attack. The Courts Service is continuing to work with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the Office of Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) to ensure continued protection with all recommendations from these bodies fully applied to the Courts IT environment. Organisation-wide user awareness messaging on best practice in relation to cyber security has also issued.

Modernisation Committee Update

Ms. Denning gave the presentation on this topic with Ms. Audrey Leonard, Ms. Emer Darcy, Ms. Marriane Cassidy and Ms. Catherine Glackin in attendance. The presentation outlined the current position of the Modernisation Programme which is in Transition phase where the focus is on establishing the foundations for modernisation. The presentation also featured key deliverables for 2021, the structure of the monthly reporting to the Modernisation Programme Board, the status in each areas of the reform programme, and the courtroom technology expansion site list. More detailed updates on the both the Civil and Family Law Reform programmes were outlined together with an update on the Programme budget.

Board Effectiveness Review

The Board are continuing to work through the recommendations from the IPA Effectiveness Review in 2020. The day long meeting of the Board in September will allow for a workshop in some of the areas covered in the review.

Audit & Risk Committee – Annual Report of A&RC

Ms. Deirdre Kiely as Chair of the A&R Committee presented this report which had been deferred from the meeting of the 22nd February. Ms. Kiely noted that the general financial environment in the Courts Service is satisfactory with unqualified reports issued by external auditors. Ms. Kiely then outlined the main highlights of the report and indicated that the Terms of Reference which are contained in Appendix 2 are currently being reviewed. Ms. Kiely also spoke on the priorities of the A&R Committee for 2021 and indicated that it would continue to conduct a deep dive into certain areas and would invite relevant personnel to meetings.

Risk Management Report

Mr. John Cleere spoke on this report, with Ms. Karen Kehily also attending. The Risk Management Report outlines at a high level the main features and progress of the Corporate Risk Register for 2021. There are now 19 corporate risks with the following profile; 5 high, 13 medium and 1 low.

[Risk Management Policy](#)

Mr. Cleere presented the Risk Management Policy which had been brought to the Audit and Risk Committee and discussed at SMT. The Report outlines the purpose of the policy, the key principles, the risk appetite, risk structure, roles, responsibilities and reporting.

The most notable change in the policy is in Risk Appetite where, while our risk appetite remains low in the areas of reputational, compliance and financial risks, the modernisation programme has been identified as an area where there is acceptance of an increased degree of risk. Mr. Cleere noted that the level of risk is dynamic and depends upon external factors and the nature of our operations, which may vary over time.

[Hammond Lane Presentation](#)

Mr. Cleere gave the presentation of the Preliminary Business Case (PBC) for the Hammond Lane Family Law Complex with Mr. Simon Hall and Mr. Cillian Smith both in attendance. He outlined that the Board was being asked to approve the PBC and submit it to the DOJ as the project's Approving Authority. The Presentation went through the project's evolution, the strategic context and relevance, the project needs and objectives, and the options together with the basic capital costs of the options and the recommendation. It also outlined the development and phases of the project, the high level internal and external governance structure, the user consultations with the emerging key themes and the design team.

[Hammond Lane Business Case](#)

Mr. John Cleere spoke on the Preliminary Business Case which expanded on the details outlined in the presentation. Mr. Cleere said that the PBC had also been shared with the DOJ and NDFA.

The Chair proposed that the Board adopt the Proposal contained in the PBC and this was agreed.

[Update on Covid Recovery](#)

Ms. Angela Denning presented the report on Covid 19 Recovery which gave the up to date position on Court sittings across all jurisdictions and case types. It also outlined the numbers of videolink appearances and remote court sessions for the year ended 30th April 2021, together with the Courtroom Technology Expansion site list, and referenced the issues around the taking of annual leave by Courts Service staff. The efforts of staff in working throughout the pandemic was also noted.

A discussion followed on the best metrics to be used to assess backlogs and on the future use of remote technology.