Report No: **SLAB/2019/06**

Agenda Item: **12**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 11 February 2019 |
| **Report Title** | Business Plan Update |
| **Report Category** | For Information |
| **Issue status:** | Business from a project |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Written by:** | Corporate Support Manager |
| **Director responsible:** | Director of Strategic Development |
| **Presented by:** | Corporate Support Manager |
| **Contact details:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Delivery of Strategic Objectives** | |
| Select the Strategic Objective(s) relevant to the issues | 1. to deliver improvements to legal aid processes that increase efficiency and improve the experience of system users and customers.  2. To advise Scottish Ministers on strategic development of legal assistance and its contribution to Scotland in which rights are supported and disputes are resolved fairly and swiftly  3. to ensure that our organisation has the culture and capability to be responsive to our customers, the justice system and developments in legal and advice sectors.  4. to build and maintain effective and collaborative relationships with the legal and advice sector and our public sector partners as we seek to achieve our purpose and contribute to wider Scottish Government aims. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Link to Board or Committee Remit** |
| The Board formally approves SLAB’s annual business plan and is responsible for overseeing progress against its delivery. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Publication of the Paper** |
| The Board has previously agreed that papers of this nature should be published as a matter of course. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Executive Summary** |
| The majority of projects sit at an amber status. In most cases this is driven by issues of complexity or matters outwith our control, rather than serious concerns around our ability to deliver the project.  Key challenges remain in a number of areas. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Previous Consideration** | |
| **Meeting** | **Detail** |
| Board – November 2018 | The Board considered progress against the business plan up to the end of October 2018.  Members noted the position. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Report** |

**MONITORING OF THE PLAN**

1. The colours of projects are interpreted as follows:

* **Green** = The project is performing to plan and all aspects of time, cost and quality are within tolerances.
* **Amber** = Issues exist which are having a negative effect on project performance but these can be dealt with by the project manager or project delivery team. Action is being taken to resolve the problem or monitor the situation. Any deviation from plan remains within tolerance levels.
* **Red** = There are significant issues with the project which require corrective action to meet the project’s objectives. The issue cannot be handled solely by the project manager or project team. One or more aspects of project viability — time, cost, scope — exceed tolerances.
* **Grey** = Project closed.

1. The Business Plan is discussed by the Executive Team collectively on a monthly basis alongside the corporate risk register.

**BUSINESS PLAN REPORT**

1. The attached report gives members a snapshot on progress against projects alongside key delivery milestones. Members of the Board or its Committees receive more detailed papers on the individual projects as the financial year progresses. For example, this meeting sees a presentation to members on the development of the performance management project.
2. The majority of projects sit at an amber status. In most cases this is driven by issues of complexity or matters outwith our control, rather than serious concerns around our ability to deliver the project. Likewise, as the bulk of the plan is activity that will necessarily carry over into 2019-20, an amber status at this time of the financial year should not necessarily cause alarm.
3. Key challenges are no doubt apparent in a number of areas. The legal aid review remains a sensitive project and resource intensive for a small number of key staff. This project is a significant barometer for our corporate risk in respect of influencing Government. As we discussed with the Audit Committee on 28 January, we have just increased the likelihood of this risk materialising.
4. The Scottish Government’s proposal for a 3% rise in legal aid fees had seen both the fee reform and online accounts projects move to a red status. This was due to the need for clarity on the exact application of the fees and our decision to deploy system changes for the fees and the final tranche of online accounts at the same time. Fortunately, we have now resolved these issues which means the fee changes can be deployed (but not implemented) by the end of March which will also mark the conclusion of the key outputs in the log running accounts project.
5. Although the project that is monitoring the delivery of police station advice is at green, we are making the Board aware that the scope of the project is necessarily widening in order to deal with recent action from solicitors in Edinburgh on the Justice of the Peace court and extradition duty plans. The Edinburgh Bar Association has also advised that it is now considering its position on the custody court duty plan. Withdrawals from these plans would present a much greater challenge due to the large case numbers involved and the Scottish Government has asked us to carry out a risk assessment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Governance Links** |
| 1 | Finance and Resources  Costs and resources are considered at a project level as part of the project board governance arrangements. |
| 2 | Risk  The Executive Team considers progress against the business plan and the corporate risk register simultaneously. A number of the business plan projects are key to our mitigation of corporate risks or are contributing factors to changes in our risk environment. |
| 3 | Legal and Compliance  N/A |
| 4 | Performance  Our performance against the business plan is something that we are considering how best to measure as part of the next phase of the performance management framework. |
| 5 | Equalities Impact  Each project on the business plan considers equalities impacts as appropriate and this has oversight at the Executive Team. |
| 6 | Privacy Impact and Data Protection  N/A |
| 7 | Communications and Engagement  The Board has agreed that progress against our business plan should be transparent and information in this respect is now published. Staff are updated on progress following the Board. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Conclusion and next steps** |
| We will report to the Board on the end year position in May. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Appendices/Further Reading** |
| Summary of progress against business plan projects 2018-19. |