



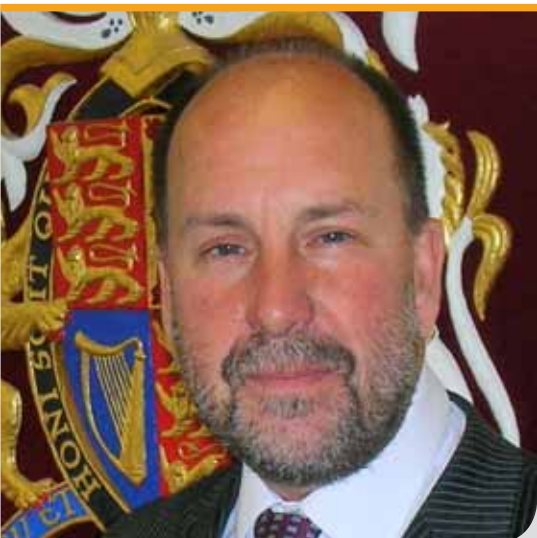
# Council for **Licensed Conveyancers**

BUSINESS PLAN **2007**

This plan covers the period from 1 April 2007 to 31 December 2007



## Chairman's Foreword



I am pleased to present the CLC's business plan for 2007. This plan sets out our key activities for the rest of the year and it serves as a benchmark to assess our performance against what we intended to do by the end of the year.

The publishing of our first business plan is symbolic of our desire as an organisation to demonstrate our accountability to the key stakeholders. In particular, we are keen that the profession has a better understanding of the work that we do to regulate in the public interest. We believe that such increased understanding will enable the profession to provide us with better feedback, which assists us to deliver regulation that is more effective. In addition, it enables us to increase our focus on those activities that are necessary to deliver our strategic regulatory objectives. We aim to deploy our resources to address our regulatory objectives in a cost effective way as outlined by our proposed actions in this business plan.

One of our key objectives over the coming months is to ensure that we are properly prepared to adapt successfully to the challenges in the changing landscape of legal services regulation, whilst simultaneously maintaining the range of "business as usual" activities, we are obliged to undertake by the existing statutory provisions.

As you would expect, some of the preparatory work to adapt to the changes of legal services regulation is a continuation of the work undertaken by staff and council members in 2006. Some of this preparatory work includes taking steps to ensure that we undertake all our regulatory activities in accordance with best regulatory practice. In addition, we need to ensure that we keep the interests of the consumer at the heart of all our regulatory functions and this may require a root and branch review of our activities. However, we are well aware that there is a lot of work to do, which may not be completed in this calendar year. Any outstanding activities will be carried forward into 2008.

We are also focused this year on improving the management of our most important resource, which is our staff. I am well aware that in the past we have not focused as much on our people strategy to support the delivery of outstanding business performance. However, in spite of the constraints of our existing people management processes, it is pleasing to note the unwavering contribution and commitment of the staff to the purpose of the CLC. It is evident in the light of the challenges, which the CLC will face over the coming years that it is imperative that we begin to take steps this year to increase our focus and investment in our staff. I am confident that such an approach will enable us to retain and attract the calibre of staff that we will require to deliver modern, effective, and innovative regulation in the future.

Your feedback is very important to us and I welcome your comments on this plan.

**Alistair Guthrie**  
Chairman of the Council

# Council for Licensed Conveyancers

## Our purpose

To set entry standards and regulate the profession of Licensed Conveyancers effectively in order to:

- + secure adequate consumer protection;
- + promote effective competition in the legal services market, *and*;
- + provide choice for consumers



## Who we are

The Council for Licensed Conveyancers ("the CLC") was established under the provisions of the Administration of Justice Act 1985 as the Regulatory Body for the profession of Licensed Conveyancers. Its statutory duty is to ensure that the standards of competence and professional conduct amongst persons who practise as Licensed Conveyancers are sufficient to secure adequate protection for consumers.

The Act (as amended by the Courts & Legal Services Act 1990) also created the CLC as the body responsible for the supervision and regulation of the newly formed profession.

## What we do

The CLC fulfils its statutory responsibilities by undertaking a range of activities, which are outlined as follows:

- + Set educational and training standards for entry to the profession;
- + Issue licences to practise to those qualified to provide conveyancing services to clients;
- + Maintain a register of all Licensed Conveyancers;
- + Set standards to regulate the professional practice, conduct and discipline of Licensed Conveyancers;
- + Set standards to maintain adequate professional indemnity insurance and a compensation fund to protect the public;
- + Monitor compliance with the standards and those regulations that impact on our duty of consumer protection;
- + Provide guidance and advice to Licensed Conveyancers to maintain compliance with the standards and those regulations relevant to our duty of consumer protection;
- + Collaborate with key stakeholders in the conveyancing services market to monitor and shape the impact of proposed regulations on the conduct of Licensed Conveyancers in order to maintain adequate consumer protection;
- + Investigate complaints against a Licensed Conveyancer and order redress for the client for poor service where appropriate;
- + Investigate allegations of misconduct against a Licensed Conveyancer and where appropriate take disciplinary proceedings before the Discipline and Appeals Committee.

## Key objectives

Our key strategic objectives for 2007 are outlined as follows:

- + To set standards to ensure that the profession maintains standards of competence and professional conduct that meet the needs of consumers of legal services and other key stakeholders;
- + To maintain the mechanisms that ensure that all consumers who use Licensed Conveyancers can rely on the service to meet the required standards and ensure that, if things go wrong, the consumer is satisfied with the regulatory action taken;
- + To ensure that Licensed Conveyancer practices are more competitive so that they have a broader customer base and can offer more services;
- + To ensure consumers have access to Licensed Conveyancer practices in those geographical areas where consumer need for Licensed Conveyancers are not being met;
- + To ensure key stakeholders including consumers know what the CLC does and is responsible for and how to access the regulatory services;
- + To comply with the statutory obligations and identify the opportunities presented by the Legal Services Bill to improve the service for the consumer;
- + To identify opportunities for improved efficiency and implement agreed recommendations.

## Our programme of work for 2007

The key objectives map out the main areas of focus for the CLC during 2007. They also provide us with a benchmark to assess critically any potential new initiatives that may arise during the course of the year. For some objectives, our proposed activities in 2007 are limited due to the existing financial constraints. However, in such instances the work undertaken in 2007 will be foundation for additional work in the next few years.

### Key objective one

**To set standards to ensure that the profession maintains standards of competence and professional conduct that meet the needs of consumers of legal services and other key stakeholders.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Identify the needs of the consumers during the rule making process and ensure that they are addressed;
- + Ensure the key stakeholders know what the needs of the consumers are;
- + Ensure the competence of students awarded the licence to practise as a Licensed Conveyancer meets the required standards;
- + Provide up to date training manuals and information on accredited tutors who have the requisite experience and qualifications that will enable students to reach the required level of competence;
- + Identify all the changes in the rules that will impact on the practices of Licensed Conveyancers;
- + Alert Licensed Conveyancers to all changes in the rules that impact on their practices at least four weeks before implementation. In particular with regards to changes to the following rules;
  - + *Accounts Rules*
  - + *Licensing Rules*
  - + *Training Rules*
- + Provide guidance that explains what Licensed Conveyancers need to do in order to maintain compliance with the rules. In particular we will;
  - + *Issue guidance on the grant of licences*
  - + *Issue guidance on registration of students*
  - + *Provide guidance and support to the profession in order to improve their effectiveness in dealing with complaints*
  - + *Issue updated anti money laundering guidance in light of changes to the EU directive*
- + Identify emerging issues in the external environment and changes in law and practice that will have a major impact on the services provided by Licensed Conveyancers and provide information that explains what is required of Licensed Conveyancers. In particular we will;
  - + *Issue guidance on Home Information Packs*
  - + *Issue guidance on e-conveyancing*
- + Ensure all applications for student registration, licence authorisation and renewals are processed within agreed timescales.

## Key objective two

**To maintain the mechanisms that ensure that all consumers who use Licensed Conveyancers can rely on the service to meet the required standards and ensure that, if things go wrong, the consumer is satisfied with the regulatory action taken.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Ensure the quality of the continuing professional development training programme provided by accredited training providers meets the agreed standards;
- + Carry out regular checks on all practices to an agreed schedule to identify if they are meeting the required standards particularly with regards the following aspects;
  - + *Handling of Client Monies*
  - + *Quality of work*
  - + *Compliance with regulations*
- + Ensure that there is a mechanism for dealing with any concern about the service and conduct from a Licensed Conveyancer. In particular, we will;
  - + *Ensure all claims and grants from the Compensation Fund are dealt with within agreed timescales and quality standards*
  - + *Ensure that all disciplinary matters referred to the Discipline and Appeals Committee are dealt with in accordance with the guidelines and within agreed timescales*
  - + *Process all consumer complaints in accordance with agreed performance targets.*

## Key objective three

**To ensure that Licensed Conveyancer practices are more competitive so that they have a broader customer base and can offer more services.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Identify the needs of the consumers and ensure that they are addressed;
- + Ensure the key stakeholders know what the needs of the consumers are;
- + Achieve accreditation to regulate probate services by the end of 2007;
- + Persuade all the lenders that we become aware of that are reluctant to instruct Licensed Conveyancers to use Licensed Conveyancers.

## Key objective four

**To ensure consumers have access to Licensed Conveyancer practices in those geographical areas where consumer need for Licensed Conveyancers are not being met.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Identify the geographical areas where consumer needs for Licensed Conveyancer practices are not being met;
- + Identify targets for improving consumer access to Licensed Conveyancer practices;
- + Ensure that all consumers have access to an up to date web-based register of Licensed Conveyancers that gives them the information they need;
- + Assess the feasibility of undertaking research to understand the underlying reasons for the relatively lower levels of new Licensed Conveyancer entrants in the conveyancing markets in certain geographical areas.



- + We aim to protect and actively promote the interests of consumers accessing the legal services regulated by the CLC

## Key objective five

**To ensure key stakeholders including consumers know what the CLC does and is responsible for and how to access the regulatory services.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Redesign the website to ensure people can find the information they need, and to increase the use of the services available online;
- + Identify how the Chronicle can be used to achieve Key Objective five whilst maintaining its relevance to the day-to-day work of Licensed Conveyancers.

## Key objective six

**To comply with the statutory obligations and identify the opportunities presented by the Legal Services Bill to improve the service for consumers.**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Identify key policy issues arising from the Legal Services Bill;
- + Ensure key policy issues of concern are addressed by the DCA and other relevant key stakeholders;
- + Develop a 3-year strategic plan to direct the activities and resources of the CLC to meet any requirements of the Legal Services Board;
- + Identify the people, processes, skills and systems requirements required to meet our strategic objectives;
- + Develop interim proposals for the fee strategy to implement the strategic objectives of the CLC;
- + Develop an action plan to draft new rules to respond to the Legal Services Bill.



## Key objective seven

**To identify opportunities for improved efficiency and implement agreed recommendations**

### In order to achieve this we will:

- + Identify options to increase the cost-effectiveness of a risk-based approach to regulation. In particular we will;
  - + *Identify what information needs to be collected to support a risk based approach and the options for collection with costs*
  - + *Identify how the inspection process is impacted by changes to the conveyancing process*
- + Identify and implement improvements in the efficiency of the CLC's complaints handling process;
- + Ensure that all HR policies and practices are up-to-date and in particular;
  - + *Develop a reward strategy that enables us to retain and attract staff with the right skills, competencies and who share our values.*
  - + *Develop and implement a performance management system that allows us to achieve our goals.*
  - + *Ensure all staff employment contracts comply with current legislation.*
  - + *Implement the recommendations arising from the Investors in People reaccreditation assessment.*
  - + *Implement an organisational structure to allow easy delivery of the strategic objectives.*
- + Ensure all remedial actions arising from the internal audit are implemented within agreed timescales;
- + Find alternative office premises that will enable us to achieve our strategic objectives;
- + Ensure the IT infrastructure of the CLC enables us to meet our strategic objectives;
- + Identify if the current arrangements for management and control comply with the Good Governance Standards for Public Bodies as it applies to the CLC;
- + Ensure we have the staff available with the required skills when we need them in order to achieve our strategic objectives;
- + Ensure any risks to achieving our corporate objectives are identified, managed and mitigated;
- + Develop a financial management process that allows us to achieve our objectives within our resources. In particular to;
  - + *Be able to estimate and measure the costs of each critical business activity*
- + Ensure that we generate sufficient income to fund the business objectives.
- + Ensure we meet our legal obligations particular with regards the;
  - + *Freedom of Information Code*
  - + *Anti Discrimination legislation*

