

NICTS BOARD MEETING: Monday 26 September 2011 at 3.30pm

Present:

David A Lavery (Chair)	Director, NICTS
The Hon Mr Justice Deeny	Judicial Representative
His Honour Judge Burgess, Recorder of Belfast	Judicial Representative
Mrs Bagnall, Presiding District Judge (MC)	Judicial Representative
Mr MacLynn, President, Appeals Tribunal	Judicial Representative
Jacqui Durkin	Head of Business Operations
Geraldine Fee	Head of Criminal & Coroners Policy
Siobhan Broderick	Head of Civil Policy & Tribunal Reform
Anthony Carleton	Head of Business Support
Robert Crawford	Head of Public Funded Legal Services
PJ Fitzpatrick	Independent Board Member
Colm McKenna	Independent Board Member

In Attendance:

Angela Barratt	Secretary
Alison Houston	Office of the Lord Chief Justice
Mark McGuckin (Agenda items 1&2)	Head of DOJ Reform Programme
Laurene McAlpine (agenda items 1&2)	Principal Private Secretary/LCJ
Derek Anderson (Agenda items 7-9)	Head of Risk & Assurance Branch

Apologies: None

Conflicts of Interest: There were no conflicts of interest declared.

The Director advised the Board that Carol Moore, the Department of Justice Representative had retired from the Civil Service on Friday 23 September. A replacement would be nominated in due course.

1. DOJ Reform Programme

- 1.1 The Head of the DOJ Reform Programme delivered a presentation on the DOJ Reform Programme and organisational redesign strand of the project, under which NICTS would become an agency within a new Access to Justice Directorate with effect from 7 November.
- 1.2 It was agreed to table a paper at the December meeting on possible changes to the NICTS Framework Document to reflect the new DOJ structure.
- 1.3 The judicial representatives expressed concern that the language and structure proposed did not adequately acknowledge the fundamental constitutional importance of judicial impartiality and independence.

2. NICTS Organisational Redesign

- 2.1 The Head of Business Operations presented a proposed new management structure for the agency.
- 2.2 The Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Chief Justice provided an overview of the structure within the Office of the Lord Chief Justice.

3. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 27 June were agreed. The minutes were signed and will now be published on the NICTS website.
- 3.2 The Board noted the memo circulated by the Head of Criminal and Coroner's Policy Division outlining the planned reviews which are to be taken forward by the Justice Committee.
- 3.3 The Head of Business Operations confirmed that work was progressing on developing a Headcount Reduction Savings Delivery Plan for the agency. An update would be provided for the next Board meeting.
- 3.4 There were no other matters arising that were not covered on the agenda.

4. Director's Report

- 4.1 The Board noted the Director's Report.
- 4.2 The Board discussed the quarter one performance report. There was a discussion on the planned transfer of responsibility for The Appeals Service from the Department of Social Development. The Board noted that there should be no transfer of responsibility until all outstanding budgetary and audit issues were resolved.
- 4.3 The Board noted a new listing system was being piloted in Belfast and Antrim which would help improve performance in the Crown Court.
- 4.4 The Board noted the update in relation to the ICT Refresh project and the ongoing work to resolve current performance issues.
- 4.5 The Board noted that the report of the Access to Justice Review had been published on 13 September for a period of public consultation.
- 4.6 The Board noted that the Public Accounts Committee had taken evidence from the Director on 21 September in relation to the NIAO Report on Managing Criminal Legal Aid.
- 4.7 The Board also noted the 'scoping exercise' being undertaken by the NIAO in respect of funds in court.

5. Criminal Legal Aid Reform

- 5.1 The Board noted the significant progress made in the last year with the programme of legal aid reform. There was a discussion on the increase in Children Order legal aid and also the possible impact of extradition cases on the legal aid budget.

6. Finance Director's Report

- 6.1 The Finance Director provided an update on the financial position at 31 August 2011. The Board noted the budgetary position and the ongoing programme of financial planning and governance work being carried out by Finance Branch.
- 6.2 The Board noted the progress being made to bring the accounts of the NI Legal Services Commission up to date.
- 6.3 The Board noted that the Minister had agreed to a public consultation process on the Estates Savings Plan.

7. Article 55 Triennial Review

- 7.1 The Board noted the very encouraging outcome of the Article 55 Review under the Fair Employment and Treatment Order.

8. Audit & Risk Committee Quarterly Report

- 8.1 The Board noted the quarterly report from the Audit and Risk Committees.
- 8.2 It was noted that the NICTS Head of Risk and Assurance Branch would become Head of Risk and Assurance for the Department of Justice.

9. Resource Court Security Performance

- 9.1 The Head of Risk and Assurance presented an interim report on the investigation into Resource court security performance. The Board noted the initial findings and emerging recommendations.

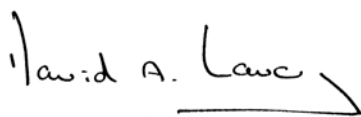
10. Board Effectiveness Review

- 10.1 The Board noted the findings of the Board Effectiveness Review and agreed to a further review in 12 months.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 There was no other business.
- 11.2 The next meeting will take place on Monday 12 December 2011.

Signed:



Chair

Date: