LEGAL SERVICES BOARD (LSB) MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2025

Date:	22 July 2025
Time:	14.30 - 15.30 (Board private session)
	15.30 – 18.30 (Board meeting)
Venue:	Online (via Teams)

Present: Catherine Brown, Interim Chair
(Members)
Katherine Briscoe
Clare Brown
Gary Kildare
Habib Motani
Christine Nwaokolo
Lizzie Peers
Flora Page
Richard Orpin, Interim Chief Executive

Apologies:
Craig Westwood, Chief Executive

In attendance:

Angela Latta	Head of Performance and Oversight
Paul Nezandonyi	Head, Communications and Engagement
Samuel Omolade	Head, Strategy and Research
Femi Otukoya	Head, Finance, IT and Procurement
Matilda Quiney	Director of Corporate Services
Danielle Viall	General Counsel and Interim Deputy Chief Executive
Heather McLoughlin	Corporate Governance Manager (Minutes)
Rob Morrison	Regulatory Policy Manager (Private Session and Item 05)
Gavin Doyle	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Lead (Item 04)

In attendance as observers:

Emily Field	Legal Advisor (Item 04)
Toakase Tonga	Senior Legal Advisor (Item 06)

Item 01 - Welcome and apologies

1. The Interim Chair welcomed the Board and Executive.

2. Apologies were received from Craig Westwood, Chief Executive and Liz Marshall, Board Apprentice.

Item 02 - Declarations of interest relevant to the business of the Board

3. There were no declarations of interest relevant to the business of the Board.

Item 03 - Chief Executive's progress report

4. The Interim Chief Executive presented the report.

    - The Interim Chief Executive provided a verbal update on the two ministerial roundtables that were held recently that LSB attended. Both roundtables had good engagement between Ministers and LSB.
    - The Judicial Diversity Forum was attended by the Lord Chancellor, who expressed her commitment to improving diversity within the legal profession.
    - The Head of Communications and Engagement provided a verbal summary on recent LSB engagement events in Manchester. The Board was informed that the event had around 50 attendees, and a range of legal sector topics were discussed including the Legal Services Act and the lack of progress on delivering the benefits that underpinned the introduction of the SQE qualification.

5. The Board **noted** the report.

Item 04 - Encouraging a Diverse Legal Profession – Draft Statement of Policy

6. The LSB's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Lead introduced the item and noted that the proposals in the draft statement of policy were a culmination of ongoing dialogue with the Board that had started in 2023. The Board discussed the following:
    - The complexity of diversity issues in the legal profession was acknowledged, as well as the need for a flexible framework that recognises the differing regulatory contexts.
    - There was strong support for the draft statement of policy's clarity and ambition.
    - The importance of high-quality, meaningful data collection by regulators was emphasised, and that the LSB should reflect on how the proposed framework could support this. The Board acknowledged that regulators should use external evidence and data collected and published by others where regulators lack their own data.

- The Board discussed the need for regulators to develop individual implementation plans to meet the statement's outcomes and expectations within 3–6 months, with a clear expectation of progress within 12 months.
- That the link between bullying and harassment and diversity in the proposals could be reflected on, so that its inclusion in this agenda is clearly defined.
- The draft statement of policy's directive tone was acknowledged as a significant shift from previous LSB policy and guidance, but it was deemed necessary to drive meaningful change.
- The broader context, including government support for improving diversity alongside the Government's growth agenda, was seen as an opportunity to align regulatory efforts with national priorities.
- Overall, the Board emphasised the need for placing responsibility on regulators while allowing flexibility, recognising the directive nature of the approach as clear, evidence based, and proportionate.

7. The Board **discussed** the draft policy statement and **agreed** to delegate to the Interim Chair and the Interim Chief Executive the approval of a final draft of the statement of policy to be consulted on in the autumn.

Item 05 - OLC Budget Acceptance Criteria

8. The Regulatory Policy Manager introduced the item and reminded the Board that this item was for the Board to consider ahead of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) submitting a draft budget to LSB's Board in the Autumn. The Board discussed the following:
    - The need for OLC to produce a concise draft budget application, one that focused on providing clarity on the key impact areas of their work.
    - That value for money criteria should not only reflect what OLC will do in the coming year but also link it to performance in prior years.
    - Core spend should be linked to strategic outcomes.

9. The Board **noted** the draft OLC Budget Acceptance Criteria.

Item 06 - BSB Voluntary Undertakings update

10. The Head, Performance and Oversight introduced the paper and summarised progress. Engagement with BSB on the draft undertakings has been increasingly positive, with focus now turning to measures of the outcomes that the BSB would deliver. The BSB Board was expected to consider the draft undertakings at its meeting on 23 July.

