

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (EB)

30 April 2008

**Judges Conference Room
Saltmarket
Glasgow**

Present:

Eleanor Emberson, Chief Executive and Chair (EE)
Eric McQueen, Director of Field Services (EMcQ)
Gordon Wales, Director of Operational Support (GW)
Graeme Marwick, Principal Clerk of Session and Justiciary (GM)
Stephen Coulter, Deputy Director; Planning and Performance (SC)
Gillian Jewell, Director of Property and Services Unit (GJ)
Alan Swift, Director of Personnel and Development Unit (AS)
Susan Whiteford, Head of Corporate Communications (SW)
Janet Blackstock, Sheriff Clerk, Greenock
Laura Wiles, Secretariat

Apologies were received in advance of the meeting from Alastair Sim, Director Policy and Strategy, Cliff Binning, Deputy Director of Field Services (Development), David Forrester, Deputy Director of Field Services (Delivery), Nicola Bennett, Director of Finance and David Morris, Director of Information Technology.

1. Minutes of the Previous Executive Board Meeting

The Minutes from 26 March 2008 were approved by the Board.

SW raised the matter of the publication of minutes with the Board. It was decided that the minutes of both the EB and the Strategic Board (SB) should be placed on the website from this meeting onwards.

Action Point: SW to establish a protocol for publishing minutes.

2. Matters Not Arising Elsewhere

SC updated the Board on the first Draft Corporate Plan action point. He reported that some minor changes had been made as a result of comments from the Strategic Directors and that he had also received helpful comments from the SB. One such comment noted that there was more to Vulnerable Witness facilities than reflected within the document and that the uptake of facilities could be mentioned. The Board agreed that this was an important aspect, though it was also important to point out that SCS was meeting demand for such facilities rather than recording uptake, which is outwith its control.

Another comment was the absence of a performance measure around Sheriff and Jury Trials. It was felt that its absence from the Corporate Plan would give out the wrong signals about the importance the SCS places on this important area of its business.

Action Point: SC to revisit the performance framework with EMcQ.

The Board agreed that further work on performance framework should be incorporated into the new scorecard to enable routine monitoring. SC indicated that comments from the EB on the scorecard would be very useful and would undertake to try and meet Board members prior to a wider discussion at the May EB.

Action Point: Board members to send comments to SC in time for the May meeting.

With regards to the second Corporate Plan action point, the Board decided to look more closely at the Corporate Plan indicators at the May meeting.

The action point under item 4, Budgets and Business Plans, will be discussed at the June meeting once the outcome of the Parliamentary scrutiny of the fees order is known.

Action Point: Board members to give consideration to areas which would benefit from additional resources if the money becomes available. Suggestions to GW and CMcC by the end of May.

The Board were advised that the action point under item 5, Revised People Strategy was cleared.

Action Point: EE to be advised of the outcome of the HR meeting due to be held on Friday 2 May.

All other action points were cleared and there were no other matters arising.

3. Local Business Plan Update, including risk updates (EB/Apr08/01)

The Board carried out a review of the Business Plans for the year ending 31 March 2008 and noted the progress against the plans.

Operational Support Directorate (OSD)

Finance and Procurement

Roll out of EASEbuy is at approx 70% and the benefits are beginning to show, particularly in larger courts. Some smaller courts are showing a lack of compliance due to the changes necessary in work practices, particularly where smaller suppliers were dealt with face-to-face before. An internal audit would be looking into these issues and problems involving technical issues with EASEbuy itself.

Fees Order – Fees orders for 2007 were put in place after last summer's delays. Fees orders for 2008 are in development and will be discussed with Ministers when the final outcome of the consultation is known.

Property and Services Unit (PSU)

All objectives are on track.

Facilities Management (FM) Performance – Carillon's directors are coming up to reassure PSU over issues in maintenance backlog. PSU should be in a position to work this out shortly. Customer service indicators are showing that SCS is happy with service overall, but PSU exploring this with internal audit to check whether reporting reflects front line experience.

The Estate report at the May meeting will deliver an update on how the FM contract is going.

Personnel Development Unit (PDU)

Electronic Recruitment On-line System (EROL) – Good feedback is being received for this and the Scottish Government is showing interest.

Mitre Finch – Turnover in PDU is delaying full implementation, but 50% of staff should be on the system by autumn 2008.

HQ Location Project – A business case covering different options is being developed.

Action Point: Recommendation paper on HQ Location to be brought to the EB in June and the SB in July.

Information Technology (IT)

Court Unification – The first tranche in Lothian and Borders is regarded as having gone well by partners as well as SCS. Arrangements to thank staff for the huge effort put into this work are in hand.

Staffing – Resources in IT are stretched and additional staffing has been agreed in considering the 2008 budget.

Field Services Directorate (FSD)

Summary Justice Reform/Lay Justices – Implementation is going well. Data for review of system performance will be available after the end of the first quarter.

Technical Training – A massive improvement has been seen by staff and managers have reported seeing better skills following the new training. The big investment in this is paying off and FSD needs to make sure this continues.

High Court Programming Board – The Board had a positive first meeting and the next meeting is due to take place on 22 May 2008.

Core Objectives – This is showing as amber but work continues through the year. It was noted that a lot of changes have been delivered so far without full staff complement.

