



MINUTES FINAL

32nd Meeting of Legal Services Regulatory Authority – Minutes (FINAL)

Date: 16 June 2022

Time: 16:30 to 18:30

Attendees by video conference:

Authority Members	Executive & Secretariat	Others
Eileen Barrington	Brian Doherty (CEO)	
Angela Black	Ultan Ryan (Secretary)	
Geraldine Clarke		
Joan Crawford		
Shane Galligan		
Dermott Jewell		
Deirdre Malone		
Sara Moorhead		
Simon Murphy		
Síona Ryan		
Don Thornhill (Chairperson)		

Apologies: N/A

Section 1 – Administration

1.0 General

1.1 Agenda adopted.

1.2 Declaration of Interests on agenda items. None raised.

1.3 Minutes of Authority meeting of 24 March 2022 approved subject to minor amendments:

1. Duplicate name to be removed from attendees list.

2. Amend title of Síona Ryan to Director of Policy and International Division, CCPC.

Matters arising in Minutes dealt with in CEO Report.

Section 2 – Governance

2.0 CEO Report

- 2.0.1 CEO provided updates on highlighted activity and Risk Register dashboard since the last Authority meeting:
- 2.0.2 COVID Update:
LSRA ramping up roster of staff on-site at premises. Priority site access is for the Complaints & Resolutions function but other functions will see increased on-site presence.
- 2.0.3 Recruitment and Staffing:
Three recruitment campaigns to fill current vacancies for Clerical Officer, Higher Executive Officer (Communications) and Higher Executive Officer (LPDT Support) were completed in the period since the March Authority Meeting. CEO updated Authority on key current staffing challenges.
- 2.0.4 Legislative Amendments to the 2015 Act:
The Department of Justice has informed the LSRA that the publication of the Courts and Civil Law – Miscellaneous Provisions Bill is imminent. The LSRA has been engaging for some time with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel (OPC) on amendments relating to the introduction of Legal Partnerships and amendments to the Levy Model.
- 2.0.5 Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP):
The LSRA has recently approved registration of the 400th LLP since the introduction of the new business model.
- 2.0.6 Section 32 Advances 2016-2018:
In respect of advances received by the Authority pursuant to section 32 of the 2015 Act in the period 2016-2018 inclusive, the LSRA is hoping for a resolution on the status of those advances in the coming weeks.
- 2.0.7 Risk Management:
Risk Management update provided in report. The Authority discussed the risk on cyber-security. The Authority were informed that there had been ongoing

engagement with the Department of Justice providing assurances through agency meetings and through a new Service Level Agreement and Data Processing Agreement to be signed between the LSRA and the IM&T Division of the Department.

2.0.8 A brief update was provided on the progress of the Workforce Review being undertaken by Grant Thornton on behalf of the LSRA. The review is ongoing and will form the key part of a submission to Department of Public Expenditure and Reform on the future resourcing requirements of the LSRA.

2.0.9 Secretary updated the Authority on the Patents of Precedence process for 2022.

2.0.10 Other matters dealt with under separate agenda items.

3.0 Duly Authorised Register.

Duly Authorised Register will be circulated for approval when staff updates have been confirmed.

Section 3 – Finance

4.0 Financial Reports

The CEO informed the Authority that the Levy Notices for this year issued on 9 June. Payment of the Levy in respect of the Law Society (for all Solicitors) was received on 15 June. A section 32 advance of €1m was received from the Minister for Justice in January 2022. The LSRA Budget for 2022 will need to be revised to reflect significant variances (plus or minus) in budget vs spend in the first half of 2022.

4.1 Management Accounts for period ending 30 April 2022

An error on text in the accounts will be raised with the accountants for correction.

Legal Spend:

The Authority queried the profile of spend on Legal Advices. The CEO explained that the LSRA was now engaging for advices in respect of a number of emerging matters including, potential judicial reviews, section 90 enforcement proceedings, activity around claims harvesters and advertising regulation compliance.

In terms of encouraging legal practitioners to engage with the LSRA as early as possible in the Part 6 Complaints Process, the Authority discussed potential communications solutions and CPD modules which might raise LSRA profile and encourage that early engagement.

The Authority proposed that a Communications Strategy for engagement with the professions on the Part 6 process should be developed.

Section 4 – LSRA Policy and Implementation

5.0 Update on the Performance of the Complaints and Resolutions Department

5.0.1 Complaints Reporting and Statistics:

The Authority Members were provided with a statistical report which outlined the processing of cases through the different stages of the Complaints process. The CEO stated that further refinement of the statistical analyses was required. However, in the absence of a comprehensive Case Management System for the LSRA, the extraction of data is a complex task with the current system. The Authority discussed the statistical reports provided.

5.0.2 Staffing:

Recruitment ongoing to fill existing vacancies. Following the DAC Beachcroft review further staff have been allocated to provide support for the Review and Complaints Committees Secretariat. The Workforce Review being undertaken by Grant Thornton will include analysis of the needs of the Complaints and Resolutions function and is expected to see recommendations for additional staffing for that Department.

