

Minutes of the fifty-sixth meeting of the

Office for Legal complaints (OLC)

Monday 16 June 2014

12.30pm – 15:30pm

Baskerville House, Birmingham

Present:

Steve Green, Chair
Rosemary Carter, member
Tony Foster, member
Stella Manzie, member
Professor Philip Plowden, member
Karen Silcock, member
David Thomas, member
Maureen Vevers, member

In attendance:

Adam Sampson, Chief Ombudsman
Rob Hezel, Chief Operating Officer
Alison Robinson, Head of Policy and Communications
Freda Sharkey, General Counsel
Sir Michael Pitt, Chair, Legal Services Board
Chris Kenny, Chief Executive, Legal Services Board

Apologies:

None

Board Secretary:

Helen White

Preliminary issues:

The quorum requirements for the Board meeting were met.

There were no declarations of interest.

Item 1 - Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed and thanked those in attendance. He welcomed Sir Michael Pitt and Chris Kenny, from the Legal Services Board. The Chair reminded the members to ensure they submit their expenses in a timely manner.

Item 2 - Minutes of the previous meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014 were approved.

ACTION:

- The Board Secretary to publish the approved minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014.

Item 3 - Matters arising and outstanding action points

3. The Chair reported that the OLC Annual Report did not get laid before Parliament but action is being taken to remedy this.
4. The outstanding action points were discussed. The Chair reported that he had written to the Ministry of Justice to request formal approval to begin budget spend on the CMC project in accordance with the start-up budget. A reply was promised but has not yet been received.
5. The Chair reported that the Section 120 request was discussed and the Legal Services Board are reviewing the information supplied and will respond shortly.
6. It was noted that the Quality paper will now be presented to the November OLC Board meeting.
7. It was noted that the policies identified for review at the April Audit and Risk meeting, are being combined into the wider policy review. This is to be further discussed further under Item 10.
8. The items presented for information were noted. No comments had been received in advance of the meeting for circulation.

Chief Ombudsman's Report

9. The Chief Ombudsman updated members on the recruitment for the Interim Head of Policy and Communications. Prof. Plowden asked to meet the successful candidate once appointed.

ACTION:

- The Board Secretary to arrange for Prof Plowden to meet the Interim Head of Policy and Communications

Chief Operating Officer's report

10. Members formally registered concern at the increase in the numbers of outstanding, unallocated and work in progress cases. The Executive reported that a range of measures are being considered by the management team. The Chair confirmed that performance is scheduled to be comprehensively discussed at the next OLC Board meeting in July.

Finance Report

11. The paper was noted and no comments were received from members.

KPI Dashboard

12. Discussion was held on the rise in the Ombudsman case numbers. There will be a further discussion on the subject in the review of performance at the July meeting.

Item 5 – Presentation by Sir Michael Pitt, Chair, Legal Services Board

13. Sir Michael Pitt thanked the OLC Board for the opportunity to attend the meeting. He said that the appointment of new Chairs both to the OLC and Legal Services Board gives an ideal opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the two Boards, a relationship based on teamwork. He touched on various areas of the Legal Ombudsman's performance which could perhaps be prioritised, such as sharing learning and giving greater attention to the quality of work done. The metrics currently being reported did not quite build to a balanced scorecard.
14. Agreement was reached to schedule a joint strategic roundtable, perhaps comprising a subset of the two Boards. This will be discussed and finalised shortly between the two Chairs.

Item 6 – Presentation by Legal Services Consumer Panel

15. The Chair welcomed Elisabeth Davies, the Chair of the Legal Services Consumer Panel.
16. Elisabeth sought to reintroduce the Consumer Panel to the OLC Board and to provide an overview of the Legal Services Consumer Panel, its objectives, vision and work programme highlights for 2014. She focussed on three initiatives – to take a step back and discuss the benchmarking work done at the end of 2013, the findings from the tracker survey and the key points from the LSBCP response to the BIS consultation on the ADR Directive.
17. The Chief Ombudsman requested that the Equalities and Diversity Manager obtain further information from the Legal Services Consumer Panel on the

work being done around understanding consumer vulnerability in legal services.

ACTION:

Stella Manzie to discuss this further with the Equalities and Diversity Manager.

- 18.** It was agreed that the Legal Services Consumer Panel would present to the November OLC Board meeting to discuss priorities for the coming year. If ready, the consumer impact report would also be presented.

ACTION:

- The Board Secretary to invite the Legal Services Consumer Panel to present to the November OLC Board Meeting.

Item 7 – CMC Project Update

- 19.** The Chief Ombudsman reported that there were delays to the implementation of CMC's. This would give the organisation more time to recruit and train new staff.
- 20.** The Chief Ombudsman confirmed that recruitment for the Head of CMC is continuing with Stella Manzie participating in the interview panel.
- 21.** There was discussion about how to minimise the reputational impact of any CMC difficulties and whether or not it would be helpful to have the CMC work under a different brand. It was agreed to return to this question at a future meeting.

Item 8 – LeO Business Transformation Programme

- 22.** Allan Jones joined the meeting to update members on the Business Transformation Programme.
- 23.** The Transformation Programme will continue into January 2015 and possibly beyond and will link all the individual projects currently being planned and undertaken.

Item 9 – Quarterly Human Resources Update

- 24.** Marcus Passant, HR Manager, joined the meeting to present the Quarterly Human Resources update. Attrition is currently 11.15% and it was reported that this figure may well move upwards in the next quarter.
- 25.** Following the Remuneration Committee Meeting, discussion was held on senior staff pay. The HR Manager gave the background to the proposal which is aimed at integrating all staff salaries to the pay policy. This will

ensure senior staff pay is linked with the market and decisions made around the rest of the organisations pay. The members requested sight of the background briefing document which the HR Manager will circulate for comment and approval.

ACTION:

- The HR Manager to circulate the background briefing paper to members via e-mail, setting a deadline for comments.

Item 10 – Policy Review Framework

26. The General Counsel updated members on the role and scope of the ongoing policy review.

27. It was agreed that Equality Impact Assessment be added as a substantive requirement of the framework.

28. The General Counsel was asked to forward a copy of the review framework to the Audit and Risk Chair.

ACTION:

- The General Counsel to circulate a copy of the review framework document to the Audit and Risk Chair.

29. Members approved the four recommendations made by the General Counsel.

Item 11 – September Strategy Session

30. Discussion was held around the upcoming September Strategy Session. The Chair will give this further thought and circulate further information.

ACTION:

- The Chair to circulate further information on the September Strategy Session.

Item 12 – Any other business

31. No other business was raised. The Chair declared the meeting closed.

Next meeting

32. The next OLC meeting will be held at 11.30 pm on Mon 21 July 2014 at Baskerville House, Birmingham.