



Corporate Strategic Plan

2024 – 2027



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



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An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Foreword

(by Chair of the Board)





Foreword

Chairperson of the Courts Service Board

The Court Service is embarking on a new phase of its ten-year modernisation plan with this new Strategic

Plan covering the period 2024 to 2027.

Ireland has weathered the storm of Covid 19, and the Courts Service has come through the challenges posed by the pandemic. The end of one challenge does not mean that there are no further challenges to face in the future, and this Strategic Plan is designed to meet the challenges ahead, and to further the ambitious aims of our ten-year modernisation programme. In developing this Strategic Plan, the Courts Service has consulted widely with various representative groups in society, and others with a direct involvement with the courts system, such as the representative bodies of the legal professions, amongst others.

Ultimately, the aim of this plan is to ensure that the court system is fit for purpose, efficient, and serves the needs of those who use the court system and who work within it. An important part of the plan is to ensure that the court system should be easier to navigate for those who have to come before the courts. Greater efficiency should lead to a court system which is cheaper to access for members of the public.

One of the significant changes to have occurred in recent times is the report furnished by the JPWG. The recommendations of that body have led to an increase in the number of judges, and this has presented the Courts Service with the challenge of ensuring the best use of the additional judges now available and to become available in the near future within the resources and facilities presently available.

A further important piece of news is that the long awaited proposal in relation to the provision of new family law courts in Dublin is now coming to fruition with the recent decision of An Bord Pleanála to grant planning permission for the development of the Hammond Lane Site in which nineteen courts dealing with family law issues will be located. This will be a significant addition to the estate of the Courts Service, but that is not to say that there are no other challenges in relation to the provision of court facilities in other parts of the country. It is a significant part of the role of the Courts Service to ensure that the existing infrastructure is fit for purpose, and further court facilities will be made available as and when that proves possible to meet the needs of people in other parts of the country.

At the heart of the current Strategic Plan is a desire to ensure that the court system is fully equipped to deal with the needs of all court users. In this regard, the Courts Service will continue to develop IT strategies to give effect to this goal, while never losing sight of the fact that for some people digital solutions simply do not work. That is why, for the time being, the Courts Service is not pursuing a “digital only” approach.

The population of Ireland has grown considerably in recent years, and our society is now much more diverse. This brings its own challenges to the Courts Service. An increasing population means more people coming into contact with the courts system, requiring additional court facilities. Further, a more diverse population requires more in the way of assistance for those who require additional help when coming to court such as translation services.

A number of strategies are being developed to support the needs of court users, and this will continue to be a priority. As part of this strategy, the Courts Service will have particular regard to the needs of vulnerable people in society who require to access the court system.

It goes without saying that the Courts Service cannot function without its staff, and it is important to recognise the role of the staff within the organisation and to support them to grow and develop their skills and attributes to make the Courts Service a better and more efficient organisation.

Overall, the role of the Courts Service must be to assist the judiciary in providing a first-class court system to all those who need to avail of it, be they private citizens or business entities, or members of An Garda Síochána, the Prison Services, and members of the legal professions.

This Strategic Plan is not an end in itself, but a stage in the never-ending process of improving the court system for all users. While it is an ambitious plan, it must be remembered that ambition is, of necessity, constrained by budgetary limitations. Part of the task of the Courts Service is to do as much as possible within the limits of the funds available. This plan gives concrete effect to that ambition.

Elizabeth Dunne

Judge of the Supreme Court

Chair of the Board of the Courts Service

Introduction



I am pleased to introduce the Courts Service's Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027 which sets out the direction and high-level work programme that we will undertake during the next three years. The new Strategic Plan reflects the key ambitions for years four to seven of our ten-year Modernisation Programme aimed at improving access to justice in a modern, digital Ireland. This plan builds upon the significant progress made in the 2021-2023 strategy when we built capacity and skills in our staff, improved our operational and management data and provided strong visible leadership by introducing new technology and modern ways of working to the administration of justice. This plan describes our goals for the next phase of the programme to deliver user centred digital services and attaches a set of strategic actions and outcomes to each goal.

The pace of change in the courts system has not slowed post pandemic. If anything, an accelerated pace of change has become our norm. Our operating environment does not stand still. Over the course of the lifetime of this strategy we will continue to expand operations and implement the recommendations of the Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG), will deal with the impact of a new legislative programme and will continue to use design thinking to respond to the changing needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population. This plan will set the direction of, and be complemented by, annual corporate business plans. Progress will be monitored and regularly reviewed by our Board, supported by improved data, thus allowing us to refine and adapt our efforts.

Our staff strive to deliver services to a high standard with commitment, professionalism and dedication. Our working environment is changing, as are employee expectations. Over the coming three years we will invest in and support our people to create a high performing organisation.

This Strategic Plan sets out our roadmap up to 2027 and helps us focus on our strategic priorities ensuring that, in conjunction with our partners, we respond effectively and innovatively to the needs of court users. In developing this plan, we assessed and included the human rights and equality issues relating to our functions as an employer and service provider. We also consulted with our partners and stakeholders seeking their valuable input. The strong feedback received welcomed the collaborative approach we have taken on our modernisation journey in recent years. We are committed to continuing to work together with judges, staff and stakeholders across the justice system and civil society to forge strong relationships and to co-design an improved, more accessible justice system.

Angela Denning
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COURTS SERVICE



1. About the Courts Service

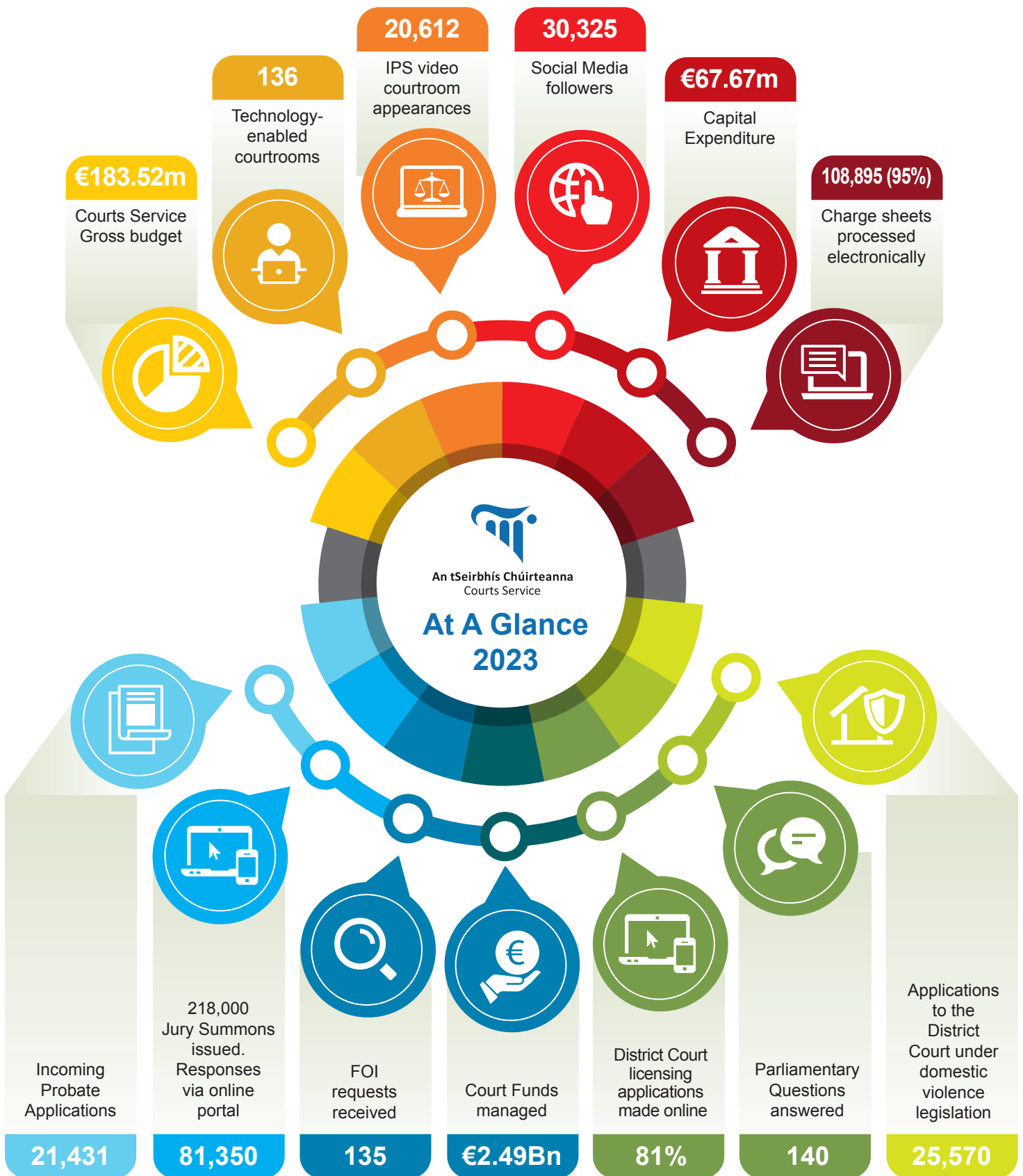


The Courts Service is a statutory independent state agency, established by the Courts Service Act 1998, to support the third branch of Government - the Courts and the Judiciary. As a frontline service-focused organisation, we are responsible for the administration and management of the Courts in Ireland. Under legislation the Courts Service is mandated to:



In fulfilling these primary functions, over 1,200 staff work, across a nationwide network of offices and court venues, to provide services in civil, criminal and family law to court users daily. These offices, supported by directorates established as part of our management structure, working with the judiciary, facilitate the work of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, Circuit Court and District Court.

Access to justice exists outside of courts. Personal and business disputes are negotiated and resolved, guided by our laws every day without needing to come to a courthouse. An effective and stable Courts system that provides timely access to justice is of central importance for those who need it and for our society. Courts have a role in helping families and individuals exert their rights and resolve their disputes, in the prosecution of crime, in the protection the vulnerable and the resolution of property and business disputes. A responsive and resilient court system is critical for protecting democratic values and strengthening the social contract between people living in Ireland and the state.



2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030

Our Vision

The Courts Service provides a broad range of services that are essential to the operation of the courts system. That system is the framework under which justice is administered in Ireland. It encompasses a wide range of participants and stakeholders directly involved on a day-to-day basis. The Courts Service plays a key role in influencing the operation of the wider system so as to ensure it is modern, transparent and accessible.

Our vision for the future, based on our mandate, is a collective belief and aspiration towards:



“Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the judiciary and others, to enable a world-class courts system.”

Our vision is to put the court user at the centre of everything we do by improving access to justice, reducing delay and cost within the justice system and maximising the use of technology to improve our services. We have committed as an organisation to digital first but not to digital only. It is our ambition over the course of our Modernisation Programme to reduce the requirement to attend at court offices and courthouses through the use of improved digital services designed to best serve users.

Our Purpose and Values

In delivering on our mandate, the Courts Service aspires to the Public Service values included in Better Public Services - Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy. We aim to meet the expectations and needs of staff, members of the Judiciary, justice partners, court users and members of the public. Every day we work to the Courts Service core values of being professional, customer-focused, fair, impartial, responsive and respectful.

2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030

2. Supporting Access to Justice in a changing environment



2.1. External environment- trends, challenges, and opportunities

In preparing this Corporate Strategic Plan 2024 -2027 the Courts Service has considered key external factors and trends in society that may affect us and the potential opportunities and challenges they present.

In framing this Strategic Plan, the following have been considered:

- Courts Service Long Term Strategic Vision – 2030
- Courts Service Organisational Capability Review 2019
- Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland’s Public Service
- Civil Service Renewal 2030 Better Public Services - Public Service Transformation 2030 Strategy
- Report on the Administration of Civil Justice in Ireland
- Report of the Judicial Planning Working Group
- OECD report on Modernising Staffing and Court Management Practices in Ireland
- Family Justice Strategy 2022 - 2025
- Criminal Justice Sectoral Strategy 2022 -2024
- Climate Action Plan
- Zero Tolerance: Third National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based violence 2022-2026

Technological developments

As expected, developments in technology continues apace presenting new challenges and opportunities to all organisations. Through the development of a new ICT, Digital and Data Strategy towards the end of 2024 we will set out how we will harness this potential while at the same time addressing the risks that new technologies can bring. We will explore advancements in areas such as AI and cloud services and how they might assist or automate onerous processes such as manual data entry, transcription, interpretation and so on. Importantly, we will continue to invest in our cybersecurity programme providing robust defensive support to our increasingly digital courts system.

Judicial Planning Working Group (JPWG)

In 2023, the Judicial Planning Working Group made a series of recommendations for system improvements and greater efficiencies in how the Courts and judiciary work, designed to ensure effective and timely access to justice. Together the recommendations represent a demanding and multiannual change programme for the Judiciary and the Courts Service requiring strong collaborative leadership. Sustaining focus on implementation of the totality of the recommendations while delivering expanded operations, already under pressure, will continue to be a high priority for the Courts Service during the lifetime of this Strategic Plan.

Legislative responsibilities

The Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021 was commenced in 2023 and expands on the existing obligations of public bodies to promote the use of the Irish language and improve the services we deliver through Irish. A plan will be developed during the period of this strategy to meet the statutory requirements including that by 2030 one fifth of all staff recruited in the Courts Service should be proficient in Irish.

Inclusivity and the need to create a more inclusive environment for staff, as well as those using the Courts is a consistent feature of engagement with our staff and users. In accordance with our obligations under section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2015, we will in parallel to this Strategic Plan, develop a new action plan with Key Performance Indicators, will provide tangible evidence of our commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).

Programme for Government: Our Shared Future

We will continue to support the Programme for Government, which includes commitments such as the Dublin Family Court, Family Court Bill, and the Judicial Appointments Commission Bill.

International developments and standards:

A challenge for court administrations and justice systems worldwide is achieving the correct balance between ongoing digitalisation to optimise operations and always ensuring that justice is human, efficient and of high quality. The transition from paper to digital court files is ongoing and necessary. It is essential to ensure that the tools chosen are the most appropriate and compatible with quality, efficient, accessible, and impartial justice.

Access to justice is globally recognised as a fundamental right underpinning quality democracies, inclusive growth and equality of opportunity. All UN member countries have, under the United Nations 2030 Agenda, committed to “promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensuring equal access to justice for all”. Globally, according to estimates by the World Justice Project, more than 5.1 billion people lack meaningful access to justice. Against this backdrop, the OECD adopted a Recommendation on Access to Justice and People-Centred Justice Systems on 12 July 2023 to support adherents in advancing access to justice and putting in place core elements of people-centred justice. In January 2023, the OECD published its report on Modernising Staffing and Court Management Practices in Ireland in which it recognised that Ireland has launched an ambitious strategy to build a more inclusive efficient and sustainable justice sector. It reported that Irish citizens recognise these efforts as Ireland is one of the OECD countries with a higher percentage of citizens trusting their courts, according to the OECD Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Administrations. The study aimed to support these efforts by analysing the judicial workforce and relevant support structures and processes and was relied upon by the Judicial Planning Working Group as part of its deliberations.

