

Meeting: Legal Services Board

Date: 26 October 2021

Item: Paper (21) 51

Title: Annual conference

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Status: Official

Introduction: Purpose of the paper

1. This paper sets out a proposal for an annual conference and senior summit in September 2022 following the Board's discussion at its September 2021 strategy session.

Recommendation

2. The Board is invited to note the proposal and provide any feedback.

Background

3. As our consumer-focused strategy for the legal services sector makes clear, we will only tackle the challenges facing the sector by collaborating with others. At its strategy session on 21 September 2021, the Board discussed initial ideas for an annual collaborative stakeholder event and asked the Executive to develop a proposal.
4. We propose holding a conference with an associated senior summit-style meeting. These will build on the extensive stakeholder engagement that informed the strategy and the success of the online summit in September 2020.
5. The events would take place consecutively, with the senior summit taking place either the evening before or early morning before the full-day conference.

The senior summit

6. The overall aim of the senior summit is to continue building support for the strategy at senior levels and engage leaders in our work.
7. We would invite senior politicians and senior representatives from the regulators and across the legal services sector.
8. The summit would include a keynote address, a discussion about the sector's strategic challenges and ways to tackle them, with dinner or breakfast.

The conference

9. The overall aims of the legal services conference are to:

- a) Maintain momentum in the sector-wide mission to deliver the ambitions set out in the strategy
- b) Promote collaboration and leadership, and promote positive examples of good practice to encourage others to play their part in tackling the sector's challenges

10. Although there are several conferences across the legal services sector, none bring the wide range of stakeholders across the sector with a role to play in reshaping legal services together in the way that we envisage.

11. We aim to use our convening power to bring together those who can help deliver our mission. This includes:

- Approved regulators and regulatory bodies
- Legal services providers
- Consumer groups
- Government ministers and departments
- Charities and the third sector
- Judiciary
- Diversity groups
- Academics and education and training providers
- Tech providers
- Leading legal voices

12. The event will play a key role in building support for the consumer-focused strategy, and we will not charge delegates to attend.

13. We plan for this to be a mainly in-person event but will include hybrid elements or web streaming/recording to be as inclusive as possible.

14. We will provide a platform for a wide range of voices to share what they are doing to reshape legal services to better meet society's needs and focusing on areas where we can foster collaboration. We will identify senior and influential voices to deliver the keynote and other speeches throughout the day.

15. As well as plenary sessions, we will investigate the best use of time in separating the audience into different groups, with panel debates, workshops or roundtable discussions. These sessions will focus on the three strategic themes of the reshaping legal services strategy.

Timing of the event

16. We propose to hold the events in the week commencing 19th or 26th September 2022. This scheduling reflects the significant time and resources required to plan, promote and deliver a senior summit and large scale conference.

Governance for the conference

17. In keeping with the spirit of collaboration, we will set up a steering group of stakeholders to help shape the agenda and co-produce the events. The steering group will advise on how to best curate the strategy through keynote presentations, panel discussions and Q&A sessions.
18. We will invite the Legal Services Consumer Panel and the CEOs of the regulatory bodies to participate or delegate participation to a suitable colleague. We will also ask the Bar Council and the Law Society to participate.
19. With the steering group's input, we will investigate the option of umbrella branding for the conference to advance the collaborative message further and shared sector-wide agenda.
20. We will regularly consult with the communications and engagement Board leads (Catherine Seddon and Michael Smyth) and use them as a sounding board to organise the event. We note that Michael Smyth appointment to the Board comes to an end ahead of the event, and so we invite the Board to consider whether a third Board member should work alongside the leads from the start of the project.

Delivery and risks

21. The LSB has an experienced Communications and Engagement Team. However, planning, promoting, and delivering events of this size in-house is a significant risk given the team's small size, and it is the first time we are attempting this.
22. We are exploring options for additional people or agency support and opportunities for co-delivery and partnering with others.

Next steps

23. We will cost the proposal and include it in the draft business plan for 2022/23, which we will consult on in December 2021.
24. We will provide regular updates to the Board during the project.

Risks and mitigations	
Financial:	The external steering group will offer leadership on the events' aims to ensure it supports our collective mission and help ensure they achieve value for money.
Legal:	Any delivery contracts will be reviewed by the legal team.
Communications and engagement:	Key risks are explored above.

Equality and diversity:	We will build steps into the planning and invitation process to ensure there are no unintended barriers to a diverse and wide-reaching audience.
Resource:	Key risks are explored above.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)		
Para ref	Fol exemption and summary	Expires
N/A	N/A	N/A