

To:	Legal Services Board	
Date of Meeting:	27 October 2014	Item: Paper (14) 54

Title:	Communications approach (November 2014 – June 2015)	
Workstream(s):	All	
Author:	Vincent McGovern, Communications Manager	
Introduced by:	Julie Myers, Corporate Director	
Status:	Official	

Summary:

This paper takes as its starting point an expressed desire to raise the Board's visibility in order to promote the Board's mission and its strategic plan with its change of emphasis. It therefore seeks discussion and agreement on the Board's approach to external communications over the coming months, and specifically as it transitions between Chief Executives, launches a new strategic plan and enters the election period.

Whilst the Board has managed to achieve credibility with a number of important audiences over its lifetime, helping it to repel repeatedly a variety of existential threats, there remains some scepticism and confusion about its role - most notably within elements of the legal profession. If the Board is to promulgate and gain buy-in to a more radical agenda, pushing the boundaries of its remit to consider strategic issues in the unregulated sector, then it will be important to convince the broadest possible range of interested parties of the Board's legitimacy to lead debate – although consensus on the outcomes may not be possible or even desirable if it leads to a watering down of ambition.

Board discussion is specifically invited on the following areas of the enclosed discussion prompt:

- Continued relevance of key messages (paragraph 6);
- The suggested focus on bridges to build in the first quarter of 2015 (paragraph 13);
- Whether there are opportunities to build media profile beyond the approach in paragraph 19;
- Possible Parliamentary contacts to supplement those in paragraphs 22 and 29 including engagement with the Select Committee;
- Whether and, if so, which think tanks to engage with how best to do so (paragraph 35f);
- Options for building profile within the professions including the scope for regular regional events and establishing 'friends' groups (paragraphs 45 - 47);

- Encouraging more active involvement with consumer and third sector bodies;
- Areas where Board members can engage in more communications activity individually than in the past.

Recommendation(s):

The Board is invited to discuss its approach to communications over the immediate nine months and beyond to steer the Executive in resource and activity planning and specifically to endorse the proposed action in paragraph 59.

Risks and mitigations

Financial:	The Board should be aware that paid-for communications activity and in particular the use of consultants in this area is covered by Cabinet Office spend controls
Legal:	N/A
Reputational:	Well-managed and effective communications enhance and support the delivery of the LSB's regulatory objectives. However, activity that is capable of being presented as "spin" will be controversial, especially if it involves direct expenditure.
Resource:	The LSB has limited resource dedicated exclusively to communications – the options proposed in this paper may call for some limited additional investment, but also depend on greater deployment of Board members for ambassadorial and networking roles.

Consultation	Yes	No	Who / why?
Board Members:	X		Chairman
Consumer Panel:			
Others:			

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Fol)

Para ref	Fol exemption and summary	Expires
1 – 59	Section 36(2) – information that is free and frank advice and intended to promote a free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation by the Board	

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Discussion prompt

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