

**THE SCOTTISH LEGAL AID BOARD**

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY  
STRATEGY**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Strategic planning is an essential component of delivering effective Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems. Using the Board's Corporate Plan and the associated Vision Statement, this ICT strategy sets out to consider the current and future direction of the Scottish Legal Aid Board, and in the context of an overarching Scottish Executive "21<sup>st</sup> Century Government" framework, considers how the ICT infrastructure can be improved over the period to April 2006 to support the pursuit of the Board's strategic objectives effectively.

- the delivery and expansion of web-based and web-delivered services, embodied in the Board's strategic objectives effectively.
- the integration of case management from application, through approval processes, accounts payment to management of principal sums and recovery of any debt;
- the streamlining of the technological base both to facilitate integration and to ensure best value in delivery of ICT services.

The difference between the last ICT strategy and this will be one of pace – driven both the Board's ambitious aims to transform business processes and communications pathways, to which are attached ambitious financial and staffing targets; and by the government's "Modernising Government" commitment, to provide access to all public services online by the end of 2005.

### Governance

The ownership of the strategy rests with the executive team and is fully endorsed by the Board. To assist the executive team and the Board in the monitoring of the implementation of the ICT strategy, it is proposed that, in addition to the existing Project Management structures and the associated executive team monitoring, an ICT steering group be established. Chaired by the Chief Executive, membership would include the executive team, the Head of IS and a nominee from the Board. The group would meet twice each year. In relation to the suite of projects, such a group could report to the Board upon progress, expenditure, the achievement of business benefits and the management of competing priorities and resources. In addition such a group could report more generally on the fulfilment of the ICT strategy; and advise upon revisions to the ICT strategy or components thereof, in light of any changes to the Board's Corporate Plan.

- New system and systems upgrades for:
  - HR and Payroll
  - Office Software and Network Infrastructure
  - Treasury's PSUSMs system
  - Telecommunications system
  - Criminal/civil legal assistance registers;

and substantial progress towards implementation of:

- a Legal Aid Online system;

- an integrated case management system through development, initially, of a new civil applications system and principal sums system;
- a document scanning and indexing system; and
- an improved website

### **The plan for delivery**

In the context of the gaps in our ICT provision, the strategy goes on to set out a plan for delivery, consistent with the key themes relating to the delivery and expansion of Legal Aid Online and an integrated case management system, coupled with the streamlining of the technological base.

Both to achieve our objectives of system integration and to meet the targets associated with Modernising Government, our highest priorities are the completion of the **Civil and Criminal Application system re-writes**, and the business analysis of these two application and account types for the next stage of **Legal Aid Online**. The time-critical nature of the Modernising Government target means that along with the provision of on-line transactional services for the profession, we will need to add to our highest priorities, the **delivery of all other services online**. For this reason, the re-development of our website to achieve these ends will become an integral part of our Legal Aid Online project.

The impending introduction of quality assurance for civil legal assistance means that we must, in early course, fulfil the need for a **Compliance-Assurance Management System**. This is a system that as well as meeting our own needs for the management of the audit of practitioners on our criminal and civil registers, will meet our obligation, under the reform of civil legal aid, to provide the Law Society with a system to manage their quality assurance process.

Prime among our next tier of priorities is the continued development of the **Document and Content Management project**. This system will provide significant business benefits in terms of storage, retrieval and management of workflow; as well as processing efficiencies and staff savings through the introduction of intelligent scanning of forms.

The replacement of the **Debt Manager** system, through the implementation of the Accounts Receivable module in *Oracle Financials*, will provide a more integrated and robust system for the management of monies owed to the Board. Its introduction is also consistent with the objective of converging technologies to improve our utilisation of I.S. resources.

To reap the full benefits of our integrated administrative systems we need to continue to develop both the FAMS system and our **management information** capabilities, through the wider and more systematic use of the *Oracle Discoverer* tool. The further development of **FAMS** will address the better utilisation of inherent functionality, hitherto unused elements of the purchasing and payments modules; and the enhancement of data capture to better inform trends analysis and decision-making. The extension of management information capabilities, to a certain extent, will form a small element in the bigger **Knowledge Management project** that will be the subject

of comprehensive business case during 2004-05. This project will, at the strategic level, enable the Board to analyse and plan its business in terms of the knowledge it currently has and the knowledge it needs for future business processes. At the tactical level we will be concerned with identifying and formalising existing knowledge, acquiring new knowledge for future use, archiving it in organisational memories and creating systems that enable effective and efficient application of the knowledge within the organisation. At the operational level we will fulfil a need in everyday practice by professional personnel who need access to the right knowledge, at the right time, in the right location.

Whilst remaining key elements of an overall programme, our lowest priorities (particularly where there is competition for I.S. resources) are the further development of the **telephone system**, the introduction of **video conferencing** and the development of an **intranet**.

### **The next steps**

Notwithstanding developments arising out of the *Strategic Review of Legal Aid*, the main developments on the horizon are those in support of the review of Advice and Assistance and of Criminal Legal Aid. The Board's vision statement signals two areas that may require ICT investment, i.e. partnership working and home working. In both cases it is likely that the developments will be based on the web and internet technologies that underpin Legal Aid Online.

### **Resources**

The tables on pages 40 and 43 set out the timetable for delivery and the consumption of resources.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this is a strategy that:

- is aligned to the Board's corporate plan objectives;
- is based upon the delivery and expansion of Legal Aid Online and an integrated case management system, coupled with the streamlining of the technological base; and
- aligns the pace of delivery to both the Board's ambitious aims to transform business processes and communications pathways, to which are attached ambitious financial and staffing targets; and by the government's "Modernising Government" commitment, to provide access to all public services online by the end of 2005.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Strategic planning is an essential component of delivering cost effective ICT systems. The planning process must consider the current and future direction of the organisation and how the ICT infrastructure can support it effectively. The ownership of the strategy must rest with the executive team and must be fully endorsed by the Board.

This ICT strategy looks at the period until 2006 driven by the key business elements:

- Corporate Plan (2003-2006)
- The Board's Vision Statement
- The Scottish Executive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government framework
- To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the infrastructure that supports the administration of legal aid in Scotland.

### **1.1 Why have an ICT strategy?**

A clearly defined ICT strategy is essential to ensure that the needs of the business and its key stakeholders are met by the ICT infrastructure.

Some of the major consequences of not having an established ICT strategy are:

- increased risk of project failure due to lack of understanding of the overall business strategy;
- reactive, rather than proactive, technology decisions leading to inefficient support systems;
- failure to provide the best and most appropriate systems and technology to deliver best value;
- inconsistent system purchases;
- additional costs as part of unplanned purchases;
- limited participation in I.S. developments by key stakeholders; and
- higher implementation costs.