The European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) adopted the 2022 – 2025 CEPEJ Action plan: “Digitalisation for a better justice” which aims to reconcile the efficiency of new technologies and respect for fundamental rights (in particular Article 6 European Convention of Human Rights), in order to guide states and courts in a successful transition to the digitalisation of justice. As our data capability improves, we will provide more and better data, to EU and other international institutions to more reliably and efficiently report on activities in the Irish courts system.

Changing Work Environment

Workers worldwide emerged from the pandemic with a greater focus on their personal and family lives, wanting to spend less time at their place of work, or at least have greater flexibility around doing so. The 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer found that the meaning of work has

shifted, and employees across generational divides are demanding a reset. While trust in “my employer” is high, employees are expecting more and their influence in the workplace is rising.

The digital revolution, automation and virtual working has created possibilities for changed working shifts to suit workers’ lifestyles. Lower paid civil service administrative jobs are competing with other sectors which in many cases can offer better pay and more flexibility around working conditions. Macro-economic factors impacting recruitment include a sustained period of full employment, the increased cost of housing and an aging workforce. These factors combined with the introduction of the civil service mobility scheme at all grades are creating a recruitment and retention challenge for the Service.

Living in Ireland

Information from the Central Statistics Office gives us a picture of life in Ireland. Almost 5.3 million people are now resident in Ireland, 750,000 of whom speak a language other than Irish or English at home. The number of people aged 65 and over has increased by 23.6% since 2017. Towns with the youngest average age are mostly situated along the Eastern seaboard. Approximately 22% of the population indicate they have a disability that impacts on their life. Internet access is available to 94% of households.

These changing demographics highlight the importance of designing our services to meet the needs of a changing Ireland. We follow the principles for a design-led public service so we can respond to these needs, particularly with regard to language and ability to engage with our services, be that in-person or through digital channels.

Climate Action

The Government’s Programme for Climate Action encompasses a range of policies and initiatives aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transitioning to a low-carbon economy, and enhancing climate resilience.

The Climate Action Plan, which is updated annually, sets out the requirements for all Public Sector Bodies to adopt a Climate Action Mandate. The Mandate sets out actions under four headings: Our Targets; Our People; Our Ways of Working; Our Buildings and Vehicles. Specifically in relation to our targets, our energy efficiency target is a 50% improvement as compared to 2009, and to reduce carbon generation by 51% by 2030, with a pipeline of projects identified to achieve these targets.

The Mandate requires every public body to publish a Climate Action Roadmap with details on actions required to the end of the decade and their quantified impact to reach targets. The latest Climate Action Roadmap for the Courts Service relates to Climate Action Plan 2023.

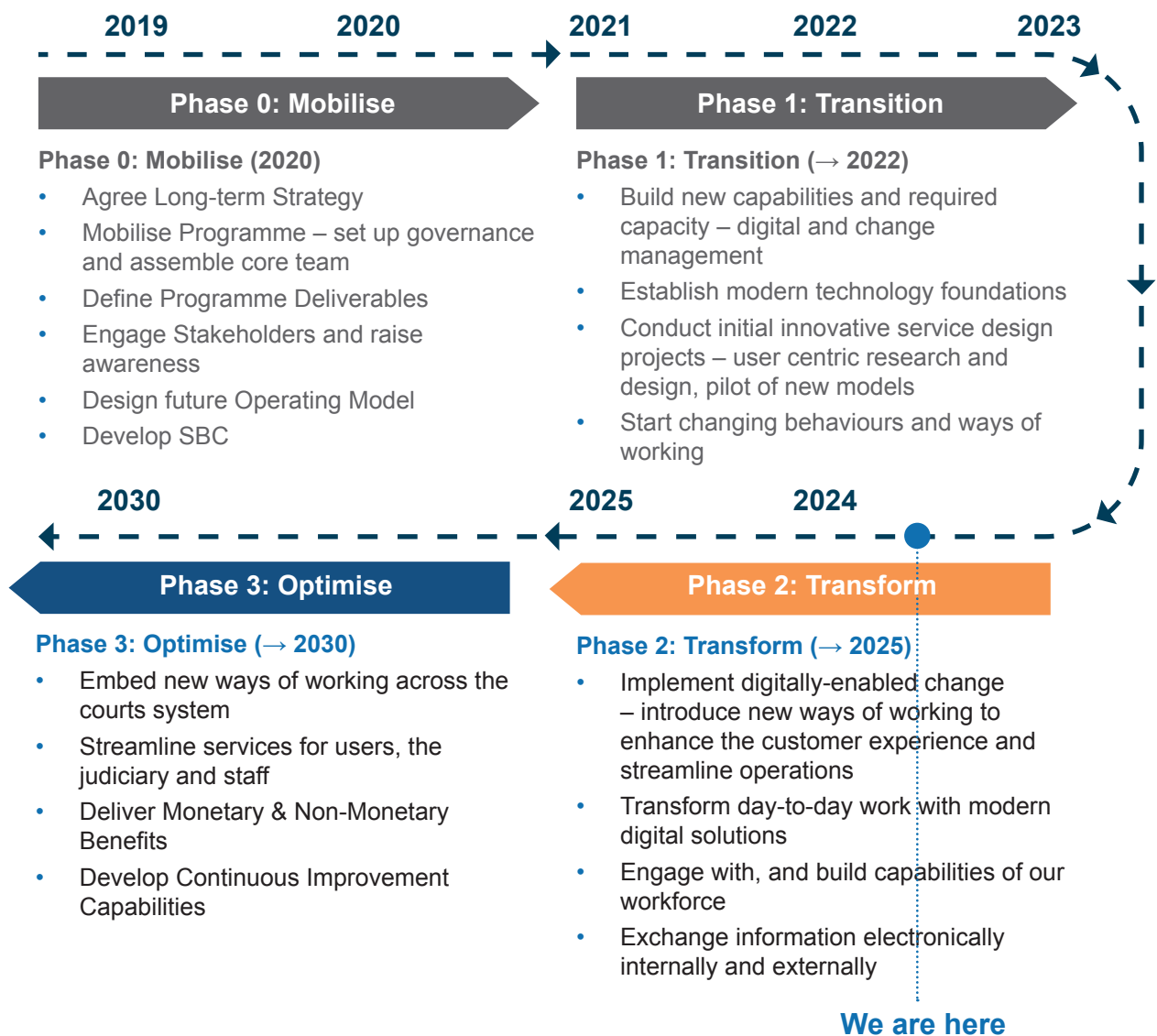
2.2 Internal environment - Key Reform Areas, Modernisation Programme & Strategic Partnerships

