

**MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD**  
**20<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**The Courts Service Board met on 20<sup>th</sup> October 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 – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Minutes of the Building Committee – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020

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

**Financial Report 2020**

The Board considered the Financial Report, as circulated. The Board noted:

- **Reduction in fee income** – The impact of Covid 19 on fee income generally is very significant. The anticipated shortfall in Appropriations in Aid had increased by a further €1m to €18m following the recent government decision to waive annual licensing fees. The Service continues to work closely with the Department of Justice and the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (DPER) in addressing this matter has proposed that this matter be addressed, by way of a Further Revised Estimate (FRE) in October or in November by way of a Supplementary Estimate.
- **Changes in spending patterns** – Projected Expenditure Net of Income for 2020 is €5.079 and in balancing the Vote for 2020, it is proposed:
  - to make a surrender balance of €0.850m as required by Government Accounting Guidelines and in line with 2019.
  - to seek sanction to carryover circa €4.9m of this year's capital allocation into 2021 which may be achieved by availing of the carryover mechanism provided for in Government Accounting procedures

- **Government Stimulus Package** – The funds assigned will be used to support recovery initiatives in facilitating additional courts to be held and towards the Service meeting its sustainability targets. The timing of the assignment of the funds in the latter part of the year makes it difficult to be applied in full. Works on the Old Traffic Court, Smithfield and on courthouses resulting from the condition assessment survey will not take place until the New Year. The Service is projecting an underspend against the stimulus funding of €2.093m, which it is hoping to carry over
- **Modernisation** – provision has been made in the 2021 estimates to support the modernisation programme. The meeting noted that if the targets for the modernisation programme are delivered, that this will represent the strongest case for future funding.

### Corporate Recovery Risk Register

The Board considered the updated Corporate Recovery Risk Register and noted its contents. The meeting heard about the operational responses to Covid 19 and the development of criminal and family law roadmaps, which mirror the levels of the Government’s programme for living with the virus. It also heard about the arrangements in place to ensure the safety of staff, Judges and court users

### Chief Executive Officer’s Report

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

**Covid 19:** – The Chief Executive outlined the steps taken by the Service to mitigate the risks arising from Covid 19. She reported on notable issues including:

- That not every courthouse can accommodate criminal jury trials
- Data continues to be a challenge to gather
- The District Courts are continuing to deal with an increase in ex-parte domestic violence applications
- There is a more coherent approach to communicating the organisation’s response,

Data on videolink to prisons shows that over 70% of people in IPS custody appear remotely at present.

**Hammond Lane** - a commitment to increase funding for the project has been given to the Service and it has been meeting the NDFA and the State Architect in order to develop an updated business case for the Department of Justice in November.

The meeting also considered the interface between the Service and the Judicial Council

#### **Procurement of ICT Managed Services**

The Board ratified a proposal to award a contract for the procurement of ICT managed services. The proposed new contract under consideration was for a total of 5 years – an initial 3-year period with the option of 2 further 1-year extensions.

#### **Terms of Reference for the Modernisation Committee**

The Board formally ratified the Terms of Reference for the Modernisation Committee.

#### **Execution of leases for properties at Merchants House and Merchants Hall, Dublin 8**

The Board authorised the execution of a lease for a period of up to 10 years for the two properties concerned which house the Office of the Legal Costs Adjudicator.