Four years ago, the Board had little in the way of a coherent infrastructure strategy: adding to the network as necessary and implementing projects in isolation. This led to an infrastructure environment with multiple hardware and software suppliers and escalating internal and external support costs. With the challenges of Legal Aid Online and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government, continuing in this manner would not have allowed the Board to make best use of future technologies. The ICT strategy seeks to address this issue.

The Board approved the previous ICT Strategy in August 2000. The strategy was a key component of delivering the objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan (2000-2003). The key focus of the strategy at the time was to replace all legacy (i.e. old) systems.

Since that previous strategy was published the Board established a business case, “The Electronic Delivery of Legal Aid”, and secured funding from the Modernising Government Fund and SEJD to implement an eBusiness solution, now known as Legal Aid Online.

A review of the previous strategy in October 2002 looked at the progress of the strategy and made a recommendation to develop an integrated case management system to support Legal Aid Online, thus making internal processes more efficient. In addition, recognising the impending obsolescence of certain elements of computer hardware and associated software, it made recommendation about improvements and streamlining of the technical infrastructure.

## 1.2 Inputs to the ICT strategy

The key inputs into the ICT strategy are:

- **The Board’s Vision Statement** – This statement sets out the key elements of the Board’s vision for where it hopes to be in March 2006, the end of corporate planning period. This will be a key influence in the formulation of the ICT strategy.
- **Corporate Plan** – The key strategic business document for the Board is the main driver for the direction of the ICT strategy. The strategy must assess the objectives of the Corporate Plan to ensure that it meets the needs of the business.
- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Government** – All services must be available electronically by the end of 2005. The strategy will address this requirement particularly through the current Legal Aid Online project and possible strategic partnerships, particularly with other Justice bodies.
- **Technologies** – The Board should be aware of current and emerging technologies. This will ensure that the Board will not develop systems that have a short shelf life but rather will be flexible and capable of development to meet future business needs.
- **Current ICT position** – The current ICT position must be assessed in relation to the overall business objectives. A gap analysis can then be undertaken to provide a view of what still needs to be achieved.
- **Business Processes** – The continued improvement and documentation of business processes should continue to ensure that systems are not built for existing inefficient business process but rather that the business and technological processes are improved side by side.

## 2. BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Legal Aid Online and integrated case management

The delivery and expansion of Legal Aid Online and an integrated case management system are the core ICT objectives of the Board at present. This is driven mainly by the Board's strategic objectives of achieving consistent, timely and sound decision making at all stages of an application for legal assistance and at all stages of paying accounts; effective financial management; and improving the effectiveness of the delivery of our service while achieving a reasonable balance between cost and quality. The vision is one where the electronic system will replace the paper system for the majority of business transactions. This system will be controlled by the Board's case management system.

In terms of technological objectives, the key aim remains the streamlining of the technical infrastructure base with recognised and respected suppliers, hence the concentration of technology around *HP*, *Novell* and *Oracle*. The benefits of such an approach are more economic, efficient and effective procurement and use of hardware, software and staff, as well as giving confidence that the systems chosen are flexible enough to deal with future developments.

Looking forward, these key objectives will remain the primary ICT strategic drivers. However, in order to meet targets associated with delivery of online access and the ambitious financial targets associated with transformation of our business process and reduction in staff numbers, the pace of delivery will have to increase.

### 2.2 Corporate plan (2003-2006) and Vision Statement

The corporate plan, along with the Board's Vision Statement, highlight some key areas that the ICT strategy must take into consideration.

- **Community legal services** – This could have implications in terms of access to the Board's systems and the range of organisations that we may have to deal with.
- **Review of Civil Advice and Assistance** – Key developments are likely for the A&A application system including the Legal Aid Online system.
- **Review of Criminal Legal Assistance** – Major development of the Criminal systems could emerge as a result of Lord Bonomy's review of the High Court and Sheriff Principal McInnes' review of the Sheriff court
- **Trend analysis and fund forecasting**– Both developing improved fund forecasting and assisting in the development of a Knowledge Management system.
- **Investigations** – Improving our current management information to assist in the checks and verification exercises to minimise abuse of legal aid.
- **Better integration of systems** with others involved in the justice system – As part of the Legal Aid Online system the Board has proactively attempted to engage others in discussion on integration. In reality this is most likely to

occur once each body has achieved their own targets as part of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government.

### 2.3 21st Century Government

The Modernising Government framework requires that all government services are available electronically by the end of 2005.

The current Legal Aid Online project will provide this for applications, increases and accounts for all legal aid types. Legal practitioners will have direct access to our systems and therefore system developments and enhancements must be more tightly controlled. The implementation of security of business processes and mounted technology will result in a culture change for the Board's security policy staff procedures. Staff must be adequately equipped from the key policy sites, promptly and in accordance with the British standard for such systems where electronic technology is a relatively new concept. The implementation of Legal Aid Online and electronic case management must be phased appropriately to ensure that staff can meet the demands of the system.

Our next step to meet the Modernising Government requirements is to make all of our services available electronically, including those to assisted persons, opponents, suppliers and the wider general public. Consistent with the 2005 target, the Legal Aid Online project, which hitherto covered only legal aid applications, increases and accounts, has been broadened to ensure that the appropriate services provided by the Board's Finance, Treasury, Purchasing, HR, Communications, Audit and Facilities departments are all made available online.

### 2.4 Strategic Review

The outcomes of the strategic review may signal changes in the Board's strategy and priorities. Any such changes may have associated consequences for the Board's ICT needs. We will need to have regard to the impact of such consequences on both the ICT strategy and on our plans for delivery.

### 2.5 Communications Strategy

It is important to ensure that the ICT strategy is congruent with the Board's communications strategy. Whilst there are obvious overlaps, relating mainly to the delivery of web-based services, it is important that the ICT strategy support the entire communications strategy in the employment of technology to achieve effective communication between the Board and its stakeholders.

### 2.6 Improving the support infrastructure

The I.S. department within the Board has been proactive in the last year to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the infrastructure that supports the business of the Board. The main focus has been to ensure that the users of the delivered systems have input into the development of these systems and are therefore confident to take ownership of these systems.

- Oracle user group – Key managers attend the Board's monthly Oracle user group meeting to discuss and prioritise work requests for the development of current systems. This has been very effective in giving managers an insight

into the I.T. needs of other operational areas. It also gives staff within I.S. a clear direction on priorities.

- **Programme management** – A board of five key managers has been set up to discuss the programme of projects that involve systems. The board has been actively seeking to improve the overall programme management by highlighting interdependencies, conflicts and risks.
- **Change management** – The chief principal of change management is to ensure that users are ready and confident to take ownership of systems. The Board uses the *PRINCE2* Project Management methodology as the framework for delivering projects. A recent paper to the executive team highlighted a gap in the process of change management and there is an on-going review to provide a revised change management framework.

## 2.7 Improving project management and governance

The Board uses the *PRINCE2* project management methodology to provide a coherent management structure for all projects.

*PRINCE*, which stands for Projects in Controlled Environments, is a project management method covering the organisation, management and control of projects. *PRINCE* was first developed by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency (CCTA), now part of the Office of Government Commerce (OGC), in 1989 as a UK Government standard for IT project management.

Since its introduction, *PRINCE* has become widely used in both the public and private sectors and is now the UK's de facto standard for project management. *PRINCE2* is a structured method providing organisations with a standard approach to the management of projects. The method embodies proven and established best practice in project management. It is widely recognised and understood, and so provides a common language for all participants in the project.

*PRINCE2* provides benefits to the organisation, as well as the managers and directors of the project, through the controllable use of resources and the ability to manage business and project risk more effectively. *PRINCE2* enables projects to have:

- A controlled and organised start, middle and end;
- Regular reviews of progress against plan and against the Business Case;
- Flexible decision points;
- Automatic management control of any deviations from the plan;
- The involvement of management and stakeholders at the right time and place during the project;
- Good communication channels between the project, project management, and the rest of the organisation.

Whilst oversight of the Board's ICT projects is currently achieved, consistent with the *PRINCE2*, through "Project Board's"; and additionally in the case of Legal Aid Online through a "Corporate Board"; the extent of the current and planned

programme of ICT development and expenditure point towards an overarching structure of governance. To this end, it is proposed that, in addition to the existing Project Management structures, an ICT steering group be established, chaired by the Chief Executive, and whose membership would also include:

- the Directors of Corporate Services & Accounts, Legal Services and Audit & Compliance;
- the Head of IS; and
- a nominated Board member.

The remit of such a group, which would meet twice each year, and report to the Board, should include:

- monitoring progress of all ICT projects, through reports received from the Project Boards;
- within the context of delegated authority limits, advising the Board on business plans for new projects;
- monitoring of expenditure, against business plans, on ICT projects;
- review of achievement of business benefits in ICT projects;
- advising the Board, on the basis of reports received from the Programme Management Team, on the management of competing priorities and resources;
- reporting progress to the Board, on the fulfilment of the ICT strategy; and
- advising the Board on revisions to the ICT strategy, or components thereof, in light of any changes to the Board's Corporate Plan.

## **2.8 Reviewing the technical infrastructure**

At the time of the review of the previous ICT strategy, in October 2002, the impending redundancy of the HP3000 system, on which many of the Board's legacy systems operated, offered the Board the opportunity to review and rationalise its technical infrastructure, resulting in a concentration on *Oracle* based applications, running on Unix based *HP* hardware, coupled with *Novell* networking.

It is, of course incumbent upon us to keep this structure under review, to satisfy ourselves that it continues to most effectively support our business processes, and that it represents the lowest possible 'total cost of ownership' (TCO).

In conducting such a review, we will have to take account of the growing trend of organisations towards 'open source computing' where users of the software have access to the source code and can modify it, and share the changes with other people, for which there seems to be some evidence of reduced costs of ownership, mainly associated, with lower hardware and software licensing costs.

### **3. CURRENT POSITION**

It is useful to establish the current position, particularly in the context of the progress achieved since the publication of the previous strategy

The Board approved the previous ICT Strategy in August 2000. At that time the key focus was the replacement of legacy systems, and the key outcomes related to:

- business process development and documentation
- new financial system
- management information system
- systems upgrades
- e-commerce
- case management
- document scanning and indexing
- decision support database

The review of the ICT strategy in October 2002, as well as documenting the progress towards the achievement of the developments above, recognised the emerging importance of the use of the internet, the electronic delivery of services to practitioners, and the dependence of that upon the integration of information on cases (from application through to payment of accounts and collection of contributions and expenses) in a case management system. Indeed it was in that intervening period that the Board established its business case, “The Electronic Delivery of Legal Aid”, and secured funding from the Modernising Government Fund and SEJD to implement an E-Business solution, now known as Legal Aid Online.

Progress on these plans can be recorded as follows:

#### **3.1 Business process development and documentation**

The previous ICT Strategy highlighted a weakness in the documentation surrounding the business processes for the operational areas within the Board. With the establishment of a dedicated business unit within I.S., the Board has now fully documented business processes for all operational areas. The recently appointed Business Process Reviewer will have the ability to utilise these when breaking processes down into individual tasks. This documented process allows for greater control in terms of impact analysis for future systems developments and therefore it is critical that this documentation receives the approval of the operational areas, and that it is kept up to date, reflecting changes in procedures, processes and systems.

#### **3.2 New Financial System (FAMS) and Management Information**

As recommended in the previous ICT Strategy, this system was successfully redeveloped into *Oracle Financials* from the old *AR&T* and *HPFA* systems. The process was complete in April 2001 but the system was upgraded in May 2002 to fully enable it for Legal Aid Online. The move to *Oracle* means that there is real integration between the operational accounts area and the payment processing area of the Finance department and the start of a linkage to the applications system through

*Oracle Projects* functionality. This represents a solid foundation upon which further improvement will be based, facilitating more extensive use of the available built-in features, and extended data capture to meet changing business needs.

There is much improved and accurate reporting in these areas and this has provided the foundation for a genuine Management Information System (MIS) within the Board. The benefits of this management information are now being seen in, for example, the payments area for the Legal Aid Fund where there is now regular and detailed reporting on trends in legal aid; and in the reporting that underlies the measurement, reporting and monitoring of performance in operational areas.

This has been a key implementation for the Board. The success of the project has given the Board confidence in the delivery of projects in partnership with the private sector. It has also confirmed that value of effective business analysis and review of business processes before developing new or changing existing systems.

### **3.3 Systems upgrades:**

#### **3.3.1 *HR and payroll***

The HR/Payroll systems have been redeveloped into Oracle as recommended by the previous ICT Strategy. The most valuable aspect to emerge from the project is that the Board now has its payroll system fully documented and the system is now 80%-90% automated.

#### **3.3.2 *Office software***

For the foreseeable future the Board will operate Microsoft Office software. A recent review of Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft Office licences led the Board to move to the more flexible open licence agreement. Previously the Board bought a licence that came as part of a purchased PC. This licence was not transferable and so when the PC was replaced the licence also had to be replaced. The licence also gave no provision for upgrades. The open licence under GCAT (the online government catalogue for procurement and contracting for IT and telecommunications products and associated services) provides a licence detached from the PC. This will save the Board money in the long term when we replace PCs without having to repurchase a licence. Under this agreement the Board can also upgrade the licences, giving us far greater control. This has allowed the Board to replace or upgrade approximately 150 PCs to ensure that staff can work efficiently.

