

NICTS BOARD MEETING: Monday 7 March 2011

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
PJ Fitzpatrick	Independent Board Member

In Attendance:

Angela Barratt	Secretary
Alison Houston	Office of the Lord Chief Justice

Apologies:

Carol Moore	Department of Justice Representative
Robert Crawford	Head of Public Funded Legal Services

Conflicts of Interest:

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

1.1 The minutes of the meeting on 6 December were agreed and signed and will now be published on the NICTS website.

1.2 The Director noted the following matters arising:

The Financial Awareness session has been re-scheduled for Monday 27 June at 1500. NICTS Finance Director will provide an overview of the financial environment and processes. The planned presentation from DFP will be returned to at a later date if necessary.

The Independent Board Member had recently completed the training provided by the Chief Executives' Forum on Public Accountability and Governance for Audit Committees.

The report of the Value for Money Study on Very High Cost Criminal Legal Aid Expenditure in NI, being undertaken by NIAO, is unlikely to be published before April.

Information will be circulated on the profile of civil legal aid expenditure.

A new Independent Board Member will join the NICTS Board in May.

2. Director's Report

- 2.1 The Board noted the Director's Report.
- 2.2 The Board discussed the tribunal performance standards. It was agreed that future reports would include a clarification that the standards measured by NICTS only relate to the date the appeal is lodged with the tribunal.
- 2.3 It was noted that a 'Progress Report' on the Access to Justice Review would be published shortly.
- 2.4 The Board noted that a number of NI Departmental tribunals would statutorily transfer to the NICTS on 1 April. The NICTS will continue to operate the Appeals Tribunal and Rent Assessment Panel under an agency arrangement. The Industrial Tribunals and Fair Employment Tribunal may move to a similar arrangement in due course. The NICTS wished to be satisfied that sufficient resources were transferred to allow it to properly administer these tribunals.
- 2.5 The Board noted that the Planning Appeals Commission and Water Appeals Commission (PACWAC) were not being considered for transfer. The Director subsequently advised that this may be due to the review of planning processes.
- 2.6 The Board noted that the Small Claims limit would increase from £2k to £3k from the beginning of May. The increases in the general civil jurisdiction of the County Court will take place later in the year.
- 2.7 The Board noted the briefing note which had been provided on the DOJ Reform Programme. The Board noted that the judiciary wish to see the NICTS become a non-Ministerial department and would wish this to be addressed in the context of the review of devolved justice arrangements.

3. Finance Director's Report

- 3.1 The Finance Director provided an update on the financial position at 31 January 2011 and presented the proposed budget for 2011/12. The Board approved the budget for 2011/12.
- 3.2 The Board remitted further work on the saving plans for 2012/13 to 2014/15 to the Finance Committee.

4. NICTS Business Plan 2011/12

- 4.1 Subject to amendments discussed, the Board adopted the Draft Business Plan as a working draft, pending submission to the Minister of Justice after the Assembly election in May.

5. Risk Committee Report

- 5.1 The Board noted the quarterly report from the Risk Committee. It was agreed that the role of the Audit Committee should be publicised to all staff on the intranet.
- 5.2 There was a discussion on the risk associated with information security. The Audit Plan for 2011/12 will include this area.

6. Any Other Business

- 6.1 There was no other business.
- 6.2 The next meeting will take place on Monday 27 June 2011.

Signed:

Chair

Date: