

SCOTTISH CIVIL JUSTICE COUNCIL

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

PARLIAMENT HOUSE, 4.15PM, TUESDAY 29 APRIL 2014

Members present: Lord Tyre (Chair)
Gavin MacColl, Advocate
Duncan Murray, Solicitor, SCJC Member
Craig McCorkindale, Scottish Court Service, Director for Civil Courts Reform
Marie-Louise Fox, Scottish Legal Aid Board

In attendance: Yvonne Anderson (Depute in Charge of the Offices of Court)
Chris Nicholson (Deputy Legal Secretary to the Lord President)
Neil Robertson (SCJC Secretariat)
Mandy Williams (Policy and Legislation Branch, Scottish Court Service)
Kenneth Htet-Khin (Head of the Rules Rewrite Drafting Team)
Steven D'Arcy (Head of Strategy and Governance, Judicial Office for Scotland)

Apologies: Stuart Duncan, Head of Delivery: Criminal Justice and Parole, Scottish Government
Cara Archibald, Criminal Justice IT Coordination Manager, Scottish Government
Lauren Wood, Citizens Advice Scotland, SCJC Member

Item 1: Introduction, welcome, apologies and private papers

1. The Chairman welcomed those present and noted apologies.
2. **The Committee agreed not to publish paper 4.6A.**

Item 2: Minutes of Previous Meeting

3. **The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.**

Item 3 Proceedings

Item 3.1 Records Management Plan [Papers 3.1 and 3.1A]

4. **Members noted the Records Management Plan [Paper 3.1A] and in particular the responsibilities of committee members outlined in paragraphs 29 and 30.**

Item 3.2 SCJC Update

5. The SCJC has met once since the ICT Committee meeting of 27 January 2014. Neil Robertson provided an update on the activities of the SCJC, outlining in particular:
 - the appointment of two advocate members to the SCJC (Andrew Stewart QC and Kenneth Forrest);
 - the Lord President and Sheriff Principal Stephen have given evidence to the Justice Committee on the Courts Reform (Sc) Bill;
 - the publication of Rules Rewrite Working Group's interim report; and
 - the SCJC's Annual Programme and Annual Report are being prepared.

Item 4: Future Business

Item 4.1 Making Justice Work overview [Oral]

Item 4.2 Scottish Court Service IT update [Oral]

Item 4.3 Justice Digital Strategy update [Oral]

6. Craig McCorkindale spoke to items 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, which were taken together. Mr McCorkindale provided an oral update on the Scottish Government's Making Justice Work (MJW) Programme, outlining the progress of the Courts Reform (Sc.) Bill through Parliament.
7. Mr McCorkindale provided an update on Scottish Court Service (SCS) IT initiatives, noting in particular that the SCS Corporate Plan, setting out SCS's strategic priorities until 2017, has been published. In particular Strategic Priority 6 (Digital Innovation) sets out the SCS's aim of placing digital innovation at the centre of its service delivery.
8. Thereafter Mr McCorkindale provided an update on the MJW Project 4: the Justice Digital Strategy noting that a draft of the Strategy had been prepared and that it was expected to be published towards the end of May 2014.

Item 4.4 Other ICT Committees and Projects [Papers 4.4 and 4.4A]

a. Landscape of ICT Committees [Paper 4.4]

9. The Committee considered a paper from Craig McCorkindale mapping out the relationship between the key justice bodies with an interest in ICT. **The Committee noted the paper.**
10. Members discussed in detail plans for the development of a new civil case management system by the SCS. The project is being driven by the SCS ICT Steering Group and the Enabling Technologies Project (MJW 1.2). **The Committee noted that the system will be developed in parallel with the Rules Rewrite Project and that the SCJC and its committees would be consulted on the user specification.**

b. Enabling Access to Justice Project [Paper 4.4A]

11. **Paper 4.4A** provides an outline of Making Justice Work Project 3: Enabling Access to Justice. **The Committee noted the paper and asked Marie-Louise Fox to provide an update on the availability of online information at a future meeting.**

Item 4.5 Barriers to ICT [Papers 4.5, 4.5A and 4.5B]

12. **Paper 4.5** outlines the barriers to ICT caused by the lack of Wi-Fi in the courts. The paper recommends “that thought should be given to a programme seeking to introduce Wi-Fi accessibility throughout Scotland’s Sheriff Courts.” Craig McCorkindale provided an oral update and advised that an objective in the SCS’s Corporate Plan is to roll out Wi-Fi to all courts within the next 3 years. **The Committee noted the paper and the SCS’s commitment to introducing Wi-Fi to all courts over the next 3 years.**
13. Members considered two papers produced by Citizens Advice Scotland outlining issues around digital exclusion in Scotland **[Papers 4.5A and 4.5B]**. **Members noted the papers and, in light of the social issues raised, invited the Access to Justice Committee to consider this further.**

Item 4.6 Rules Rewrite Working Group

a. Style Guide

14. The Rules Rewrite Working Group (RRWG) is preparing a “style guide” for new rules for inclusion in its final report. With a view to reporting to the RRWG, **Paper 4.6A** sought members’ views on how new rules might be drafted so to enable the use of technology and be more responsive to technological developments.

15. After discussion, the Committee invited the Secretariat to produce a draft report to the RRWG incorporating members' comments. The report to be circulated to members for comment by correspondence.

b. Implementation

16. **Paper 4.6B** provides the Committee with an overview of the implementation plans for the Courts Reform (Sc.) Bill and Rules Rewrite Project.

17. **The Committee noted:**

- a. the priorities identified for the rules rewrite and implementation of the Courts Reform (Sc) Bill; and
- b. that work is ongoing to develop a detailed implementation timetable and that an update will be provided to the ICT Committee at its next meeting.

Item 4.7 Visits to other courts agencies [Oral]

18. Neil Robertson informed the Committee that the Commercial Court (Rolls Building), London, the Scottish Legal Aid Board and the Office of the Public Guardian had been identified as visits for the purposes of comparative research.

19. **Members were invited to identify, by correspondence, any topics or questions they would wish to discuss at these visits and the Secretariat was asked to take forward arrangements.**

Item 5: A.O.C.B

20. No other was business raised.

Item 5 Date of next meeting

21. **The next meeting was scheduled for 24 June 4.15 p.m.**

Scottish Civil Justice Council Secretariat
April 2014