#### **3.3.3 *Network infrastructure***

Projects to upgrade the network, desktop PC and e-mail infrastructure to prepare for Legal Aid Online were completed in September 2002. There has been a deliberate move to streamline the hardware, operating systems and software technologies used within the Board. The Board has a very small I.S. Department and to avoid staff working in a single task environment and to allow them to cross train and cover for each more effectively, proliferation of other technology streams must be minimised. As well as streamlining the management of staff training, this reduces the risks associated with staff turnover, since cross training helps to ensure adequate cover across all areas.

The streamlining of the hardware and software technologies has also led to significant savings in running costs. These savings have offset the costs of introducing new technologies. The I.S. Department has also taken the bulk of the PC maintenance in-house, making significant savings in doing so.

### **3.3.4 Treasury**

The new Principal Sums system was implemented in November 2003. The system has been developed and integrated with FAMS on Oracle Financials. The benefits of this system were seen at the end of the financial year during the reconciliation processes.

Plans to replace the exiting *Debt Manager* system have yet to be realised. It is hoped that implementation of the successor system will happen by December 2004.

### **3.3.5 Telecommunications**

A new telephone system has been installed providing voicemail, call logging and monitoring and direct dial facilities. The Board must now investigate the development of this technology in tandem with Legal Aid Online and with the Document and Content Management system.

### **3.3.6 Criminal/civil legal assistance registers**

These systems have been developed in Oracle to fully integrate with FAMS and the Board case management system.

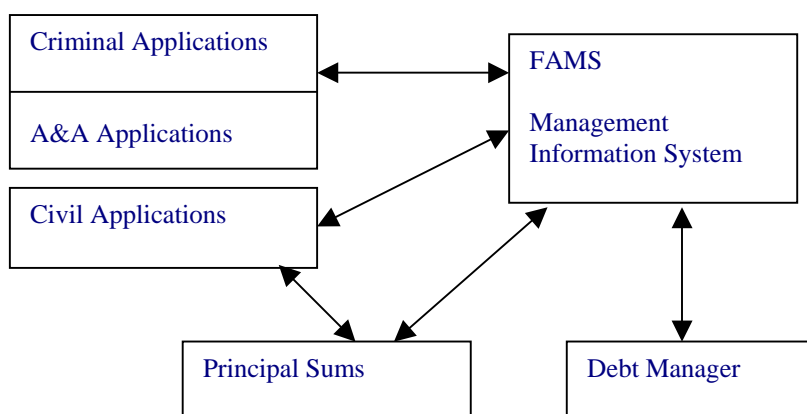
## **3.4 E-commerce**

In implementing the first phase of Legal Aid Online (for Advice and Assistance), the Board is now actively engaged in testing with firms around Scotland. Live piloting of transactions is imminent and the Board expect to rollout the Legal Aid Online at the end of June 2004. The success of this project will rest not only on sound technical development, but also on appropriate communication and marketing of the concept.

## **3.5 Case management**

The shift in emphasis toward the integration of case management across our operational areas means that case management can no longer be considered in the context of Civil or Criminal Applications systems alone. Developments in Financial and Treasury systems will be coupled with the applications systems and will mean the end of disparate systems linked together via interfaces, with data held in more than one data store and the risk of data on one system being updated on one system and not on the other

The diagram below illustrates how the systems are linked via high maintenance program interfaces to transfer data between them. Each arrowed line represents where data is moved between two or more systems:



### 3.5.1 *Civil applications re-write*

The Civil applications system is being re-written to support the civil legal aid reform and to pave the way for the development of Legal Aid Online for that area. The system is being developed using *Oracle* to allow full integration with the FAMS system and, therefore, achieving further progress towards an integrated case management system. The implementation will have a positive benefit for the new Principal Sums system, in that information relating to the client, opponent, objector, etc will be available from the case management system, avoiding duplication of data input and storage.

The stage reporting and civil legal aid assistance elements have already been implemented and the remainder of the system is due to be implemented in July 2004.

### 3.5.2 *Criminal applications re-write*

The Criminal Applications re-write is also being redeveloped for Legal Aid Online using *Oracle*. Once this is complete, all of the Board's applications processing will be running on *Oracle*.

The development phase of this project is underway. Testing and training will see the project implemented around the end of 2004.

## 3.6 Document Scanning and Indexing

The Board has partnered with *170 Systems Inc.* to provide a document and content management system to compliment our move toward a case management system. The project objective is to have the Board systems fully electronic and eradicate the use of paper for internal processing. All correspondence will be scanned and routed electronically to the relevant operational area within the Board. Case documentation will then be linked to the case record and be viewable on screen when the case is being assessed.

The project has started with civil applications and is currently on target to provide a solution by the end of August 2004. Subsequent phases will address A&A, Criminal applications, Finance and Accounts Assessment

### **3.7 Website**

The main objective for this redevelopment is to communicate effectively with applicants, opponents, their advisors and other stakeholders in a clear, concise, timely, informative and proactive manner.

The first phase of the redevelopment of the Board's website was implemented in December 2003. The initial phase of redevelopment saw the merging of the public website with the professional site (SLABpro), improvements in navigation and the introduction of a new consistent identity. External feedback on the revised website has been very positive.

The next phase will deliver an enhancement of services, including a new Legal Aid Handbook and facilities, including mapping, to help potential applicants to locate a solicitor registered to provide legal aid and assistance. This phase will also deliver improved accessibility for disabled use, and further improvements in the site's structure and navigation.

The subsequent phase will centre on ensuring compliance with the Modernising Government target of providing all government services online by the end of 2005. An inventory of such services is being compiled and an implementation plan is being developed to achieve this end on target.

Finally, in pursuit of our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, we will aim to deliver as much of the information as possible identified in our Publications Schedule, electronically.

