

**NICTS AGENCY BOARD MEETING: Monday 15 June 2026 at 3.30 pm (5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room)**

**Present:**

|                                |                                                       |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Glyn Capper                    | Chief Executive                                       |
| The Rt Hon Dame Siobhan Keegan | Lady Chief Justice                                    |
| Presiding District Judge Keown | Presiding District Judge (Magistrates' Courts)        |
| His Honour Judge Gilpin        | Recorder of Belfast                                   |
| Claire Duffy                   | President of Appeal Tribunals                         |
| Paddy Butler                   | Director Coroners Service and Legacy Inquests         |
| Karen Ward                     | Director Modernisation, Digital and Estates           |
| Catherine Rodgers              | Acting Director Tribunals and Corporate Services      |
| Debbie Maclam                  | Principal Private Secretary to the Lady Chief Justice |
| Elaine Higgins                 | Deputy Director of Finance                            |
| Vilma Patterson                | Independent Board Member                              |
| Albert Hamilton                | Independent Board Member                              |
| Katy Denkowski                 | Secretary                                             |
| Richard Morrow                 | Corporate Support & Engagement                        |

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1 Apologies:  
Elaine Topping Director Court Services

**2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting on 30 March were agreed.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 No declarations of interest were noted.

**Strategic Issues**

**4. Chief Executive's Update (Glyn Capper)**

- 4.1 Glyn updated the Board on the senior staff changes following the Grade 5 competition, with all Grade 5 posts filled substantively from July 2026.
- 4.2 Glyn noted the current financial situation, with a more detailed update to be provided in Elaine Higgins' SRC Update.

4.3 Support has been provided in a number of high-profile cases/inquests and. Glyn passed on his thanks to colleagues. He also noted work being done to look at landscape when the Criminal Bar Association's withdrawal of services concludes.

## **5. Head of Division Updates**

5.1 Paddy updated the Board on:

- The Noah Donahoe Inquest, which is expected to conclude in early July.
- CSNI death report volumes remain high with 2025-26 figures showing an increase in deaths reported, an increased number of PHs and 30 additional inquests being held during the reporting year.
- Planning for the Katie Simpson inquest.
- The legacy legislative picture remains unclear.
- Springhill inquest findings have been delivered.
- Ongoing work with stakeholders and partners.

5.2 Catherine updated the Board on:

- NIAO report on the Planning Appeals Commission was published on 20 May with five recommendations including a fundamental review.
- The Dalradian public inquiry has recommenced at a slower pace than anticipated.
- Truth Recovery Redress Scheme – accommodation is secured and IT solution awaiting DoJ accreditation. There will be consideration of legislation at the Executive Office Committee next Monday with plans to open the scheme by Autumn.
- The Security & Ancillary Services contract is out to tender.
- The Appeals Service - work continues on a solution to the issue of tribunal members being removed from UK Judiciary platform.
- Tribunal volumes are increasing, with work on training around adjournments and case management.
- UK Supreme Court judgment impacting on Deprivation of Liberty cases issued last week.
- There is to be an introduction of a Mediation Pilot in SENDIST.

5.3 Karen updated the Board on:

- Themis side - work continues on the Small Claims solution with 85% of development work complete.
- Commercial discussions are progressing with CGI, and a rectification plan is close to agreement.
- There is a focus on the go-live path and training.
- Tribunals phase 1 has been completed and tested and work on design and development on wider tribunals will be on a phased initiation plan.
- Discovery work continues on Civil business.
- On Estates, Karen noted the Estate Committee met last week and considered the Estate Strategy Year 3 plan, and noted challenges in light of no agreed budget.
- Limavady Courthouse Consultation, which is due to close in August.
- The Estate Committee also considered the Strategic Asset Review of Magherafelt Courthouse.

- Procurement for the Bishop Street Modernisation Project is at final stage, however cannot proceed to award contract until budget confirmed.
- Royal Courts of Justice Modernisation Project – detailed design progressing and decant proposals are underway.
- Preparatory work for Old Townhall procurement is with CPD with an early notice to market on procurement.

5.4 Debbie updated the Board on:

- Work on a number of Judicial Appointments.
- Planning for the opening of legal year.

The Board noted the various Business updates.

## **6. Performance Update (Glyn Capper)**

6.1 Glyn, referring to the paper provided, updated the Board on the Quarter 4 position.

6.2 At the end of the Quarter 4, nine Strategic Objectives published in the 2025/26 Business Plan were achieved, three were substantively achieved, four targets were partially achieved (related to estates projects and the people plan) while the remaining one was not achieved within the reporting year (Themis).

6.3 In relation to the 27 performance standards, only two standards were red and three amber (within 5% of being achieved). A commentary paper was provided. There was a discussion around the probate and OCP targets. Glyn highlighted the significant work undertaken to deliver the OCP target in 2025-26.