The Courts Service Modernisation Programme commenced in early 2020 and will continue until 2030. The programme aims to fundamentally transform how the Courts Service delivers services and develops a modern, best-in-class court system, delivering a more efficient and user-friendly experience for all those who attend, work in and pay for the Courts.

The priority actions in this Corporate Strategic Plan 2024-2027 will support delivery of our Long-Term Vision by continuing to build on our progress in delivering the Modernisation Programme.

Developing the capabilities of our staff and leadership teams to support the organisation through the change and delivery of the Modernisation Programme, whilst maintaining business as usual services, remains a key priority.

Courts Service Modernisation Programme - Phased Approach



We will continue:

- 1) Progressing development of a digital courts system
- 2) Developing strategic capability
- 3) Collaborating in common purpose with justice agencies
- 4) Enhancing our customer service focus
- 5) Building rewarding roles in a changing work environment for our people

Changing work environment

Our people will transform the Courts Service by delivering our ambitious Modernisation Programme to deliver our strategic Vision 2030. In circumstances where our staff are, on average, spending three years in their roles at the same time as our operations are expanding, we have an increased demand to support our staff with training and development. Through the development of a new People and Organisation Strategy in 2025 we aim to make jobs more meaningful and rewarding by streamlining and simplifying processes, reducing our reliance on paper-based processes and providing for digitally-enabled operations. Our desire is to be a workplace where everyone can thrive; be a place where people want to invest their careers to realise personal and organisation goals.

Progress in key reform areas

Over the last 3 years we have made significant advances in key areas of the Modernisation Programme including:

ICT

- The introduction of modern desktop and mobile devices across all Courts Service staff, members of the judiciary and courtrooms with the latest communications software.
- A significant expansion of our technology-enabled courtrooms, providing remote courts and digital evidence display functionality, moving from 46 such courtrooms at the beginning of 2020 to 136 at the end of 2023.
- Commencement in 2023 of a deployment of Wi-Fi services across the Courts Service managed buildings, including courtrooms, common areas in courthouses and court offices, completing 23 buildings in 2023, with the remaining to be completed in 2024 and 2025.
- An improved support model introduced for members of the judiciary, with proactive and regular check-ins, targeted and specific 1-1 training sessions, and the commencement of rolling training webinar sessions.
- An improved adoption support model for technology by staff with the introduction of a dedicated adoption team with frequent and scheduled in-person site visits to listen, learn and inform on all aspects of our technology services catalogue.
- A significantly improved cybersecurity defence system was put in place with the introduction of a dedicated 'in-house' cybersecurity team of specialists, an increased and continuous investment in the latest cybersecurity tooling, and an expansion and maturing of our cybersecurity policies and procedures.

Data

- We have established a dedicated data unit with in-house expertise in the areas of business intelligence, data engineering and data governance. This unit is responsible for increasing the maturity of the organisation with respect to how we manage our data and improving it as a whole-of-organisation concern.
- We have introduced several new data policies governing how we store, archive, destroy and access our data through a comprehensive new records management policy and data retention schedules. We will advance the implementation of these policies across all offices of the Service over the term of this strategy.
- A step change in the availability of quality data has come through the unit with the introduction of a wide range of dashboards and a suite of quarterly statistics in support of the implementation of the JPWG recommendations and operation of the courts.
- In the spirit of openness, transparency and building trust in the system we launched a new Open Data portal containing aggregate data on the courts system. This will be built on over the course of the coming strategy.

