

Meeting	OLC Board Meeting	Agenda Item No.	4
		Paper No.	147.5
Date of meeting	17 June 2026	Time required	20 Minutes

Title	2025/26 Annual Report and Accounts
Sponsor	Phil Cain, Chief Ombudsman Hari Punchihewa (Chair of ARAC) Laura Stroppolo, Head of Programme Management and Assurance Blessing Simango, Head of Finance, Procurement and IT Mike Harris, Head of Communications, Engagement and Impact
Status	OFFICIAL
To be communicated to:	Members and those in attendance

Executive summary
The Board is invited to approve the 2025/26 Annual Report and Accounts (ARA), reflecting a strengthened and more coherent narrative of LeO's performance, challenges and strategic direction. We are grateful to Board members for their detailed review of the draft report. Feedback has been captured in a schedule of amendments (Annex X), with the majority incorporated within the available timeframe. Where changes have not been made, clear rationale has been provided, including where this relates to consistency, assurance requirements or delivery risk. Overall feedback has been strongly positive. Board colleagues particularly recognised the improved clarity, accessibility and narrative coherence, including: • clearer articulation of the external environment and sustained demand pressures • a more compelling case for transformation • an improved tone across the forewords • a reduction in overall length without loss of substance Detailed feedback identified a number of consistent themes, including: • increasing the early prominence of access to justice, EDI and vulnerability • strengthening the use of plain English and outcome-focused explanations

- balancing transparency and readability across KPIs, risk and performance sections
- sharpening how operational challenges and transformation are framed, including the shared role of the wider legal sector

In response, we have made targeted revisions to reinforce these themes while carefully managing the overall length of the report. The net impact has been a limited increase of fewer than 500 words, maintaining the improved readability achieved in this year's draft.

The ARA has progressed through the planned governance and assurance cycle and remains on track for finalisation, including ARAC assurance, Accounting Officer sign-off, certification by the Comptroller and Auditor General, and subsequent laying before Parliament and publication

Recommendation / action required

Board is asked to **approve** the 2025/26 Annual Report & Accounts.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

EDI implications	Yes
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The Annual Report and Accounts provides a comprehensive overview of the OLC's governance arrangements and the Legal Ombudsman's performance and operations. EDI, including access to justice, vulnerability and customer outcomes, are integrated throughout the report and reflected in how we describe our performance, challenges and priorities. This reflects both statutory requirements and our commitment to best practice. The final published report will be accessible.

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)

Paragraph reference	Fol exemption and summary
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Attachments: Draft documents attached

Fol Exempt S.22 – information intended for future publication

Value for Money (VfM)

Value for money is a central theme within the Annual Report, reflecting the organisation's continued focus on managing rising demand while improving performance and maintaining financial discipline. The report demonstrates how the OLC applies the National Audit Office's '4Es' framework: economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity to ensure resources are used effectively, productivity is maximised, and outcomes are delivered in a way that balances cost, quality and fairness.