

Meeting	OLC Board Meeting	Agenda Item No. Paper No.	For information 139.1
Date of meeting	18 June 2025	Time required	N/A

Title	2026/27 Budget and Business Plan: Planning and timetable
Sponsor	Laura Stroppolo (Head of Programme Management & Assurance)
Status	OFFICIAL
To be communicated to:	Members and those in attendance

Executive summary
<p>In line with previous years, the Programme Management and Assurance Team will continue to manage the 2026/27 Budget and Business Plan process through the programme management architecture. The formal project kick-off meeting with the Executive Team is scheduled for 19 June, and key milestones have been shared with Executive colleagues in preparation for the high-level mapping discussion. These milestones will be tracked throughout the year, with progress shared regularly.</p> <p>The 2026/27 cycle includes improvements identified from the 'lessons learned' analysis presented to ARAC in May, reflecting earlier thinking on business plan deliverables and ensuring the last performance sub-group meeting (PSG) takes place before the start of quarter four.</p> <p>An initial discussion has taken place with LSB colleagues on reviewing and simplifying the budget acceptance criteria, with a proposal to be shared with the OLC Chair ahead of the LSB Board meeting in July.</p> <p>At the time of writing, all PSG meetings have been factored into the milestones, but a planning meeting with the PSG chair is to be arranged ahead of the first meeting in July.</p> <p>Additionally, the budget setting assurance process will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk management steps to identify, assess, and mitigate risks associated with the budget; • regular stakeholder engagement to ensure input and buy-in; • adherence to compliance and governance standards; and • assurance through regular financial reporting. <p>The 2026/27 milestones can be found in Appendix A.</p>

Recommendation / action required	
Board is asked to note the paper	
Equality Diversity and Inclusion	
EDI implications	Yes
<p>The Budget and Business Plan process incorporates ED&I considerations throughout its development, with ED&I a key enabler in LeO's Business Plan and Strategy. The Budget Acceptance Criteria pose questions relating to the whole of LeO's operations, including its delivery of EDI-related objectives, for the forthcoming year.</p>	
Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)	
Paragraph reference	Fol exemption and summary
N/A	N/A

2026/27 Budget and Business Plan: Planning and timetable

1. Background

Following the 'lessons learned' discussion in May, the Executive Team has commenced planning for the 2026/27 Budget and Business Plan process. The planning will be led by the Head of Programme Management & Assurance (HoPM&A) in collaboration with the Executive Team and key stakeholders.

2. Progress to date

The HoPM&A has produced the high-level milestone report based on the previous year's approvals. This will be discussed in more detail at the high-level mapping meeting on 19 June 2025.

A discussion between the OLC Chair, Chief Ombudsman and LSB Executive colleagues took place in late May to review the current budget acceptance criteria (BAC). There is a shared commitment and agreement from all parties to review the criteria with a view to adopting a simplified version for this year's budget approval process and to focus on ensuring the response to the BAC is more streamlined, avoids duplication and is focused on key points without the need for significant additional detail or context as has been provided in previous years.

The Executive will be reviewing budgets and initiating budget planning in July and August and will be supported by the monthly Executive Finance Review meetings which are scheduled throughout the year. A further meeting has been scheduled with internal audit to align budget cycles, ensuring any increase in fees is factored into the budget at the start of the process. This is further underpinned by Executive reviews and approvals being scheduled in the diary for duration of the Budget and Business Plan process.

3. Next steps

On 19 June 2025, the Executive will be discussing the high-level mapping of work and engagement required for each month, and will highlight any emerging risks which will need to be managed during the year. Part of this discussion will also look to discuss the use of the content agency Scroll to draft the consultation and Business Plan, as this will help to alleviate capacity pressures during the autumn period.

PSG meetings have all been scheduled and diarised, and a planning meeting to discuss the focus of these (i.e. assumptions and trajectories) as well as the content is to be diarised in the coming weeks.

The Head of Finance will – in collaboration with Executive colleagues – carrying out the analysis on performance trajectories and resource requirement to provide the assurance required for the total budget ask.

In line with previous years, the Executive will ensure that the budget assumptions used will consider risks and the impact of inflation, pay remit and interest rates on costs, alongside any other variable factors for the 2026/27 budget. Sensitivity analysis will be carried out and will form part of the budget setting assurance which will be shared with ARAC in October. Finally, the Finance and Business Intelligence teams will work together to ensure that the budgeting model is robust and minimises the risk of errors.

High-level milestones