Digital

- A major part of the journey to digital end-to-end processing of case work commenced in 2023 through the initial launch of a new Unified Case Management System (UCMS). This system was introduced to support the new ADMC case type, the tracking of cases within the High Court, and is now in the process of being deployed for case tracking across Circuit Family. The UCMS under this strategy will expand into all other jurisdictions for case tracking and will be expanded for court users by way of “UCMS Portal” and for members of the judiciary via “UCMS Judiciary”.
- The digitisation of the jury summons and response process was launched in 2022. This system enables members of the public receiving jury summons to respond with acceptance or excusals electronically. Over 42% of all summonses issued are currently being responded to and managed digitally, replacing postal responses. Feedback has been very positive, with 93% of users who responded describing the new system as easy to use.
- Digital integration with other justice sector partners has advanced over the last three years with the introduction of data-sharing initiatives such as eCharge Sheets – where charge sheets, which were previously delivered in paper and entered manually into Courts Service systems, are now in the main delivered digitally removing vast amounts of manual data input work. In 2023, 95% of charge sheets were received and entered into our systems digitally.

Supporting court users

To better support the needs of court users some of the changes we have implemented include:

- Becoming a JAM card-friendly organisation, supporting people with hidden disabilities or communication barriers to let us know they need “Just A Minute” discretely and easily.
- Developing 360-degree tours of four of our buildings, allowing people to navigate and understand the environment before coming to court. These tours can be accessed online at <https://services.courts.ie/virtual-tours>.
- Using virtual reality headsets to help witnesses and vulnerable users prepare for the court experience in advance.

- Providing plain language information about Family law and Debt on our improved, accessible website. Information about the court system resolution options, and how to access legal and other relevant supports is provided.
- Developing and commencing rollout of Trauma Informed Practice training tailored to the needs of our organisation and its users.
- Appointment booking system allowing court users to attend a court office at a time that suits them, reducing waiting times.
- Providing jurors with a digital way to reply to their jury summons and receive information from court offices.

Collaboration with key strategic partners

A key focus of the last Strategic Plan was to build collaborative engagements with key strategic partners. Working groups were established to engage with the Judiciary, Legal Practitioners and Civic Society Groups. Every project team includes a member of our Communications and Media Unit so that excellent communications and engagement is embedded in project planning from the outset. Our teams continue to work with a broad range of colleagues across the justice sector and other areas of public service. In submissions received in the development of this plan strong support was received for the approach taken to date.

New ways of working

Over the lifetime of the previous Strategic Plan, we introduced new ways of working across our organisation. Our project teams use collaborative approaches such as agile methodology and design thinking. We involve our staff, and those that use our services in an iterative process to deliver better outcomes.

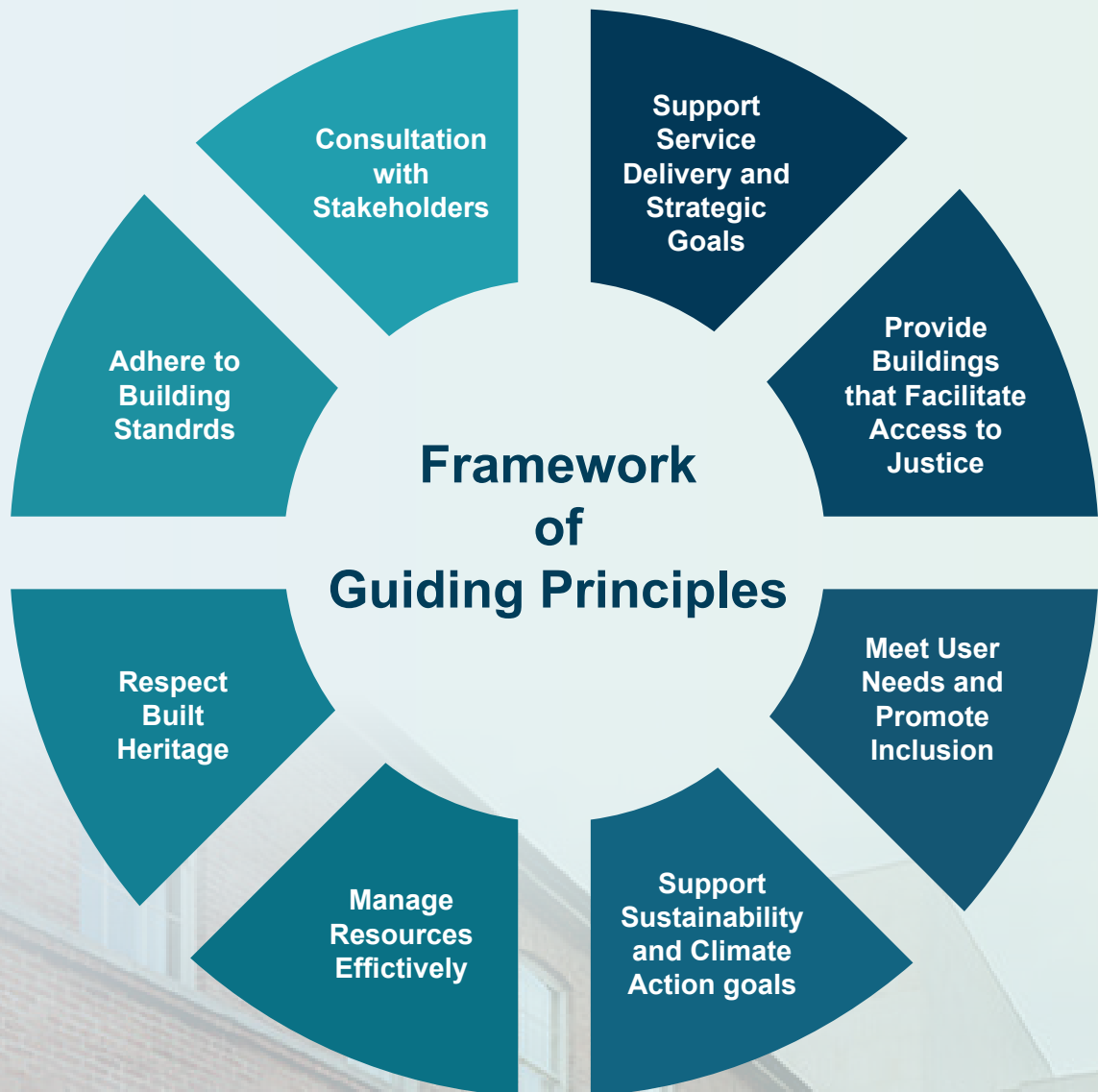
We are also working together to create a Healthy Place to Work.

