

Online Procedure Rule Committee

Minutes of meeting on 9 June 2025 at 14:00-15:15

Conducted in a hybrid format at The Royal Courts of Justice, Fetter Lane, London and via video conference.

Members in attendance

- Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls (MR)
- Sir Andrew McFarlane, President of the Family Division (PFD)
- Lord Justice Edis
- Sarah Stephens (SS)
- Brett Dixon (BD)

Non-members in attendance

- Lord Justice Baker
- Lord Justice Birss
- Sarah Rose, MoJ
- Harriet Ainsworth-Smith, MoJ
- Helen Timpson, MoJ
- Irram Khan, OPRC Secretariat
- Fola Shodeinde, OPRC Secretariat team
- Amrita Dhaliwal, MoJ
- Marcia Williams, MoJ
- Jenny Pickrell, MoJ
- Elena Birchall, MoJ
- Alasdair Wallace, External Drafting Lawyer
- Joshua Gibson, JO
- Nick Lee, JO
- Amy Shaw, Acting Private Secretary to the MR
- Connor Keschari-Robson, Deputy Private Secretary to the MR
- Heidi Bancroft, SPT's Private Office
- Naomi Bruneel, SPT Office
- Bee Ezete, Private Secretary to the PFD
- Rosemary Rand, HMCTS
- Rachael Peters, HMCTS

Item 1 - Welcome, Apologies and Introductory Remarks

1. **Apologies:** Gerard Boyers and Mrs Justice Joanna Smith.
2. **Minutes:** the minutes from last meeting on 12 May 2025 were approved.

Item 2 – OPRC event update

3. Preparations for the event were advancing well, and the Law Society was coordinating with MoJ on the guest list.
4. The CPRC event would take place in the morning, while the OPRC event would be held in the afternoon. Attendees of the CPRC and OPRC events would have the opportunity to participate in both sessions. The CPRC

event would include various topics, including a discussion on Alternative Dispute Resolution led by Lady Justice Asplin.

Item 3 – Consultation Documents

5. MR expressed gratitude to JB and SS for their diligent efforts in drafting the documents.
6. The committee agreed to consolidate the consultation documents into a single document, with an introduction provided by the chair of the OPRC. The structure would be revisited to incorporate questions throughout the document.
7. The committee addressed key issues arising from the recent Pre-Action Model Workstream meeting, such as the infrastructure that could be needed to implement the proposed draft model, given current business models of unregulated providers.
8. GB would provide the technical standards for the consultation documents. The Committee discussed adopting either GDS or HMCTS data standards as the current existing standards.
9. SS highlighted the importance of data collection in the pre-action space to measure inclusion effectively.
10. MR clarified that the Pre-Action Model aimed to encourage providers to adopt compatible data standards and to guide individuals to appropriate services if the initial provider cannot assist. The committee also discussed the possibility of developing an initial list of approved providers who would adhere to the standards set by the OPRC.
11. Edis LJ noted that while the digital justice system has a role in tribunals, it is important to distinguish between types of tribunals. With the exception of the Employment and Property tribunals, most deal with disputes between individuals and the state where online dispute resolution provided by a third party is not likely to be appropriate.

Item 4 - Property & Possession

12. Birss LJ provided an update on the drafting of the rules and the draft overriding objective was shared with and received positive feedback from the Committee. A first draft of the rules would be shared with the Committee for the July meeting.
13. MR emphasised the importance of ensuring the possession system would be capable of dealing with tribunal cases as and when funding allowed for further development. This aligned with the remit given to the OPRC by Parliament which covers all case types relating to property.

AOB

14. HAS mentioned plans underway for an open meeting in October 2025.
15. HAS confirmed that the Secretariat team will present a paper on the drafting and timing of the next SI at the July meeting.
16. Birss LJ confirmed that the CPRC have extended the Online Civil Money Claims pilot to October 2026.
17. Baker LJ informed the committee that the PAM working group would be meeting with the Legal Aid Policy team and Legal Services Policy team that day.
18. Baker LJ also mentioned that all sub-committee members had been invited to the Future of Justice conference at UCL.

Actions

- Baker LJ to provide the MR with the finalised draft PAM model paper.
- MR to review the public engagement documents and send them to the Secretariat this week to circulate to sub-committee members.
- GB to provide the technical standards for the public engagement document.
- Secretariat to circulate a set of draft rules to OPRC members before the July meeting.