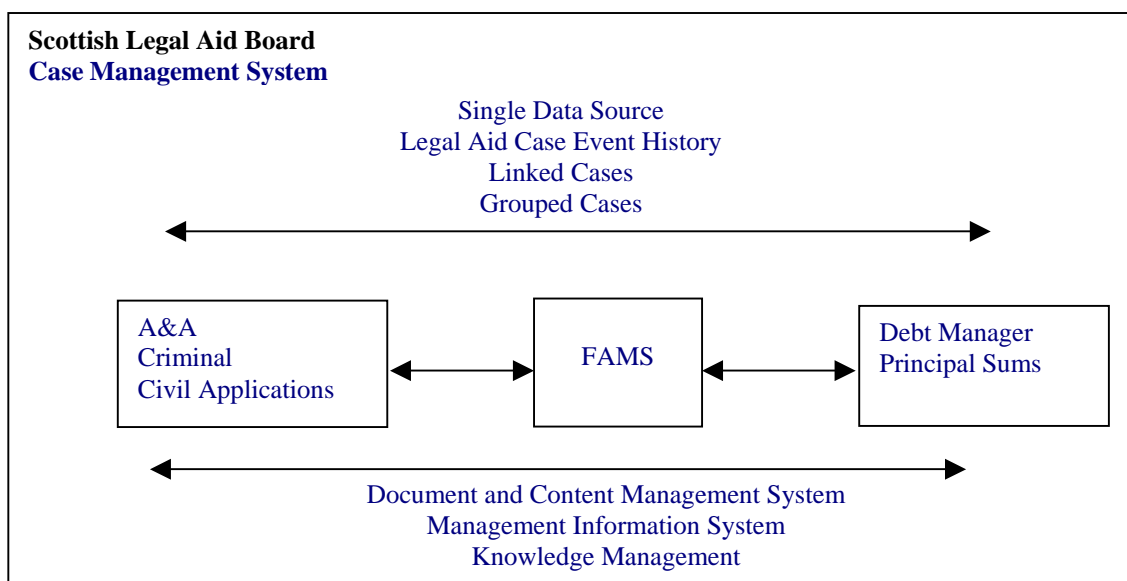
## 4. GAP ANALYSIS

Having reviewed, in the previous section, the current position of the Board's ICT systems, we must attempt to assess the gap between that position and where we seek to be.

### 4.1 Integrated case management system

This is a key objective of the ICT strategy and, as can be seen from the recent and current developments, significant progress has been made toward this goal. Case management systems provide a single data source for all cases, providing a complete history of a case, including all correspondence, action taken within a case, and what is required to progress the case. Efficient systems also make it possible to provide a complete record of all the case history and what is required to progress the case. Efficient systems also make it possible to provide a complete record of all the case history and what is required to progress the case. Efficient systems also make it possible to provide a complete record of all the case history and what is required to progress the case.

The case management system will effectively control the flow of the business operation. As the uptake of Legal Aid Online grows and paper systems are gradually replaced by online systems, the Board's case management system will become the central point of control for all case management systems. If the Board's case management system is to be controlled by the Board's case management system, as does the requirement to control change of these systems.



The case management system will deliver as much automated decision making as required using workflow to allocate the case to the relevant member of staff. All staff will have access to task lists that will provide an overview of not only their workload but also their priorities.

The case management system will also provide a complete history of the case. All events will be logged and available to anyone with the appropriate access. This will allow Board staff to view similar cases, so adding consistency to the decision making process. They and the practitioners will effectively use the system in the same way, governed by strict access controls. The practitioners will enter, via the internet, to

enquire upon applications, accounts and increases for cases that belong to them or their associates. The Board staff will enter, enquire and assess cases via a web browser on their PC desktop. However, the underlying system processes for both will be exactly the same.

## 4.2 Document and Content Management

Although mentioned in the current developments, Document and Content Management is a long-term project. The Document and Content Management system 4.31 ~~supplement~~ ~~the~~ ~~provision~~ ~~of~~ ~~all~~ ~~services~~ ~~electronically~~ ~~by~~ ~~providing~~ ~~all~~ ~~documentation~~ ~~electronically~~. The Document and Content Management system will also be key to the delivery of information to the public consistent with our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act. Only 4.4 ~~from~~ ~~Legal~~ ~~Aid~~ ~~Online~~ the Board approximately £18k in maintenance costs per year. A cost that will offset some of the increases as a result of Document and Content Management 4.4 ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~implementation~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~system~~ ~~in~~ ~~2004~~. ~~The~~ ~~other~~ ~~parts~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~business~~ ~~will~~ ~~have~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~integrated~~ ~~into~~ ~~the~~ ~~project~~ ~~that~~ ~~will~~ ~~run~~ ~~for~~ ~~two~~ ~~years~~. ~~That~~ ~~that~~ ~~all~~ ~~the~~ ~~likely~~ ~~to~~ ~~business~~ ~~processes~~ ~~have~~ ~~been~~ ~~mapped~~ ~~in~~ ~~part~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Corporate~~ ~~Project~~ ~~of~~ ~~decision~~ ~~on~~ ~~what~~ ~~applications~~ ~~the~~ ~~expansion~~ ~~on~~ ~~civil~~ ~~or~~ ~~criminal~~ ~~first~~. Both systems are required to meet the 2005 Modernising Government target.

The Board must also look to partner other justice bodies such as the Scottish Court Service and the Crown Office to ensure compatibility of services to legal practitioners. As well as seeking to define, for example, common hardware standards, there is a recognised benefit in all the justice bodies having a single method of identity authentication for the solicitors using the electronic services. The Board will investigate, with the partner bodies, alternatives to the Board's original preferred option for digital certification, the Law Society's, now defunct, *LawSeal*

## 4.5 Internet services

As part of the Modernising Government framework, we require all services (including those to assisted persons, opponents, suppliers and the wider general public) to be available electronically by the end of the 05 priority. The Legal Aid Ordinance to be established, ends past ill services to the public with the scope of the project to have difficulty accessing web services. The main priorities for the Communications department with regards to the website are to:

- better help legal aid providers do their job by communicating the right information, at the right time, using web based delivery as the key communications channel; and to
- move the emphasis from paper-based to online communication, and greater use of electronic communications for all of our customers

The Board's delivery of electronic services will include:

- Legal Aid handbooks
- Electronic communication of information, such as the Recorder and mail shots, through using email and personalised web services
- Increased use of interactive services, such as forms ordering

- Improved customer service through online learning services, help and support and increased personalised reporting information.
- Tailored information on legal aid to all Board stakeholders
- Access to registers of practitioners, along with geographical mapping and direction finding
- Electronic purchasing
- Online recruitment
- Online payments to and from the Board

Since many of our obligations under the Freedom of Information Act will be most economically and effectively met through the development of our website, the web development must also focus upon meeting the Board's obligation under the Freedom of Information Act, particularly in providing easy access to the most commonly sought information, consistent with the Board's approved publication scheme. A separate project has been set up to progress this.

## 4.6 Intranet

An Intranet is a private network inside the organisation, which uses software like that used on the internet, but is for internal use only. It is not accessible to the public and ~~The project will also provide the link of information for staff to a public information service with the Board attempt to deliver an internal online systems for internal business processes such as HR self service that could provide, 4.7.1 Debt Manager~~ electronic payslips.

This is the last of the financial system to be integrated with FAMS. The business benefits that are realised from a fully integrated financial system will be significant, ~~4.8.1 Financial management and accounts assessment system (FAMS)~~ and, once again, in terms of the convergence of technologies.