## Annex A

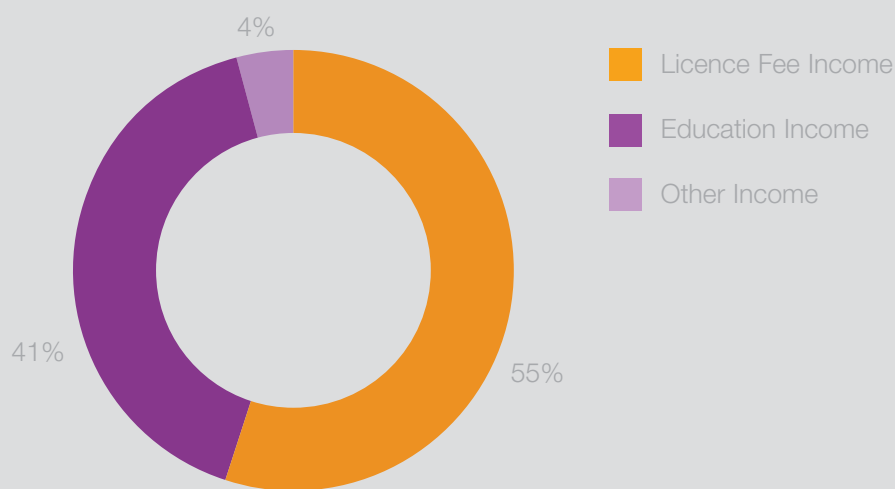
### Workload Assumptions

This section outlines the working assumptions of some of the key “business as usual” activities, which we anticipate that we will undertake in 2007. The proposed developmental activities in 2007 are not outlined in this section.

Type of Activity	Estimate
Number of students undertaking examinations	1200
Number of new student registrations	650
Number of examination revision days	6
Number of student assignments processed	6000
Number of appeals to the Exam Board	60
Number of new limited licence applications processed	92
Number of new full licence applications processed	40
Number of applications for Recognised Body status	7
Number of limited licences issued	662
Number of full licences Issued	281
No of Forensic Accounts Inspections Undertaken	100
No of File Inspections Undertaken	50
Number of Compliance Workshops	4
Number of telephone advice enquiries	3500
No of disciplinary cases handled	10
No of Appeals processed	2
No of Interventions	1
Number of Service Complaints processed	170
Number of Conduct Complaints processed	80
Number of applications for Compensation Fund grants processed	20

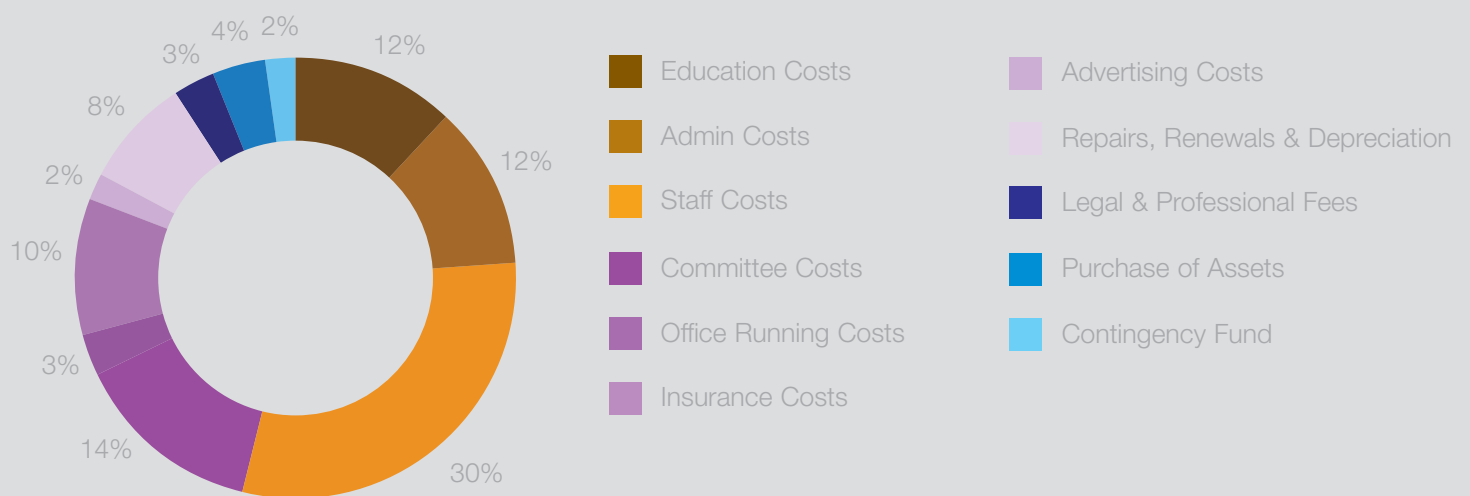
## Budget Summary (for period from 1 January to 31 December 2007)