11. The Board noted:

- the BSB had approached the undertakings constructively, which was helpful, allowing focus to move to consideration of effective monitoring arrangements.
- while the proposed undertakings are moving in the right direction, they need to be direct and clear as to our expectations on measures.
- the importance of the timeframe set to agree undertakings, and the expectation that we maintain as close as possible to the timeframe.
- the need to use language focusing on outcomes rather than process, to deliver results against a specified timeframe.
- the final wording must reflect both the Board's decision taken in April to progress informal action under its Enforcement Policy and the conclusions of the regulatory performance assessment endorsed by the Board in March.
- that a monitoring plan would be developed to maintain a focus on outcomes and track progress against those.
- overall, the Board welcomed the work on the voluntary undertakings, which has progressed well, due to efforts both by the BSB and LSB. The Board agreed that the end point was within sight and if work progressed at this pace and level of collaboration and ambition, any extension beyond 24 July would likely be a matter of days rather than weeks. The Board would be kept informed of progress.

12. The Board **noted** the close engagement between the LSB and BSB on reaching agreement so far, **discussed** the draft voluntary undertakings and **agreed** to delegate to the Interim Chair and the Interim Chief Executive the final approval of the voluntary undertakings.

Item 07 - Corporate Risk Register

13. The Director, Corporate Services introduced the item. The Chair of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) informed the Board that ARAC reviewed the register on a regular basis and that there had been discussions between ARAC and the Executive on the need for the Board to review the risk register and this piece of work was scheduled to start in Autumn 2025. The Board discussed the following:
    - An agreement that there was a need for the corporate risk register to focus on strategic, high-level risks, while ARAC should continue to scrutinise risk and its management in more detail. The Board discussed whether there should be two versions: a high-level Board version and a more detailed ARAC version.
    - The Board emphasised the importance of their role in identifying and highlighting risks that are not yet been fully understood or managed, rather than only reviewing those already identified.
    - Specific risks such as cybersecurity, public trust and confidence in regulators, and crisis preparedness were flagged as needing greater visibility and clarity.

- The Board agreed that there was a need for an annual Board workshop on the risk register to enable review existing risks and identify new risks. **(Action)**

14. The Board **discussed** and **agreed** the Corporate Risk Register and looked forward to a future discussion of refinements to the approach.

Item 08 - RNC Update

15. The Chair of RNC provided a verbal update on the recent RNC meeting.

- LSB was working on numerous appointments and that this was a busy area of work.
- The recruitment for the OLC Chair role was progressing, with this role expected to be launched soon. Furthermore, a recruitment campaign for the current vacancy on the OLC Board would soon be launched and Board members were invited to express interest on being on the interview panel.
- The Committee looked at learning and development opportunities for the Board and how members could be supported to access training.
- Feedback from exit interviews had shown that most leavers expressed a positive experience of their time working at the LSB and cited the culture and flexible working as particular areas of positivity.
- While the recent employee survey had identified some challenges that would need to be addressed, staff had expressed positivity about the leadership of the Interim Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team in providing organisational stability and direction.

16. The Board **noted** the RNC update.

Item 09 - Finance Report to 30 June 2025

17. The Head of Finance, IT and Procurement introduced the item.

- Quarter 1 report showed an underspend, primarily due to a recruitment lag, which was being held until budget approval had been received. It was noted that if the budget was to be approved at a reduced level, the underspend would be eradicated.
- There are operational issues effecting the organisation as a result of the delay in the approving of LSB's budget. This also meant that reforecasting, which usually occurs at the beginning of Quarter 2, was currently difficult to do with certainty.
- LSB was operating against a reduced baseline budget rather than the board-approved version. The Board requested that the team track financials against both the revised proposed budget of 8.4% and 11%

budget approved by the Board in April 2025, until such time as we have certainty on our budget. **(Action)**

- It was noted that the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) had been finalised and laid before Parliament. On behalf of the Board, the Interim Chair thanked the Executive for their work in this area.

18. The Board **noted** the Finance Report to June 2025.

Item 10 - Minutes of the previous meetings – 10 June

19. The Board approved the minutes as drafted of the meeting of the Board held on 10 June 2025.

Item 11 - LSCP Annual Report

20. The Board **endorsed** the LSCP Annual Report.

Item 12 - Board action tracker

21. The Board **agreed** the action tracker.

Item 13 - Papers circulated out of committee since last meeting.

22. The Board **noted** the papers.

Item 14 - Forward look

23. The Board noted the forward look.

Item 15 - AOB

24. No other formal business was raised.

With no further business to discuss the Interim Chair closed the meeting at 17.51.