Undoubtedly one of the successful projects of recent years, we are now at a state of maturity in our use and support of the system where we are seeking to gain even further benefit from this sophisticated tool. Key amongst our objectives for the further development of FAMS are:

- investigating the extension of data capture, particularly in Accounts Assessment, to improve our ability to analyse, predict and influence trends in practitioner's behaviour; both to achieve and demonstrate 'best value' in the use of the Legal Aid Fund; and to enhance our ability to provide advice to the Scottish Executive on the operation and development of legal aid.

## 4.9 Compliance-Assurance Management system

This will assist in scheduling, planning, performing and reporting on compliance audits and quality assurance reviews; this latter function being performed and ~~4.10 Telephone systems~~ by the Society of Scotland. This is required as part of the Civil Legal Aid Reform project. The telephone system will be enhanced to continue to improve communication and service with our key stakeholders. Resources permitting, this will allow specific ~~Extensions to include the Board records and the recording to be in 2004-05. These systems will increase by at least 20% allowing those staff identified with the greatest number of incoming calls to receive them directly rather than the customer having to be routed through an operator. All Board communications will be adapted to allow the inclusion of these DDI numbers.~~

Reception and the telephone switchboard are currently located in separate areas of the building. It is the intention to combine these into one area at the main reception. A new two-person reception desk was fitted in March 2004. During 2004-05 we will gradually introduce the secondary switchboard at the desk with the long-term aim to have all reception/switchboard staff working in this area. This will be dependant upon the volume of calls via the switchboard dropping from their current level through the further use of Direct Dial.

## 4.11 Video Conferencing

Dependant upon the success of trials to be held in Summer 2004, there is an intention to introduce a video conferencing facility. This will facilitate remote participation in ~~4.12 Management Information~~ conversely will allow meetings to take place over long distances without the need for staff or Board members to travel.

In order to capitalise on the good progress made on FAMS, the management reporting for applications, HR and payroll and audit need to be taken forward in a controlled manner. The system will provide a base for the knowledge management information system:

- Live data – Information on case status and history.
- Summary Data – to deliver annual reports, KPIs and trend analysis.
- Audit – Access to information on behaviour of practitioners and Board staff. For example: abatements, duplicates, multiples, holds etc.

Management information will be available to the Board and the practitioner through Legal Aid Online. This allows the practitioner to access information electronically that would previously have required a phone call. It allows the practitioner to view the type of information the Board can view, such as trend analysis and abatement levels on their cases and thereby improves education in terms of “compliance” with best practice.

#### **4.13 Knowledge Management**

This proposed project will be the subject of a comprehensive business case during 2004-05. Organisations are realising how important it is to "know what they know" and be able to make maximum use of the knowledge. This knowledge resides in many different places such as: databases, knowledge bases, filing cabinets and peoples' heads and are distributed right across the organisation. All too often one part of an organisation repeats work of another part simply because it is impossible to keep track of, and make use of, knowledge in other parts. We need to know:

- what our knowledge assets are; and
- how to manage and make use of these assets to achieve ‘best value’.

Knowledge assets are the knowledge regarding markets, products, technologies and organisations, that an organisation owns or needs to own and which enable its business processes to be economic, efficient and effective.

Knowledge management is not only about managing these knowledge assets but also managing the processes that act upon the assets. These processes include: developing knowledge; preserving knowledge; using knowledge, and sharing knowledge. Therefore, knowledge management involves the identification and analysis of available and required knowledge assets and knowledge asset related processes, and the subsequent planning and control of actions to develop both the assets and the processes so as to fulfil organisational objectives.

There are many problems associated with identifying these knowledge assets and being able to use them and manage them in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

The Board will need to:

- have a Board-wide vocabulary to ensure that the knowledge is correctly understood;
- be able to identify, model and explicitly represent our knowledge;

- share and re-use our knowledge among differing applications for various types of users; this implies being able to share existing knowledge sources and also future ones; and to
- create a culture that encourages knowledge sharing.

We will, therefore, use “knowledge engineering” techniques to provide disciplined approaches to designing and building knowledge-based applications. We will use the tools available to support the capture, modelling, validation, verification and maintenance of the knowledge in these applications.

#### **4.14 Skills and resources**

This gap was highlighted in the previous ICT strategy and although the Board are in a much stronger position in terms of skills and resources now there is still a gap.

We now have a very strong business and project presence within the Board and we are also in a strong position with our core technologies of *Oracle* and *Novell*. There is still a technical gap to bridge with the Legal Aid Online solution and Document and Content Management but steps are being taken to ensure we have the support in place to maintain these systems.

The I.S. department in particular needs to review its structure and skill levels on a six monthly basis to ensure it can both deliver the on-going projects and support the current systems. It is as a result of such a review, that the need to import or develop skills in *Java* programming (a key skill in delivering and maintaining on-line applications) was identified.

Moving forward, after lessons learned, we are now in a position to better control projects and highlight the need for third party help when we have a skills gap or a shortage of resources available because of other priorities.

Beyond the I.S. department, it is important to ensure that the skills base continues to match the business requirements. This too will require periodic review.

## 5. THE PLAN FOR DELIVERY

This section deals with the timetable for delivering the objectives and filling the highlighted gaps. The projects have been prioritised based on business need. The constraints to delivery are also documented.

### 5.1 High priorities

The main drivers of current development work are the **Legal Aid Online** project and the **Case Management systems**. Due to the requirements of the Modernising Government for a work and the potential applications and benefits analysis projects must take legal aid online. Because of the time critical nature of the Modernising Government the financial work, and the duties of Legal Aid Online to begin, these developments are time critical.

The project should be expanded to investigate working with other justice bodies to look at the requirement and demand for digital authentication and “joined-up” services. This is likely to be a requirement for civil and criminal Legal Aid Online.

Although the business benefits, at least in the short term, are not as significant, the importance of the development of **Internet Services** in meeting the time critical Modernising Government target for delivery of other services electronically mean that this must also be a high priority. Similarly, the time critical nature of the introduction of a quality assurance scheme for civil legal aid means that the development of supporting the **Compliance-Assurance Management System** (used by the Board for its compliance audit work, and by the Law Society for the management of its quality assurance programme) is also high priority. This will also be the tool used to manage the criminal quality assurance programme

### 5.2 Medium priorities

The projects that will have significant business benefits but are not time critical are:

- **Document and Content Management** – This project has the most significant business benefits of the medium prioritised projects because of the savings it will bring, including those from intelligent forms processing, and in terms of efficiency of systems, staff, paper, files etc. There are business benefits for all areas of the Board
- **Debt manager** – Potential business benefits for Finance, Treasury and I.S.
- **FAMS development** – The better utilisation of the built-in features of the systems will streamline processes, thus bringing business benefits. The enhancement of data-capture to aid analysis and forecasting will enable a more informed and nimble approach to be adopted in relation to managing the Legal Aid Fund expenditure.
- **Management information** – The improvement in management information has already been documented and this should be reviewed and developed in the consolidation phase.