Our Estate

Our Estate plays an important role in enhancing our user-centric approach to the delivery of services. Our Estate Strategy aims to ensure that our buildings, which are a major public asset, properly serve user needs and support the administration of justice.

Progress has been made to improve the overall estate. Further works are required to bring all facilities up to appropriate modern standards. This represents a significant challenge given the number of venues, their age, and in many instances their protected status. Our Framework of Guiding Principles will serve as a management tool to inform all aspects of estate governance and decision making. The principles are not a new concept for the management of our estate but rather a codification of existing methodology for progressing projects. They will assist the Courts Service to act in the best interest of users, the judiciary, legal practitioners, and staff while ensuring value for money. The principles will act as an enabler for achieving the objectives set out in the Estate Strategy and in modernising the estate.

The Guiding Principles



2020

Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others to enable a world-class Courts system

2030

3 ■ **Our Strategic Goals, Priority Actions and Key Outcomes**



Our Strategic Goals and Priority Actions and identified Key Outcomes were developed following consultation with managers, the Board of the Courts Service, our key partners in the justice sector and court users to reflect the Courts Service Long-Term Strategic Vision and the deliverables set out in the Modernisation Programme.

These **Strategic Goals, Priority Actions and Key Outcomes** will inform our annual corporate business plans, incorporating business-as-usual activities and Key Performance Indicators, to be developed by the various directorates and offices across the organisation.

Goal 1 Take a user-centric approach

Strategic Goal

We will adopt new collaborative ways of working, taking a user-centric approach, to provide improved and enhanced service delivery.

Priority Actions

1. Continue to explore opportunities to support improved Customer Service, including a service catalogue and possible Customer Service Models.
2. Integrate Design Principles for Government In Ireland with our approach to Modernisation.
3. Further develop the provision of information in plain language.
4. Streamline and simplify access to court through the introduction of new digital journeys and improved court forms.
5. Support legislative initiatives as prioritised in the Programme for Government, including the Family Courts Bill.
6. Cooperate with groups providing Court Accompaniment Services for victims and, where possible, providing improved facilities for vulnerable witnesses in court buildings, including videolink evidence facilities.
7. Cooperate with the Department of Justice in the review of the Pilot Registered Intermediary scheme.

Key Outcomes

- An evidence-based approach to customer service.
- Better understanding of the needs of all service users.
- Culture of collaborative working.
- User-friendly and efficient experience for those who engage with the court system.
- Customer charters and customer service initiatives have regard to the needs of vulnerable users.

Goal 2 Supporting the Judiciary

Strategic Goal

We will work collaboratively with the judiciary to define and provide the resources needed to effectively carry out their judicial functions.

Priority Actions	Key Outcomes
1. Continue to engage with the judiciary to develop a digital portal for the judiciary enabling digital end-to-end journeys for cases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient, effective and suitable support services provided to the judiciary to enable fulfilment of their judicial functions. Clearer and more real-time access to digital court data to assist with resource planning and case management. Through stronger collaboration, reformed court procedures and practices progressed. Improved understanding of challenges and opportunities facing the courts system.
2. Review current staffing and judicial support model to identify opportunities to provide improved support services to the judiciary and court Presidents.	
3. Develop data dashboards to support decision-making by court Presidents and judges.	
4. Work collaboratively with the Judicial Council to enhance judicial training particularly in areas related to implementation of JPWG recommendations.	
5. Support the establishment of the Judicial Appointments Commission.	
6. Continue positive engagements with various judicial working groups.	

