

**MEETING OF THE COURTS SERVICE BOARD**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020**

**The Courts Service Board met on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 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 – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020
- Minutes of Audit & Risk Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- Minutes of Modernisation Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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

**Annual Report to the Minister for Justice & Equality on the Courts Service's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies**

The Board noted contents and approved its onward transmission to the Department of Justice & Equality.

**Strategic Business Case for the proposed modernisation programme**

The Board adopted the report, subject to agreed changes and authorised the Chief Executive Officer to present the report to the Secretary General and two Deputy Secretary Generals of the Department of Justice and Equality and before subsequent transmission to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

**Annual Report**

The draft report was adopted. It was agreed to review the format of the report in 2020 to make it easier to extract data.

**Risk Management**

The Board considered the Corporate Risk Register, which had been recast as a recovery risk register, to reflect the challenges facing the Service from Covid 19. It was agreed to keep the register under continuous review, given the importance of the issue.

## Financial Report 2020

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

- **Budgetary Review** – The Budgetary Review was commenced in April came to the following conclusions in respect of the main budgets:
  - Payroll has a projected underspend of €0.628m
  - Non-pay has a projected underspend of €0.337m
  - Capital has an anticipated underspend of €3.094m.
- **Appropriations in Aid** – The Service was anticipating a shortfall of €8m on income from civil proceedings, on top of the €9m shortfall in respect of Licensing. This is a serious concern for the Service and has been communicated to the Department of Justice and Equality. Clarification has been sought on the mechanism to manage this, given that under current government accounting rules, where income is below forecast, agencies are expected to reduce their expenditure by an equivalent amount.

## Chief Executive Officer's Report

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

- **Covid 19:** – In relation to trends on sitting arrangements since the start of the pandemic, the Chief Executive highlighted data on the use of Digital Audio Recording, which showed that more matters were being dealt with than at the start of the crisis but that the matters were taking less time. The rules committees were considering new rules on the swearing of affidavits where public health guidelines require social distancing. The ICT team are continuing to examine platforms to support virtual courts that could be hosted on the Service's infrastructure.
- **Energy Usage** - The Board noted the progress made by the Service to meet SEAI targets on energy usage.
- **Hammond Lane** – The Board noted that the Chief Executive had received a letter from the Secretary General of the Department of Justice to the effect that further funding was available to pay for the development of a family law courthouse. The Board confirmed that it was happy for the development to proceed as a family law only project and asked the Chief Executive to confirm same to the Department.