- **Knowledge management** – The Board’s policy unit, MIS team and I.S. Department should develop a strategy for Knowledge Management. This would build on the management information available to look at efficiency of processes, trends in legal aid and exception analysis to provide the Board with an intelligence model to provide better management of our systems, better business processes and more and better advice to the Scottish Executive. A proficient knowledge management system would, for example, provide accurate assessment of potential policy changes on the legal aid fund in terms of potential cost to the fund and impact on the business process

The established Programme Board should make recommendations to the executive team about the timetable for these. However these are projects that may need to give way to higher or more immediate priorities.

### 5.3 Low priorities

The **telephone system**, **video conferencing** and the **intranet** although providing business benefits are of low priority compared to the other projects.

The Facilities department has plans in place to deliver its video conferencing and improvements to the telephone system within the financial year 2004-05.

The intranet project will be developed using *Oracle* portal facilities. This will allow departments to have a degree of control over the content they wish to publish on the intranet. It will also allow a degree of integration between the case management system and the intranet.

### 5.4 Constraints

- **Legislative and Policy Change** – Any significant legislative or policy changes will cause disruption to the programme. This disruption is greater if the notice period for the change is shorter.
- **Review of A&A and Criminal Legal Aid** – Depending on timescales and scope these reviews may well have an impact on delivery.
- **Resources** – Due to the Board being a small organisation with small departments availability of resources can be problematic. The advent of the programme board and investigation into a system of change management will mitigate the impact of this.
- **Capital** – As always, capital is a constraint when trying to deliver the quantity and quality of projects on the programme, not only in terms of the absolute amount, but also in our ability to manage funding over a number of financial years where the Scottish Executive’s rules on “end of year flexibility” are poorly defined and do not permit effective Capital planning or management.

## 5.5 Key milestones

The key milestones are listed in the table below. They are, as always, best estimates based on the knowledge available at the present time.

	2004	2005	2006
<b>Integrated Case management</b>			
Civil			
Criminal			
<b>Legal Aid Online</b>			
A&A			
Criminal			
Civil			
<b>Web Services</b>			
Phase 2 Enhancement (Handbook, Mapping, Accessibility)			
Phase 3: Online-transactional services			
Publications for FoI			
Intranet (phased implementation September 2004 onward)			
<b>Compliance and Assurance Management System</b>			
<b>Document and Content Management</b>			
Civil & Correspondence			
Subsequent phases (A&A, Criminal, Accounts, Finance, etc)			
<b>Debt Manager</b>			
<b>FAMS further development</b>			
<b>Management Information</b>			
<b>Knowledge Management</b>			
<b>Digital archiving and storage</b>			
<b>Telephone system enhancements</b>		<i>exact timing dependant on resources</i>	
<b>Video conferencing</b>		<i>exact timing dependant on resources</i>	

**Key:**



## **5.6 Resources**

### **5.6.1 Staff**

With such a heavy programme of projects, staff resources are stretched not only in I.S. but also in the operational areas involved. Third party support will be vital for delivering the projects and within the constraints of a business case, this should be sought whenever a resource deficiency is flagged in project that is time critical. The Board should always keep control of the project.

### **5.6.2 Infrastructure**

Most of the infrastructure is now in place. The only gaps are :

- for Document and Content Management where a need for two new servers, some scanning hardware and large flat screens to aid the viewing of documents online by decision makers. The investment was part of the business case and funding is available; and
- for infrastructure to support rationalisation of digital archiving and storage in support of electronic delivery - 24hrs a day, 7days a week, 365 days a year.

Internal resources were identified in 2003/04, following approval of business case, for the Document and Content Management system. It is envisaged that both the Knowledge Management system and the digital storage improvement and rationalisation scheme will require the financial support of the Scottish Executive. The remaining projects rely on modest internal capital investment. Given that this limits the use of external resources, this could lead to a strain on internal staff resources highlighted above.

## 6. RISK

This paper highlights the main risks to the ICT strategy at a high level. These risks and their associated mitigation strategies are highlighted in greater detail as part of the Board's risk assessment review.

- **Legislative or Policy Changes** – Changes in legislation or policy that fundamentally alter the way legal aid is delivered or how it is administered could change our assessment of needs or priorities. This could include changes that come about as a result of the current ongoing *Strategic Review of Legal Aid*. Continuing and extensive dialogue with the Scottish Executive will continue to mitigate this risk.
- **Capital investment** – The Board must ensure it has the continued financial backing, including sufficient flexibility over financial year-ends, to maintain and develop the new infrastructure. This is highlighted in the Corporate Plan.
- **System failure** – System failure will, undoubtedly, have greater impact after the introduction of Legal Aid Online. If the electronic process fails the practitioners signed up to Legal Aid Online effectively cannot transact with the Board.
  
- **Participation** – Lack of buy-in from the legal profession is a threat to the Legal Aid Online project. The project's implementation plan includes elements aimed at attracting users, including those that ensure that the system is well designed, easy to use, has adequate and effective support, has early promulgation of successful results, etc.
- **Staff retention** – As technology is always developing a small turnover in staff is often desirable but should be maintained at a level that is not a threat to systems development and maintenance. The skill levels of staff will increase and the Board must ensure that retention levels remain manageable.
- **Change management** – Change under the new business process must be highlighted as early as possible to allow for costing, impact analysis and thorough testing taking place. An assessment of the impact on staff should be undertaken dependent on the scale of the change. As stated earlier, the Board are seeking to develop a process of change management that will address the impact of this risk.

## 7. THE NEXT STEPS

Following a period of heavy development up to March 2005, it is essential that we undertake a period of consolidation to ensure that the systems are functioning to meet the needs of the business and are sufficiently equipped to meet the demands of the new business process.

### 7.1 Policies and procedures

The policies and procedures to support the ICT strategy must be kept up to date. These have been coordinated into a cycle of six-month review. The main policies are:

- Risk management
- Security Policy
- Computer Usage Policy
- I.S. Service Catalogue
- Legal Aid Online Service Catalogue
- The Management of I.S. Policy
- Change Management and Control Policy
- Core systems Policy
- Network Policy
- Desktop Technology Policy

### 7.2 Security and infrastructure

An essential part of any I.S. strategy is ensuring the security and integrity of its systems. This becomes no less important for Legal Aid Online and case management.

A full Security policy has been designed for Legal Aid Online that cannot be documented here for obvious reasons. Hacking technology is constantly being developed so the Board must ensure that it has the means to counter such developments. The Board now has a framework in place for a security policy that will enable it to achieve BS7799 accreditation. This is the British standard for security of information systems. Over the next two years I.S. will develop this policy to be fully BS7799 compliant.

