

COURTS SERVICE BOARD
6TH DECEMBER 2021

1. Minutes & Redacted minutes of meeting of 1st November 2021

The minutes were adopted with 1 small change

2. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes that won't be dealt with during the current meeting.

3. Modernisation Committee

Ms. Denning gave an update on the latest developments and meetings of the Modernisation Committee. She outlined the work done on the use of Plain English in areas such as the Court Rules and spoke on the benefits to having an External consultative Group, particularly where they would have come across many of the same issues to those experienced by the Courts Service.

4. Audit and Risk Committee

The contents of the Report were noted.

- Approval of new member of ARC,

The Board's approval was sought for a change in the Circuit Court nominee from Judge James McCourt to Judge Francis Comerford. This change was approved.

In response to a question on whether all new members to a committee need Board approval it was noted that the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee has this as a requirement for its Committee.

5. Financial paper and proposed budgets

Mr. Cleere spoke on this report which had been presented to the Finance Committee at the meeting of 29th November, and went through the main highlights regarding the Financial Position at 31st October, 2021, and the proposed Budgets for 2022. Addressing the Financial Position Mr. Cleere outlined that while it appears the full 2021 budget for Pay will be spent, and while expenditure is being carefully and well managed to meet the forecast, there are a lot of moving parts in relation to Non-Pay which could mean there may be some changes in the final year end position.

In relation to the proposed Budgets, Mr. Cleere summarised the changes for 2022 as follows

Pay: increase of €3.1m (5%), which equates to approximately 25 additional posts

Non-pay: reduction of €1.2m (-3%) which includes a reduction of €1.7m in pandemic support

Capital: increase of €3.550 (6%) which doesn't include the capital carryover of €3.648m, and ensures that contractual obligations are funded

Appropriations in Aid: Where the target is the same as for 2021. (€34.633m)

The Board noted the report

- Risk Management Report

Mr. Cleere spoke on these reports and drew the attention of the Board an overview of the Corporate Risks for the Courts Service . He went through the progress of Risk Actions during 2021 and indicated that both the Chief information officer and Assistant Secretary for Strategy and Reform had attended and would be invited back to the ARC to explore the balance between modernisation and BAU. The next steps include updating the Corporate risk Register in line with the Corporate Business Plan, ensuring any outstanding actions are carried forward, and communication to and training of staff on Risk Management.

Questions arose in relation to risks associated with ICT, Staffing, and the use of the same phone for both personal and work purposes. All these issues will be looked at in conjunction with the policies surrounding them and changes to the Risk Register will be made where appropriate

The Board noted the report.

6. Swords District Court Office Lease

Mr. Cleere spoke on this matter which had been considered by the Building Committee at its November meeting. The Board's approval was being sought for the execution of the lease. Byrne Wallace Solicitors have advised that everything is in order.

The Board approved the execution of the lease.

7. IPA board Effectiveness Review, Self-Evaluation forms

The Secretary introduced the Report which was based on the Self-evaluation forms previously distributed to members.

The Chair invited a discussion and comments from members.

Following this discussion, it was agreed to form a small group to explore some of the issues further and report back to the Board.