

Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland
Meeting: Monday 19 February 2018, Thistle House, Edinburgh

MINUTES

Present:

Mrs Nicola Gordon, Chairing Member
Dr Michael Ewart
Mrs Alison Mitchell
Mrs Deirdre Fulton
Professor Stephen Tierney
The Hon Lady Wise
Mr Alistair Morris
The Hon Lord Minginish

Attended:

Mrs Erica Clarkson, Chief Executive
Ms Ashleigh Meikle, Board Secretary and Court Appointments Manager
Mr John Wallace, Tribunal Appointments and Governance Manager
Miss Rachel Craig, Appointments Team Leader
Miss Katy Mitchell, Administrator

Mark Ormerod, UK Supreme Court

Apologies:

Mr James McNeill, QC
Ms Neelam Bakshi
Sheriff Principal Derek Pyle
Sheriff Michael O'Grady, QC

1. Minutes of the JABS Board Meeting of 15 January 2018

1.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

2. Matters Arising and Action Tracker

2.1 There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

2.2 The Board reviewed the Action Tracker. All activity was agreed to be on target.

3. Chairing Member Update

3.1 The Board was informed of progress being made on stakeholder engagement. Feedback from Scottish Government is positive and the Chairing Member reported that she hopes to meet with Ministers before the summer.

3.2 The Board considered succession planning and agreed that the new Skills Matrix will help to inform recruitment. The Chairing Member will continue to keep the Board abreast of developments as the recruitment process develops.

3.3 The Board discussed a number of outreach opportunities including co-hosted events with the Law Society for Scotland, the Supreme Court, the Scottish Young Lawyers Association, and the Sheriff's Association. The secretariat will pursue these opportunities and develop some proposals for further consideration.

3.4 The Board was informed that Sheriff Principal Pyle has been re-appointed to the Judicial Appointments Board for Scotland until 2019.

4. Chief Executive Update

4.1 The Board was informed that the Summary Sheriff recruitment round was now open and advised that a number of applications were underway.

4.2 The Chief Executive provided the Board with a report on her introductory stakeholder meetings and a forward look at future appointments - including a learning and development visit with the Judicial Appointments Commission in London.

4.3 The Board was informed that the Chief Executive would be scoping professional and personal development opportunities for the JABS secretariat team, and that consideration was being given to the introduction of Agile project management methodology to help manage workload.

4.4 John Wallace provided the Board with costs for VC equipment. The Chief Executive will give this consideration when forecasting the budget for the next financial year.

4.5 The Board agreed that Huddle (a secure cloud based storage system) should be adopted to help manage documentation and Board communications.

4.6 The Board was informed that JABS have been asked to contribute to the Senior Salary Review Board's current consultation exercise. The secretariat are working in partnership with Judicial Office and Scottish Government to coordinate a response.

5. Project Updates

5.1 Deirdre Fulton provided the Board with an update on her Public Face of JABS project. Much positive progress had been made and a number of recommendations were considered and approved. The Board agreed that the Chief Executive should align resourcing to priorities and proceed with the implementation of this work.

5.2 The Board agreed that the Chief Executive should work with Mrs Fulton to develop a Communication and Outreach Strategy for wider consideration.

5.3 The Board discussed the Development Plan & Skills Matrix (JABS 2018 08) and considered priorities for the year ahead. It was agreed that the matrix would be extremely helpful during the recruitment of new Board Members.

5.4 The Board agreed that some training on 'Unconscious Bias' would be helpful. The Secretariat will consider options and report back with a proposal. It was also agreed that some Board Members would find it useful to 'sit-in' and observe their legal colleagues.

5.5 The Board thanked Liz Burnley for her excellent work on the development of the Skills and Abilities Framework - "What makes a good judge?" (JABS 2018 09). Further work is underway and an update will be provided to the Board in due course.

6. Research Proposal (JABS 2018 10)

6.1 The Chief Executive presented a paper to the Board setting out a proposal for independent research to help inform the JABS Operational Plan and longer-term business strategy. The Board supported the proposal and agreed that the research proposal should be developed and the work commissioned. Mrs Mitchell and Professor Tierney agreed to help support the project going forward.

7. Consultation Process (JABS 2018 11)

7.1 The Chief Executive updated the Board on her recent discussions with stakeholders about the consultation process currently undertaken by the Board during appointment rounds. It was agreed that the research proposal (JABS 2018 11) should incorporate a question to ensure a better understanding of the issues.

8. Monthly Budget Report (JABS 2018 12)

8.1 The Board considered a paper on the financial position to the end of February 2018. The Chief Executive reported that budgets remained tight across the organisation generally and that no underspend is expected at the end of the 2017/18 financial year.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 In closing the meeting, the Chairing Member wished Sheriff O'Grady a speedy recovery and invited the Board to discuss options for contingency plans in relation to the forthcoming Summary Sherriff Recruitment round. The secretariat will circulate any revisions to the current plan as and when they emerge.

10. Discussion with Mark Ormerod, CEO of the UK Supreme Court

10.1 Mr Ormerod joined the meeting at 11:30am to provide the Board with an overview of his organisation's recruitment processes.

11. Date of the Next Meeting

11.1 Monday 19 March 2018 in Thistle House, Edinburgh.

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