### 7.2.1 Systems and infrastructure

As stated earlier, the ICT strategy of 2000 started the process of streamlining the technologies used within the Board to deliver the business systems. Our three main technology partners are *HP*, *Novell* and *Oracle*.

### 7.2.3 Systems support

There will be a steep learning curve for the support areas when Legal Aid Online is rolled out to the profession. It may be necessary to provide temporary support for the ~~The advantage of the new systems will be to allow support staff staff with the necessary~~ ~~high level of confidence skills. This will allow the Board to keep staff increases in that area to~~ a minimum but still give adequate support to systems. This process has begun with staff on help desk support having received *Oracle* systems administration training.

## 7.3 Programme management

The Board has adopted *PRINCE2* as its project methodology and put significant investment into training in this area. As mentioned earlier a programme board has ~~been set up~~ ~~to~~ prioritise and control the flow of projects. This control is essential, as Board business becomes more system dependant. All systems projects should ensure that system requirements are compatible with Board systems to avoid slipping back to having disparate systems.

### 7.3.2 Business process documentation

There is now a strong business analysis team within the Board and this has been bolstered by the appointment of the business process reviewer. It is essential that all ~~projects~~ ~~Business process review and staff inspection~~ ~~process documentation is kept up to~~ ~~date. The will be impact analysis a much simpler process. There should be a~~ ~~Although all business processes have now been documented for the majority of~~ ~~operational areas, the intention is to take this a step further through the activities of~~ ~~the business process reviewer. It will also be essential to ensure that the~~ ~~documentation of these processes is kept up to date and that managers are given the~~ ~~opportunity to agree and sign off the content of the process mapping.~~ ~~system must be impacted properly and this can only be achieved by an in-depth~~ ~~knowledge of the business processes. The impact analysis should review for both~~ ~~the practitioners using Legal Aid Online and internal Board staff:~~ ~~the business process reviewer.~~

7.3.2 Business process documentation

7.3.2 Business process documentation

- risk assessment
- knowledge of the business processes. The impact analysis should review for both
- system requirements documentation
- the practitioners using Legal Aid Online and internal Board staff:
- business documentation

- user guides
  - testing packs
  - communication of change
- **Policy developments** – The systems will be flexible and have the ability to cope with change. The success of this depends on having a robust change control procedure in place. A constant review of the change control procedure will ensure that the Board can respond to changes arising from policy developments. In particular, the significant potential changes to civil legal aid and “community legal services”.
  - **User group** – The Board’s Oracle User Group must continue to meet monthly to ensure that the systems are meeting the needs of the business. The user groups encourage ownership of the systems by the users and give them control over the priority of developments.

- **Change management** – A system of change management should be in place by June 2004. This will focus on ensuring that users of systems are ready to take ownership of the systems. The key elements are:
  - Ensuring that the senior users endorse the user requirements of the system
  - Ensuring that the senior users endorse the design of the system
  - Ensuring that the senior users are satisfied with the performance and integrity of the systems through controlled testing
  - Ensuring that all relevant staff are adequately trained in the systems
  - User control of implementation plans at the end stages of the projects.

I.S. will strive to undertake a constant review of current systems to ensure that the case management system is meeting the needs of all operational areas within the Board. The review should be assessed for value-added benefits to all stakeholders and this may lead to mini development projects depending on the outcome. The basic goals of the case management system should not be risked.

## 7.4 The longer term

### 7.4.1 Major developments

Notwithstanding developments that may arise out of the *Strategic Review of Legal Aid*, the two known major developments that are not yet well defined from a systems ~~viewpoint~~ *Strategic partnerships* A&A and the review of Criminal Legal Aid. Capital investment will be required to support the projects to implement these. All steps have been taken to ensure that current system development leaves as much flexibility as possible to deal with major change. The Board is now actively seeking partnership with other justice agencies on areas of data sharing and digital authentication. This should be a continual process to find benefits to the Board. Legal Aid Online project, and consistent with the Modernising Government agenda, the Board will be equipped to join-up with other government services and agencies such as local authorities and the Citizens Advice Services (CAS) to provide better information about legal aid via their online services.

The Board could also engage with Scottish Prisons and Scottish Courts to overcome the problems the practitioner faces when meeting applicants for the first time in these arenas. If the prisons and courts allowed the use of a PC by the solicitor when with his client, the Board's systems could be accessed *in situ*.

### 7.4.3 Other projects and new technologies

The Board must monitor developments around identifying the citizen electronically.

Currently identified projects are:

- Local Government Smart Card initiative in conjunction with the Scottish Executive; and
- The Scottish Executive's *Scotland Gateway* digital certificate initiative. We understand this technology is now used by the Inland Revenue for submission of income tax self-assessment over the World Wide Web.

These initiatives could have an impact on how legal aid applications are submitted and we need to ensure we are in a position to facilitate this.

The Board is currently developing with some of the latest technologies available. However we must constantly review and monitor developments that may improve the

way we do business. For example, extending the telecommunication system to record voice data and integrate fully with the case management system through the Document and Content Management system; or reviewing the apparent trend towards 'open source computing'.

#### ***7.4.4 I.S. and communications structure***

Once the major projects and developments are implemented and embedded a review of the staffing and structure of I.S., Facilities and Communications should ensure that the Board has the right balance of skills to support the ICT strategy moving forward.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The Board's investment in the replacement of its major decision making systems, including those accessed through Legal Aid Online, represent a major contribution to its commitment to achieving consistent, timely and sound decision making at all stages of an application for legal assistance and at all stages of paying accounts.

Coupled with the re-vamp of the major financial, HR and other administrative systems, these systems will be key both in achieving effective financial management of the Legal Aid Fund; and in improving the effectiveness of the delivery of our service while achieving a reasonable balance between cost and quality. The balance between cost and quality will rest upon our decision to integrate technology streams, which in turn bring economies in the procurement and support of the infrastructure, and in the development of skills in the Board's staff that support and utilise the systems day to day.

The effective use of these new systems, and the further enhancement of our website, will represent major contributions to our ability to communicate effectively with applicants, opponents, their advisors and other stakeholders in a clear, concise, timely informative and pro-active manner.

Effective data capture, and the ability to track cases from inception to completion will be a valuable tool for our staff; enhancing their ability to analyse trends in behaviour and in expenditure; thus contributing to our ability to provide sound advice to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament on the current operation and development of the provision of legal aid.

Finally, all of this must be achieved at a pace which recognises both the Modernising Government target, to provide access to all public services online by the end of 2005; and the ambitious financial targets associated with transformation of our business process and reduction in staff numbers.