

SRA BOARD

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**SOLICITORS REGULATION AUTHORITY
Minutes of the SRA Board meeting
held on 31 January 2018 at 10.00
at The Cube, 199 Wharfside Street, Birmingham B1**

Subject to final approval by the SRA Board at its meeting on 7 March 2018

Present: Enid Rowlands (Chair)
Julia Black
David Heath
Paul Loft
Barry Matthews
Geoff Nicholas
Dame Denise Platt
Chris Randall
Deep Sagar
Tony Williams
David Willis

In attendance: Paul Philip, Richard Collins, Robert Loughlin, Jane Malcolm, David Middleton, Juliet Oliver, Crispin Passmore, Julie Brannan (for item 7), Dominic Tambling.

1 APOLOGIES

1.1 The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting including Paul Loft who was attending his first Board meeting. Apologies had been received from Sharon Darcy and Elaine Williams.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2017

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2017 were approved as a true and accurate record.

3 MATTERS ARISING AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no matters arising.

3.2 Interests were as previously declared and available to view on the SRA website. Members would declare any additional particular interest in an individual item if necessary.

4 CHAIR'S UPDATE

4.1 The Chair reported that she and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) had met the independent members of the Business and Oversight Board (BOB) on 12 December 2017. They had discussed the way in which the BOB would operate in

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the future under the new arrangements set out in the Law Society's General Regulations, which had been amended by its Council in October 2017.

- 4.2 On 17 January 2018 the Chair and CEO had attended a meeting of the chairs of the legal regulators convened by the Legal Services Board (LSB). The main topic of discussion had been the LSB's consultation on its Internal Governance Rules.
- 4.3 Board members discussed the future size of the Board. The General Regulations provided that the Board could have either 11, 13 or 15 members as long as there was one more lay member than solicitor member. The Board agreed that it should remain at 13 members rather than recruit two further members. This would facilitate discussion and achieve some cost savings.
- 4.4 The Chair reminded Board members that the annual strategy away day would take place in April. Members would be asked for their ideas on subjects for discussion.

5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

- 5.1 The Chief Executive Officer, introduced his report ([link](#)).
- 5.2 The CEO covered a number of issues, for decision and noting. These included progress in implementing the General Data Protection Regulations, continuing work relating to anti-money laundering and an update on work to modernise our IT
- 5.3 The Board approved the appointment of David Neave as a Director of the Solicitors Indemnity Fund Limited from 1 March 2018 for a period of three years.

6 SRA STAFF SURVEY 2017

- 6.1 The Board was asked to consider the results of the staff survey 2017 and progress against results from previous surveys.
- 6.2 Board members congratulated the Executive team on the positive trend over the last three years, against the background of considerable and continuing change within the organisation. Members contributed their thinking on areas where the Executive should focus the corporate action plan that would be put in place to address the areas which the survey had highlighted as needing further attention
- 6.3 The Board noted the results of the survey and the overall trends in relation to the results of previous surveys.

7 SOLICITORS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (SQE) SOURCING

- 7.1 The Board was asked to consider progress in appointing an assessment supplier for the SQE and the related governance arrangements.
- 7.2 In response to questions from Board members it was confirmed that a detailed model of what would be assessed under SQE and the assessment methodology

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had been published. It was also confirmed that a contract awarded to a supplier would include rights to review or terminate in particular circumstances, as is usual commercial practice. Members underlined the need to ensure that the introduction of SQE helped those from a more diverse range of backgrounds to enter the profession.

- 7.3 The Board noted the progress made in appointing an assessment supplier and confirmed that it was content with the related governance arrangements.

8 EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF OUR REGULATORY REFORM PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Board was asked to consider the use of an impact evaluation framework for evaluating individual regulatory reforms and the wider Looking to the Future and Better Information programmes as a whole.
- 8.2 Board members welcomed the proposals and underlined the need for continuous engagement with the profession and the public and the need to assess the quality of services provided as well as how easy it was to access them. Board members also emphasised the need for them to be informed promptly if and when significant issues were identified and, in any case, to be regularly updated on this work.
- 8.3 The Board agreed the use of the framework and the indicative scheduling of individual evaluations after one year and three years, followed by programme wide evaluations after five years.

9 SRA STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER 2017-18

- 9.1 The Board was asked to consider a progress report on the management of our strategic risk register. The register currently comprised eight risks, including those relating to our IT systems which would be addressed by the Modernising IT Programme.
- 9.2 The Board agreed that the Register identified the appropriate risks and noted the measures in place to manage them.

Items for information only

10 DUBIOUS INVESTMENT SCHEMES

- 10.1 The Board noted the issues of solicitor involvement in dubious investment schemes and the possible next steps to help combat this.

11 THE SRA AND THE INSURANCE FRAUD TASKFORCE

- 11.1 The Board noted the work being undertaken in response to recommendations made by the Insurance Fraud Taskforce and other work related to the personal injury sector.

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12 IMPACT OF THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION (GDPR)

12.1 The Board noted the update on work on compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

13 REVIEW OF MEETING AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 The Board received an update from committee chairs in relation to committee meetings that had taken place since the last Board meeting. The Board considered and agreed the process for the appointment of a new Board Chair which had been discussed by the People Strategy Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2018. The Chair of the Committee confirmed that the process complied with principles of public appointments and the Legal Services Board's internal governance rules. The Board noted that information on gender pay would be circulated to members before publication.

13.2 The Chair thanked Board members for their contributions. The next meeting of the Board would be on Wednesday 7 March 2018 at The St David's Hotel, Cardiff, CF10 5SD, at 09.00.