

THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD
MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD HELD AT 12.10PM
ON MONDAY 27 JULY 2009 AT 44 DRUMSHEUGH GARDENS, EDINBURGH

Present: Iain Robertson, Chairman
Joseph Hughes
David Nicol
Graham Bell QC
Kenneth Ross
Les Campbell

In attendance: Lindsay Montgomery, Chief Executive
Colin Lancaster, Head of Policy and Development
Hazel Thoms, Project Manager, Policy and Development
Andrew McIntosh, Corporate Support Manager, Chief Executive's Office
Marie-Louise Fox, Legal and Policy Support to the Chief Executive
Stuart Foster, Board Administrator

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Paul McBride QC, Susan McPhee, Elaine Rosie, Ellen Morton, Denise Loney, Graham Watson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests not previously registered in the Register of Board Members' Interests were declared.

3. GRANT FUNDING ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

As part of the broad programme of work the Board was taking forward on behalf of the Scottish Government to help meet additional legal needs resulting from the economic downturn, applications had been invited from organisations under the Board's grant funding powers to join the grant funding programme.

The Board had received 53 applications, with one subsequently withdrawn. The total amount bid for by applicants was £6.6 million. A number of organisations had submitted multiple applications covering different types of service or various geographic areas. The Board had been successful in attracting bids which covered all the top priority geographic areas, and that related to the top priority legal issues of repossession and housing debt. The proposed programme included 16 projects, with grants ranging from £54,000 to £250,000 over an 18-month period.

Assessment

Members considered a paper which set out the process used to assess applications, gave an overview of the submissions received and recommended a programme of projects to be taken forward.

The assessment process involved use of a robust set of criteria and scoring system. The applications for funding had each been assessed on their own merits and on the basis of how they

fitted into a national programme which would, within budget, achieve the aims agreed with ministers.

Consideration and Discussion

On behalf of members, the Chairman expressed appreciation for the huge effort made by Board staff in successfully progressing the grant funding programme to such an advanced stage in the extremely short timescale available.

Members considered that the general approach to devising the programme was very robust and noted that the proposals had been particularly well received at the consultative stage.

In response to questions from members, it was confirmed that coverage of geographical areas for which no direct applications had been made would be discussed with the successful projects. Where there was no new provision, the Part V network would have a role to play. Measures of success / deliverables would form part of the contracts entered into with successful projects.

Decision

After discussion, it was AGREED:

- to approve the programme as proposed and authorise officials to proceed to make offers of grant to the projects recommended, receive detailed budget information and negotiate terms and conditions and report back on the outcome of this process as soon as possible, so that the successful projects could start to deliver services;
- a communications strategy be devised to maintain constructive links with organisations with valuable contributions to make to the overall initiative;
- consideration be given to appropriate means of “badging” the projects to reflect the Board’s involvement.

ACTION: HT/CL

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 31 August 2009

The meeting ended at 1.35 pm.