### Operations Income Budget 2007



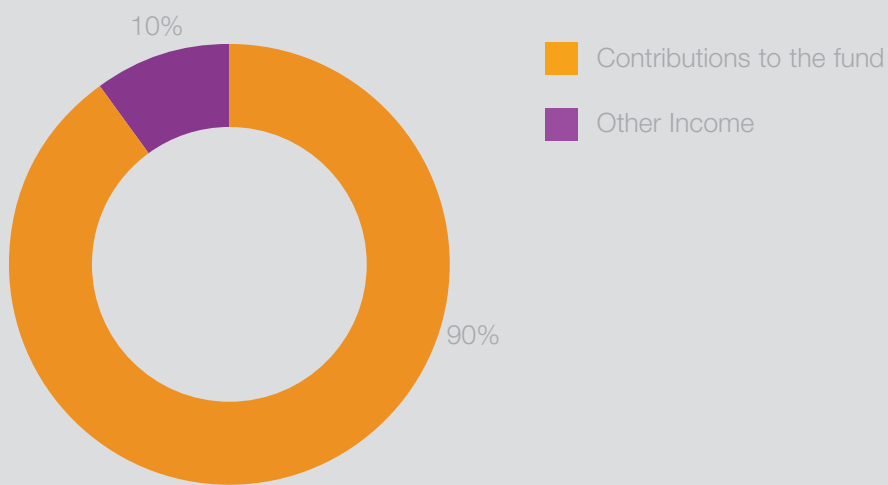
Licence Fee Income	£576,000
Education Income	£427,000
Other Income	£43,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,046,000</b>

## Operations Expenditure Budget 2007



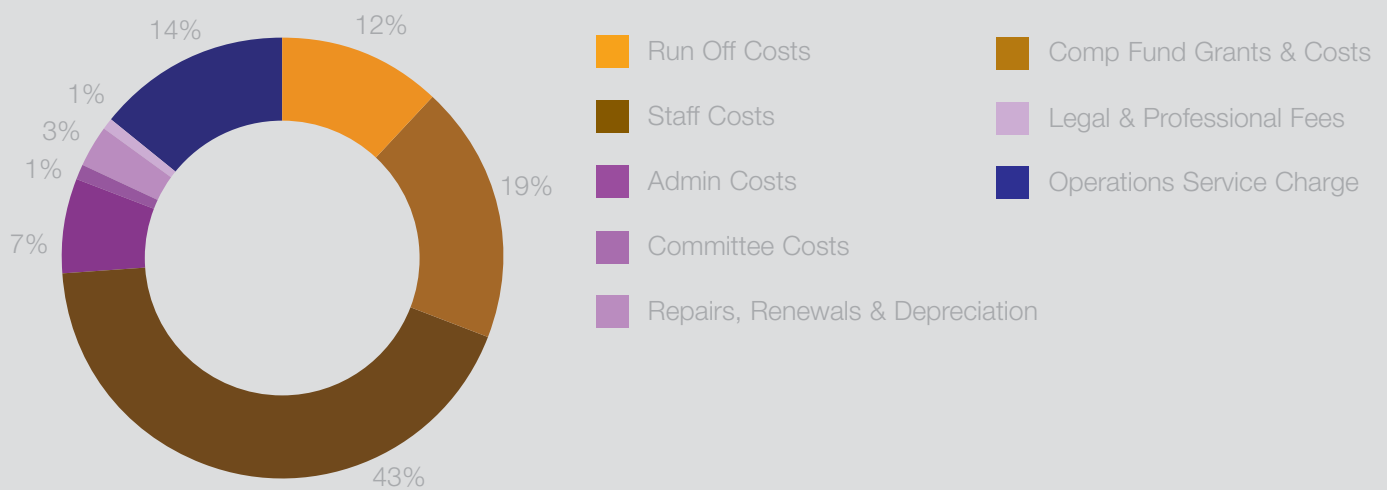
Education Costs	151,000
Admin Costs	153,000
Staff Costs	410,000
Committee Costs	181,000
Office Running Costs	39,000
Insurance Costs	127,000
Advertising Costs	30,000
Repairs, Renewals & Depreciation	110,000
Legal & Professional Fees	36,000
Purchase of Assets	46,000
Contingency Fund	20,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,303,000</b>
Less	
Recoveries from the Compensation Fund	-228,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,075,000</b>

## Compensation Fund Income Budget 2007



Contributions to the Fund	£1,086,000
Other Income	£125,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,211,000</b>

## Compensation Fund Expenditure Budget 2007



Run Off Costs	£191,000
Comp Fund Grants & Costs	£286,000
Staff Costs	£664,000
Office Running Costs	£8,000
Admin Costs	£115,000
Committee Costs	£21,000
Repairs Renewals & Depreciation	£54,000
Legal & Professional Fees	£23,000
Operations Service Charge	£228,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,590,000</b>



## Council for **Licensed Conveyancers**

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