

Releasable

SB/April08/Mins

## Scottish Court Service (SCS) Strategic Board (SB)

Minute of meeting of  
24 April 2008

Novotel Hotel  
80 Lauriston Place  
Edinburgh

**Members Present:** Eleanor Emberson, Chief Executive and Chairperson  
Eric McQueen, Director of Field Services  
Alastair Sim, Director of Policy and Strategy  
Gordon Wales, Director of Operational Support  
Nicola Bennett, Director of Finance  
The Rt Hon Lord Philip, Non-Executive Director  
Sheriff Principal Edward Bowen QC, Non-Executive Director  
Sheriff Robert Dickson, Non-Executive Director  
Johan Findlay, Non-Executive Director  
Dugald Mackie, Non-Executive Director  
Valerie Macniven, Non-Executive Director

**Attendees Present:** Stephen Coulter, Deputy Director of Planning & Performance  
Management  
Susan Whiteford, Head of Corporate Communication  
Janet Blackstock, Sheriff Clerk, Greenock (observer)  
Glynis McKeand, Acting Secretary to the Board

EE opened the meeting by formally welcoming the two new Non-Executive Directors to the board and thanking all for their attendance at this morning's presentation and plenary session.

The minute of the last meeting was approved and it was agreed that issues arising would be caught within today's Agenda.

## **1. SCS Budget 2008/9**

NB addressed the board in support of her report **SB/Apr08/1**. She highlighted the risks associated with the projected capital spend and the issues surrounding uncertainty of the projected fees income. She advised that the figures were in the process of being reworked and that she would revert to the board with revisions which would include the impact of moving the Summary Justice Reform for Glasgow and Tayside Central & Fife into the 08/09 budget frame. Board members suggested some ways in which presentation of these figures could be improved. DM undertook to engage with NB in agreeing the format of the revised paper for the next meeting. NB advised that by the next meeting she would be better placed to inform the Board of progress on the fees order proposals.

The Board agreed to approve of the Budget in so far as it related to the first part of the financial year and reserved consideration of the remainder until the position on fee income was clear.

**Action 1: NB to revise budget and agree format for presentation to the Board with DM.**

## **2. Corporate plan 2008/11**

AS reminded the meeting of the process the Board had gone through to agree its corporate approach, both at previous meetings and in discussions which preceded the meeting today. An earlier draft of **SB/Apr08/02** had been considered by the board at its meeting in January and substantially revised in light of comments from that meeting and from subsequent staff meetings. Once cleared by the Board, the plan required the approval of the Lord President before its presentation to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice.

SC explained the performance framework adopted in the plan. The Board would receive periodic updates on progress against indicators and targets and such more specific data in relation to performance as was considered by members to be necessary. The move to indicators for areas of work outwith direct court control was appreciated. It was suggested that a further indicator should be added relating to Sheriff and Jury cases.

Board members commented on a number of issues addressed in the plan and put forward other issues which they considered should also be covered in it. It was suggested that the wider justice aims could be better reflected and VM offered to supply some suggested amendments. It was also thought that the Community Impact aspect of the plan should have higher prominence.

SC agreed to redraft the plan in light of these comments and suggestions made, and circulate the redraft to the Board at the same time as it is sent to the Lord President for consideration.

SW explained that after approval by the Lord President and Ministers, staff would be provided with a summary of the plan. The Plan would be made publicly available through publication in hardcopy and an entry on the SCS website and form the basis for the 08/09 SCS Annual Report and Accounts.

**Action2: SC to redraft plan in light of comments and circulate further to the Board and Lord President for approval.**

### **Business Plan**

The draft business plan was discussed. It followed the terms of the Corporate Plan. Board members commented on the plan, making suggestions for improvement and addition. Their comments in relation to the corporate plan would equally apply.

Subject to these comments being taken into account, the Board approved the Business Plan Draft V2.

### **3. Efficiency and Opportunity**

AS summarised **SB/Apr08/3**. The Board agreed that they would need to manage the presentation of this programme collectively. Opportunities to join up “back office” or administrative functions with other providers in areas such as procurement and in considering shared services through benchmarking against other providers were discussed. It was agreed that section 3 of the paper should perhaps include some reference to these.

The Board was otherwise content with the programme.

EE advised she would report back to the Board from time to time on performance against targets.

### **4. Judiciary and Courts Bill**

AS updated the Board on Parliamentary progress, confirming that the stage one report is still expected at the beginning of May and that the stage one debate is still scheduled for 14 May.

Referring to **SB/Apr08/4** AS explained what SCS was currently doing in relation to implementation planning. The make up and responsibility of the Implementation Project Team was explained. The Project Board currently consisted of three SCS Directors, namely AS, EMcQ and GW, Lord Reed, Sheriff Principal Bowen and Valerie Macniven and was Chaired by EE who was also the named Senior Responsible Officer. The Implementation Project Board would first meet on 11 June.

AS advised that it was not yet clear what lines of communication and consultation would be set up. The date the SCS would vest in the new management structure was not yet fixed. The assumptions being taken into consideration were explained.

The role the SB should play in the implementation planning process was discussed at length. It was recognised that all of the non-executive members of this Board had an interest in and something to offer the Implementation Project. Different permutations were suggested and discussed. One possibility identified was for the Implementation Project structure to allow for areas of interest to be remitted to specific interest groups – including this board.

As had been previously discussed, it was concluded that the frequency of the meetings of this Board should be increased to six in this financial year and that part of the next meeting would be dedicated to considering the remit of the Implementation Project and the role of this Board as a whole in relation to that project. DM would also be invited to attend the first meeting of the Implementation Project Board on 11 June.

**Action 3: Implementation Project remit and this Board's role to be considered at next meeting;**

**Action 4: DM to attend Implementation Project Board on 11 June.**

## **5. Performance reports**

### **Financial Performance Report**

GW spoke to paper **SB/Apr08/5**. He confirmed that forecast outturn had been accurate and that SCS had spent very close to budget. The Board appreciated the efforts that had been put into ensuring such an end year result in relation to both revenue and capital. Members agreed this was a considerable achievement given the other issues impacting on SCS over the last few months of the financial year.

### **Performance Report - Quarter ended March 2008**

SC made reference to discussion which had taken place this morning regarding the usefulness to this Board of the information contained in the format of the report **SB/Apr08/6**. He advised of plans he had for addressing these issues. Board members commented further on the content and in particular on the Supreme Courts' appeals situation. In response EMcQ advised of measures in hand to address this and undertook to report further on these in time for the next meeting.

**Action 5: EMcQ to report further at next meeting on action being taken to improve aspects of performance and its success.**

## **6. AOB**

### **Venue for July meeting**

Board members accepted EE's invitation to meet in Dundee Sheriff Court on 17 July.

### **Court Unification and Fines Enforcement**

EMcQ presented **SB/Apr08/7** to the Board. Its contents were noted with interest and appreciation.

### **Summary Justice Reform – draft consultation document V0.3**

EMcQ presented **SB/Apr08/8**, a draft consultation document, to the Board and requested that any comments on it be sent to him by Wednesday 30 April.

### **Justice of the Peace Courts**

JF advised that it was the preference that Justice of the Peace Courts be referred to as such rather than JP courts. This point was noted.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 17 July 2008 within Dundee Sheriff Court.

**Secretariat**  
**28 April, 2008**