Goal 3 Digital First

Strategic Goal

We will adopt a digital first, but not digital only, approach.

Priority Actions

1. Continue to deploy the Unified Case Management System (UCMS) across all jurisdictions, moving away from our highly fragmented and legacy technology ecosystem.
2. Deliver “UCMS Portal” – a user-facing portal enabling engagement with the court system in a digital manner.
3. Continue to expand technology-enabled courtrooms to support administration of courts through digital channels, and work collaboratively with the Irish Prison Service and An Garda Síochána to support court appearances by videolink.
4. Continue to advance initiatives to further strengthen our cybersecurity posture.
5. Improve records management processes by implementing records management and data retention policies.
6. Explore opportunities for appropriate use of advanced technologies, including AI, in support of court administration.
7. Meet our obligations with regards to digital integration with EU member states under the e-CODEX programme.
8. Continue to integrate accessibility features at each stage of digital development process.

Key Outcomes

- Reliable and secure digital environment.
- Digital channels in place reflecting user-centric approach and best practice in online service design.
- Reduced reliance on paper-based processes and outdated technology.
- Improved customer service that is inclusive and provides for digital first but not digital only solutions, taking account of human and equality rights.
- Increased utilisation of technology and improved options for court attendance and participation in remote and hybrid hearings.
- A robust, secure and transparent data ecosystem supporting the functioning of the Courts, effective decision-making, and collaboration with justice agencies and government in line with GDPR.
- New applications meet the requirement of the EU Web Accessibility Directive.



Better ways of working

Strategic Goal

We will continue to invest in and support our people to create a high performing organisation, delivering on the Modernisation Agenda and broader government priorities.

Priority Actions

1. To respond to the challenges of retention, modernisation and the implementation of JPWG recommendations, continue to invest in recruitment, training, leadership development and change management.
2. Continue to create a diverse organisation that supports digitally enabled operations and new ways of working.
3. Continue to place the employee experience at the heart of our people agenda and improve our Healthy Place to Work assessment.
4. Implementation of Courts Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

Key Outcomes

- Sufficient supported and trained staff have the skills required to deliver services to court users in a modern, digital court environment.
- A strong culture of staff engagement, innovation and continuous improvement which maximise staff members' contribution to a high performing organisation.
- Improved choices for working arrangements as digital environment matures.
- Trained staff who feel valued and heard and choose to invest their career in the Courts Service.
- Leaders who can effectively and efficiently guide and drive organisation transformation.
- A Healthy Place to Work score of 70% thereby achieving HPTW certification.
- Enhanced workplace culture and the provision of services, so that our staff and service users see evidence of the organisation's commitment to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI).



Provide a modern and improved estate and facilities

Strategic Goal

Provide buildings that are modern, fit for purpose, safe and accessible and support the new ways in which we will conduct business.

Priority Actions

1. Continue to develop plans for new and improved infrastructure to bring the estate and facilities to an appropriate standard, accommodate new ways of delivering court services and other commitments of the Service.
2. Progress implementation of our project pipeline to meet our public sector obligations including those relating to energy and decarbonisation targets, as outlined in our Climate Action Road Map to 2030.
3. Progress the development of the Dublin Family Law Complex.
4. Through minor works projects, enhance accessibility, security and safety of the estate for staff, judiciary and court users.

Key Outcomes

- Progress made in site acquisition in line with funding provided for the National Development Plan 2030.
- Progress towards a more proactive management of the estate via a Facility Management and Planned Preventative Maintenance regime.
- Be on track to meet our climate action obligations for 2030.
- Construction of Dublin Family Courts well underway.
- Improved accessibility, security and safety evidenced by an appropriate testing regime.
- An emphasis on sustainability is included in our fiscal, enterprise, innovation, and environmental approach and policies.

Goal
6

Accountability and Leadership

Strategic Goal

We will ensure governance structures ensure effective accountability and leadership for our modernisation and reform agenda.

Priority Actions

1. Ensure governance structures and performance indicators across the organisation are reviewed and monitored regularly.
2. Monitor progress and performance of the actions set out in this Strategic Plan through regular reports to the Board.
3. Monitor and report on the benefits accruing from the Modernisation programme and reform agenda.
4. An annual report will be prepared on the Courts Service's attainment of progress in meeting its obligations under the Official Languages Acts.
5. A plan will be developed to meet statutory public service Irish language targets by 2030, including recruitment and advertising.
6. Development of master statistics for management information, resource allocation and regular reporting to the Courts Service Board.
7. Develop and publish updated strategies:
 - ICT, Digital and Data
 - Stakeholder Engagement and Communications
 - Estates and Sustainability
 - People and Organisation
 - Innovation Strategy

Key Outcomes

- Robust governance environment, including business continuity, analysis and risk structures, supporting our ability to manage and navigate emerging challenges and opportunities during the lifetime of this strategy.
- Benefits of Modernisation programme and reform agenda are realised in line with targets.
- Meet our statutory obligations under the Office Languages Acts.



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service