6.0 Update on Section 34(c) Report on Profession of Conveyancer

6.0.1 The Authority was provided with a progress update on the report work. The CEO confirmed that a Full Report with Draft Recommendations will be submitted to the Authority in advance of its November 2022 meeting. The Report will address the matters raised in the letter from the Minister in chapter form. The Authority sought ample time to consider the report properly before finalising and submitting to the Minister.

6.0.2 Arising from the consultation process, 16 submissions were received by the LSRA.

6.0.3 A further progress update will be provided to the Authority at the next meeting.

7.0 Section 34 “Barriers” Report

7.0.1 The LSRA Executive has been liaising with the Department of Justice on both the “Barriers” report and the “Setting the Standards” report. Both reports are interlinked on theme and actions with the establishment of the Legal Practitioners Education and Training (LPET) Committee being a key requirement.

7.0.2 The Authority was provided with a Draft Recommendations Report at this meeting. The Executive sought approval to proceed to engage with stakeholders on the recommendations in the draft and to then feed back to the Authority with a further draft for consideration.

7.0.3 The Authority provided significant feedback to the Executive on the draft and the CEO agreed to reflect the views expressed by the Authority in a revised draft of the Report. The Authority approved the executive to engage with relevant stakeholders on the draft recommendations, noting that the views of the Authority expressed at this meeting would be reflected in any revised draft. Following the consultation with stakeholders, a revised Draft Recommendations Report will be submitted to the Authority in advance of its November 2022 meeting.

8.0 Update on establishment of Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal (LPDT)

8.0.1 The Authority was provided with an information note and update on the progress of establishment of the LPDT. The Statutory Regulations required for the operation of the LPDT are expected to issue in the next few weeks.

9.0 Update on Section 6 Review of the Operation of the 2015 Act

Drafting is ongoing on this report. The LSRA received 12 submissions as part of the consultation process. Focus includes amendments to Levy model, streamlining of complaints process and minor technical amendments to the Act.

10.0 Update on Levy

The Authority noted the update provided by the CEO.

11.0 Update on Strategic Plan 2022-2025

The CEO informed the Authority that drafting on the new Strategic Plan was underway. The Methodology being applied for the preparation of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Engagement with other regulatory bodies and comparator agencies and conduct a review of a range of strategic plans from a number of statutory bodies.
- Consultations with all LSRA staff led by members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in a variety of fora including staff-facilitated focus groups.
- An externally commissioned external stakeholder consultation and engagement exercise.
- The draft strategic plan will be presented to Authority members by the CEO at the September 2022 authority meeting for their consideration, input and approval. The draft Plan will be submitted to the Authority in advance of the September meeting (target of 25 August 2022 for submission to Authority members).

12.0 Closed Session

This was conducted at the beginning of the meeting.

13.0 AOB

Matters arising were taken at the beginning of the meeting.

Action Points – Meeting of 16 June 2022	
Agenda Item	Action
1.3	<p><u>Minutes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of 24 March 2022 approved, subject to the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Duplicate name to be deleted from attendees list; 2. Amend title of Síona Ryan to Director of Policy and International Division, CCPC. • Secretary to arrange upload to website.
2.0.	<p><u>CEO Report:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.0.6 Authority to be informed if and when the status of Section 32 advances is resolved.
3.0	<p><u>Duly Authorised Register:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Duly Authorised Register will be circulated prior to next Authority Meeting to reflect staff changes.
4.0	<p><u>Financial Reports:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query on text in management accounts relating to Net Assets/Liabilities to be raised with Accountants. • FAR Committee meeting on 23 June will examine accounts in further detail.
5.0	<p><u>Update on performance of Complaints and Resolutions Department:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update Authority on Complaints statistics and processing; • Update Authority on Recommendations and actions arising from DAC Beachcroft Report
6.0	<p><u>Section 34(c) Report on Profession of Conveyancer:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Submissions received arising from the consultation process to be shared with the Authority Members. • Update on progress to be provided at next Authority Meeting.

7.0	<p><u>Section 34 'Barriers' Report:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Recommendations Report to reflect the feedback from the Authority Members at this meeting; • LSRA Executive to engage with relevant stakeholders in respect of the Draft Recommendations Report and a revised Draft report to be submitted to the Authority for consideration at its November meeting.
8.0	<p><u>Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on establishment and operation of LPDT to be provided at next Authority meeting.
9.0	<p><u>Section 6 Review of the Operation of the 2015 Act:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Section 6 Review Report to be provided at the next Authority meeting.
11.0	<p><u>LSRA Strategic Plan 2022-2025:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Strategic Plan to be submitted to the Authority two weeks before next Authority meeting (25 August for 8 September meeting).

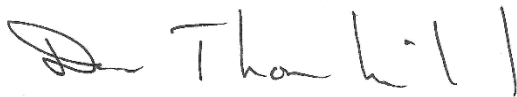
FINAL Minutes Signed



08 September 2022

Ultan Ryan, Secretary

Date



08 September 2022

Don Thornhill, Chairperson

Date