



COUNCIL

7 December 2017

Classification - Part 1 Paper

Purpose - For noting

MEMBERSHIP BOARD REPORT

Remit

1. To set and oversee the implementation of policy for managing relationships with the profession, including local law societies, Law Society groups, associations, sections, networks and divisions;
2. To set and oversee the implementation of policy relating to services for members and others to include, but not be limited to, family members, potential entrants to the profession, non solicitor employees of firms and to the public;
3. To set and oversee the implementation of policy to support Council members in their work.

Statement of territorial application

This paper applies to England and Wales

Financial, section 51 and resourcing implications

None arising directly from this paper

Consultation with Finance

This report has not been sent to Finance for review.

Equality and diversity implications

None arising directly from this paper

Consultation

This report has been papered for the Council directly.

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REPORT OF THE MEMBERSHIP BOARD – Part 1

Since the date of the last report to Council the Board has met on the 15th November 2017. The following matters were discussed.

1. Relationship Management Update

- 1.1 The Board welcomed Valeria Mancheva, the recently appointed Director of Relationship Management.
- 1.2 The Board were informed that the Relationship Management Directorate had consolidated various areas within The Law Society to include Relationship Management, Strategic Relationships, risk and compliance and communities, sections and divisions to form a wider engagement team. The aim is to deliver a more holistic, consistent approach to improve the member engagement experience.
- 1.3 Valeria advised members that there were four primary areas of focus:
 - (a) Regional activities.
 - (b) Engagement with local Law Societies.
 - (c) Member insight feedback.
 - (d) Joined up strategic planning to inform member engagement.
- 1.4 During September and October 16 topical regional seminars, roundtables, conferences and events were held in different parts of the country which collectively involved over 450 members.

2. Introduction of Student Membership

- 2.1 A further discussion paper was presented to the Board regarding the possibility of reintroducing a Law Society Student Membership. Discussions took place as to a possible student member offering and offerings from other professional bodies were looked at.
- 2.2 The Board took the view that further work should be carried out on establishing a student membership and that this would need to address any constitutional issues, look more closely at the detail of the member offer for students, consider the potential income and costs from such a membership and who would be eligible to join as a student member.
- 2.3 It is hoped that a further paper will be brought to the Board in the New Year and that a paper can be put to Council before the summer.

3. Education, Training and Learning Strategy

- 3.1 A paper was presented to the Board proposing the creation of a Law Society Quality and Standards in Education Committee. The purpose

of the committee would be to oversee all aspects of quality and standards associated with the Society's education, training and accreditations. It was expected that the committee would directly report to the new Membership and Operations Committee.

- 3.2 The new committee would be made up of legal and non-legally qualified professionals with sound and relevant expertise in post graduate legal education and training. Membership would include a Council Member, elected by a ballot of the Council, a Junior Lawyers Division or student member representative and an independent chair who would need to have an in depth knowledge and experience of quality and standards in post-graduate/professional legal education and training.
- 3.3 The Board approved the establishment of a Law Society Quality and Standards in Education Committee in line with the recommendations set out in the paper.

4. Gazette Strategy Review

- 4.1 The Board welcomed Paul Rogerson, Editor in Chief of the Gazette to the Board.
- 4.2 Paul explained that the Gazette had carried out some extensive research for a better understanding of the value to members and future role of the Gazette. Extensive research has now taken place and the results have been analysed.
- 4.3 The key findings of this research are:
- The Gazette is by far the most popular legal news title among the broader membership.
 - There is very limited evidence to suggest that a change in frequency would deliver a meaningful rise in consumption and member value. The preference among print copy readers was to retain the weekly frequency. Despite the rapid growth in Gazette digital traffic, more solicitors still read the Gazette in print.
 - The commercial revenue of the publication would be optimised by re-designing and revitalising the print weekly.
- 4.4 The research suggests a refreshed Gazette could do more to engage members in The Law Society's work and member offer, while retaining its credibility as a news and business intelligence source.
- 4.5 The recommendation put to and agreed by the Board are:
- Retain the weekly print frequency.

- Redesign and refresh the print issue to become more visually appealing and less text heavy;
- To differentiate it from the online Gazette;
- Clearly flag Law Society policies and services in a more consistent way;
- Reflect the revised Law Society Identity once agreed;

4.6 It was proposed that a further review be undertaken in 3-5 years' time to revisit and reassess the print/digital mix and frequency focussing on its value to members and commercial contribution.

5. Proposed New Law Society Logo

5.1 Mike Brown, Director of Communications, explained that a sub group of the Board and some other invited Council Members had been working on the redesign of the Law Society logo and brand refresh. This was needed to make it fit for purpose in the digital age. There was no intention to make any changes to the official Law Society crest.

5.2 The Board approved the work that has been carried out by the sub group including the proposed new logo and recommended that this be put to Council for approval.

6. Member Welcome Pack

6.1 At the request of the Board a new Member Welcome Pack has been produced which will include:

1. Personalised and signed welcome letter from the President.
2. Personalised Admission Certificate.
3. A Member Handbook.
4. A Member benefits leaflet.

6.2 The new Member Welcome Pack will be introduced in December 2017 and, if possible, would be backdated to include all new members admitted to the roll over the last 6 months.