Policy and Strategy Directorate (PSD)

Risk Management Review – The final phases have gone well. Problems with the ease of use of the system were noted by the Board and it was agreed that this needs to be fixed before rolling the software out more widely. GWilson is aware of the problems and will take action.

Action Point: GWilson to talk to the Board about the Risk Management system at the May meeting.

Business Continuity Plans – The Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) is facilitating the Justice System effort on flu pandemic planning. More general Business Continuity Planning has become a high priority and the recent fuel crisis has provided a start point for more detailed joint agency work which PSD and FSD will be facilitating.

Management Information System (MIS) – There are still plans to second a statistician to support the MIS Team. There is pressure to make changes now to provide timely data for the online scorecard, being overseen by the Management Information Action Team (MIAT).

Action Point: SC to let EE know if there is anything he would like to be raised at the next MIAT meeting on Friday 9 May.

Risk Updates

The Board agreed that the presentation of the risk reports could be improved.

Action Points: Comments on the risk reports to be fed back to GWilson.

The Board agreed that the risks included should be ordered by risk priority with the highest risk at the top of the report and the risks should not all be coloured red.

The Board proceeded to look at individual unit risk reports.

FSD

EMcQ commented that the structure of his risk register needed to be looked at, so that a clear separation between risks could be achieved.

Action Point: EMcQ to speak to SC and GWilson about the structure of the FSD risk register.

There is a mismatch occurring in the risk registers between Sheriffdoms which needs to be rectified. It was agreed that common risks occur between Sheriffdoms, but there should be no replications.

IT

GW indicated that the IT risk register was not fully up to speed and that controls and actions were still to be developed.

Supreme Courts

GM confirmed that his unit were about to go live on the 4risk system and that they were comfortable with what was being asked of them. It was indicated that the Supreme Courts risks were to be reassessed.

Action Point: GM to reassess risk markings.

The Board discussed the issue of Judicial availability and how this was managed through the High Court Programming Board and through discussions with the Courts Directorate, Ministers and the Scottish Government.

PDU

ASwift remarked that he had down graded the risk in relation to the SCS having staff poorly trained on court procedure given the improved volume and quality of training delivered and positive feedback received.

Overall, the Board agreed that a separate session on risk management in the near future would be very useful.

4. Business Plan 2008/09 (EB/Apr08/01)

SC advised the Board that the Business Plan included in this meeting had been updated to reflect decisions by the SB. The EB agreed that this version reflects what they would like to see included. The high level summary was seen as being particularly useful. SC confirmed that there were not many specific comments received from the non-executive members of the SB, but one issue raised was the use of 'management speak'. There was more to do to get rid of jargon and make the plan easy to understand.

Action Point: EB members to look at Business Unit Plans and re-word them for external audiences to understand.

5. Update on Summary Justice Reform

EMcQ updated the Board on the latest position with Summary Justice Reform.

Action Point: EMcQ to circulate paper which was produced for the SB around the EB.

EMcQ reported that the Lothian and Borders unification went smoothly and that there was a positive reaction from SCS staff, with reports that new staff members were fitting in well.

Unification of summary court administration in Grampian Highland and Islands is due to take place on 2 June 2008 and this should be equally successful, due to strong relations in place across the Sheriffdom.

The Glasgow consultation is to go out the week beginning 5 May 2008 and will last for 3 months.

It is too early to report statistics on Fines Enforcement Officers, but an encouraging start was suggested. As sanctions only came in on 1 April 2008, it will take time before any are imposed.

Action Point: FSD to supply some figures to the EB in July.

6. Estates Report

GJ updated the Board with the latest estates position.

Livingston

There are issues regarding interior layout and finishes in spite of early consultation. EE asked that any issues are best raised in a letter to EE which can be taken before the SB.

Elgin

Delays were reported due to late delivery of acoustic rated doors for interview rooms. Formal tenders have not yet been received for the addition of the new courtroom so the delay of the doors is not critical.

Alloa

A slight delay was reported, but the project should be completed by September 2008.

Glasgow Solar Roof

There has been a slight delay in connecting the solar array to the grid, but everything is on schedule for 19 May 2008 for the planned opening.

FM Contract

FM contract performance has fallen. Carillion are offering reassurance and GJ is continuing to press them on performance.

7. Any Other Business

APM Event

EE reminded the Board that SCS was hosting this event at Parliament House on 21 May 2008. The Board were encouraged to support GWilson by ensuring a good turnout.

Fuel Shortages

EMcQ updated the Board on the meetings being held with SPS and COPFS regarding the possible impact on courts. The decision not to implement contingency plans had been taken, but this was being kept under review.

Glasgow Bar Association Strike Action

EMcQ updated the Board on the position with the Glasgow Bar Association strike and confirmed that the strike on 6 May 2008 was scheduled to go ahead. There were contingency arrangements agreed to maintain essential business, so no significant problems were expected.

Framework for the 07/08 Annual Report

SW informed the Board that a section was to be set up on the T: drive where Board members could submit documents.

Action Point: Comments due back to SW by Wednesday 7 May.

Internal Communications

EE raised concerns about consistency of internal communications, particularly the use of all staff emails.

Action Point: EE to speak to SW about internal communications with a view to bringing this to the EB at a later date.

Saltmarket

The Board expressed their thanks to the Judges and staff of Saltmarket for hosting the EB meeting this month.

Next Meeting

The next EB meeting will be held at Hayweight House on 28 May 2008 at 10am.

Laura Wiles
8 May 2008