

## **Strategic Priorities for the Administration of the UKSC / JCPC: April 2016 to March 2020**

### **Our Aim**

Our aim is to provide an environment which enables the Justices of the Supreme Court to carry out their duties in an effective, visible and accessible way, and which best develops the rule of law and the administration of justice, both in the UK and in the countries which use the JCPC.

We shall do this by:

- **Continuing to secure the Justices' constitutional and financial independence**
- **Promoting the importance of the Rule of Law and its role in securing democratic freedom**
- **Promoting the visibility and helping to maintain the reputation of the Supreme Court and the JCPC**
- **Maintaining effective relationships with all jurisdictions in the UK**
- **Maintaining effective international relationships**
- **Providing an efficient and effective administration**
- **Ensuring the effective delivery of all UKSC corporate responsibilities**

### **Our Strategy**

#### **Continuing to secure the Justices' constitutional and financial independence**

Priorities during this period are to:

1. Be ready to respond as necessary to any possible constitutional changes which may result from (1) the enactment of a British Bill of Rights; (2) further devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; (3) any proposed or enacted legislation relating to the judiciary; and (4) the outcome of the referendum on UK membership of the European Union.
2. Monitor other changes to the Justice system, such as to legal aid, and prepare for their impact.
3. Work to secure changes that would deliver greater resilience in the funding of the court.

#### **Promoting the importance of the Rule of Law and its role in securing democratic freedom**

Priorities during this period are:

1. Working to maintain public confidence in judicial decisions.
2. Assisting the Justices with advice on how speeches on this subject will best be received
3. Continuing to develop and enhance relations with the media and broadcasters.

### **Promoting the visibility and helping to maintain the reputation of the Supreme Court and the JCPC**

1. Continuing to develop our openness and accessibility by using special events such as “open days” and temporary exhibitions to encourage the public to visit the court.
2. Continuing to develop our educational outreach activities with special in depth programmes for sixth formers and students in further education.
3. Increasing the number of educational visits from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. Encouraging use of, and monitoring any possible improvements or extensions to, the Court’s on-line and streaming facilities

### **Maintaining effective relationships with all jurisdictions in the UK**

Priorities during this period are:

1. Having effective communications with all the territorial judicial and executive authorities.
2. Monitoring and reacting appropriately to (1) any impact of the changes to the right of appeal from Scottish courts made by the Scotland Act 2012; (2) the introduction of a permission to appeal regime by the Courts Reform (Scotland) Act 2014; and (3) the further future devolution of powers to Scotland following the ‘No’ vote in the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014.
3. Preparing for any changes or developments to the powers of the devolved governments in Wales and Northern Ireland.
4. Discussing with the territorial judicial and executive authorities whether the Supreme Court should sit out of London from time to time.

### **Maintaining effective international relationships**

Priorities during this period are:

1. Developing and maintaining contacts with the European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights and in particular seeking to promote a better understanding of the common law and how it operates within the context of European law.
2. Promoting relations with Commonwealth countries, particularly those which use the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and with other common law countries.

3. Supporting Justices in their membership of international bodies.
4. Demonstrating the effective separation of powers and maintaining the rule of law to a wide range of international visitors.

### **Providing an efficient and effective administration**

Priorities for the administration during this period are:

1. Ensuring the UKSC can live within the financial provision obtained for this four year period in the Spending Review settlement in November 2015.
2. Ensuring the Chief Executive continues to have in place appropriate governance structures, which provide him with the assurances he needs.
3. Ensuring we have appropriate arrangements to secure the continued availability of business critical staff to enable both the UKSC and JCPC to continue to function effectively, such as staff who directly support the Justices like Judicial Assistants and library staff.
4. Continuing to develop the IT infrastructure so as to become an exemplar to others of the most effective and efficient use of IT to support the administration of the court.
5. Ensuring any changes to pay and conditions of staff reflect the needs of the court administration.
6. Maintaining secure and comfortable courtrooms and office spaces, investing in the Court's accommodation where necessary.
7. Maintaining a high level of staff satisfaction

### **Ensuring that all UKSC corporate responsibilities are adhered to**

Priorities for corporate support during this period are:

1. Encouraging, and maintaining a diverse workforce and monitoring and responding to views from the Court Users Group on equality issues.
2. Ensuring all expenditure is justified and provides value for money, and that all key data is published on the UKSC / JCPC websites in line with the Cabinet Office Transparency Agenda.
3. Ensuring that all data is processed, stored and disposed of in accordance with data protection legislation and EU directives. Ensuring that all requests for information or data are handled within the statutory deadlines and in compliance with the relevant legislation.
4. Taking steps to reduce the carbon footprint of the building.

5. As occupants of the former Middlesex Guildhall, promoting the building and the art work on show to the public; maintaining links with organisations connected with Middlesex, including the Middlesex Regimental Association.

### **Staff Values**

Underpinning the achievement of these aims and priorities are the following values, which have been developed with the staff.

All staff are expected to carry out their duties by following the core values and behaviours set down in the Civil Service Code. In addition, staff will adhere to the following values:

1. **Impartiality** - We will respect judicial independence and deal with all casework fairly and objectively.
2. **Clarity and Openness** - We will undertake our work without prejudice and in an open and transparent manner.
3. **Professionalism** – We will seek to understand other people’s pressures and give support to each other. We will treat our colleagues, court users and visitors with respect, and work professionally and co-operatively with outside organisations.
4. **Accountability** - We will be responsible for delivering a high quality service to Justices, court users and to the public.
5. **Efficiency** – We will use our time, finances and resources effectively and efficiently. We will invite and listen to feedback and look to continuously improve our processes and the services we provide.
6. **Accessibility** – We will provide a service that meets the reasonable needs and expectations of users. We will positively promote awareness and understanding of the Supreme Court and interest in the history of the building and the works of art.
7. **Influence** – We will be ambassadors for the court, and we will maintain good relations, and share our knowledge and experience, with individual jurisdictions and governments in the UK, and with other courts around the world.

**UKSC**

**March 2016**