**Decision:** The Board noted the performance update.

**Action:** Volumes of postal applications and online applications for probate to be reviewed. Issue 2026-27 Quarter 1 figures to Board when available.

## **7. Strategic Resources Committee Update (Elaine Higgins)**

7.1 Elaine, referring to the paper provided, updated the Board on the current position.

7.2 Year-end position noted with an unringfenced RDEL underspend of just under £2m.

7.3 Final budget allocations for next year have still not been received, but preparatory work continues, the Board will be kept updated of any further developments.

7.4 Elaine noted the increase in civil fees of 5% from April 2026.

7.5 The fine default position was noted, with 62 cases remaining in this financial year.

7.6 She noted that NICSHR provided an update to SRC on resourcing/staffing position.

7.7 There was a discussion on the impact of no agreed budget on capital projects.

**Decision:** The Board noted the paper provided.

## **8. NICTS Risk Register Quarter 1: 2026-27 (Catherine Rodgers)**

- 8.1 Catherine, referring to the paper provided, highlighted the top scoring risks for the Agency for this quarter.
- 8.2 There are 11 risks on the register. In Quarter 1, 10 scores remained the same and one score increased (Risk 8 – Insufficient financial resource to modernise).
- 8.3 There was a deep dive into two risks at the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) on 14 May (Risk 1a - Workforce skill, knowledge and organisational capacity and 1b – Operating with insufficient staffing levels), with a further deep dive at ARAC on 4 June (Risk 5 – Increased external demand and Risk 7 – Insufficient budget allocation).
- 8.4 There was a discussion around the red risks on the register. Glyn noted the process for escalation of risks Departmental level. He assured the Committee that the Departmental Board and Minister were aware of the NICTS financial position and noted the financial position facing the wider Department.

**Decision:** The Board noted the Risk Register and update provided.

## **9a. Quarterly ARAC Update (Vilma Patterson)**

- 9a.1 Vilma, referring to the paper provided, updated the Board on the work of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at the meetings on 14 May and 4 June 2026, the Annual Report and Accounts were considered, and the Committee was content for these to be presented to Agency Board for consideration.
- 9a.2 Vilma, referring to the deep dive sessions on the Risk Register, noted the ARAC was content with how the Agency was managing these risks.

**Decision:** The Board noted the paper provided.

## **9b. Chair's Annual Report (Vilma Patterson)**

- 9b.1 The Board noted the report.

## **10. Items for discussion: Draft 2025-26 Annual Report and Accounts (Elaine Higgins)**

- 10.1 Elaine, referring to the paper and draft accounts provided, updated the Board on the Annual Report and Accounts for 2025-26.
- 10.2 The Accounts have been reviewed by ARAC, and the audit is almost complete with only one audit recommendation to date.
- 10.3 Subject to no further amendments the Board was asked to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for signing by the Accounting Officer with the aim to lay in the Assembly by 26 June 2026.

10.4 Glyn noted his thanks to the team on all the work done on the Annual Report and Accounts this year.

**Decision:** The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts for signing.

#### **11. Items to note 2025-26 Gifts and Hospitality Register (Catherine Rodgers)**

11.1 The Board noted the Register with no further comment.

#### **12. 2025-26 Annual Complaints Report (Catherine Rodgers)**

12.1 Glyn noted the level of complaints in comparison to the amount of business dealt with by NICTS.

12.2 It was noted that the Compliments register should be presented in conjunction with this to highlight the positive feedback received by the Agency.

12.3 The Board noted the Report.

#### **13. Health & Safety Compliance Report (Karen Ward)**

13.1 The Board noted high level of compliance, and thanked operational colleagues.

13.2 The Board noted the Register with no further comment.

#### **14. Internal Audit Reports**

14.1 Internal Audit Review of Operation of Tribunals – noted.

14.2 Internal Audit Review of NICTS Courts Funds – noted.

#### **15. AOB**

15.1 The Board noted their thanks to Glyn for all his work as Chair of the Board for the last five years.

15.2 No other business was raised.

#### **16. Key Messages**

16.1 Key messages from the meeting to be shared with staff:

- Budget position and the importance of managing expenditure in 2026-27.
- Acknowledging the work of staff as reflected in the end-year performance figures.

Next meeting – 5 October 2026.

**Actions:**

| <b>Date of Meeting</b> | <b>Action</b>                                                                     | <b>Owner</b>   | <b>Status</b> |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 15 June 2026           | Volumes of postal application and online applications for probate to be reviewed. | Elaine Topping | complete      |
| 15 June 2026           | Issue 2026-27 Quarter 1 figures to Board when available.                          | Secretariat    | complete      |