



CLC Council Meeting
Wednesday 27 January 2021
9.00 a.m. – 12.00 p.m. *
Council for Licensed Conveyancers
A G E N D A
By Zoom

No	Item	Type of Paper	Lead
1.	Welcome, Introductions, Apologies for Absence		Chair
2.	Declarations of Interest	For recording	Chair
3.	Minutes and Matters Arising a) Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 12 November 2020 b) Actions arising from previous meetings		Chair
4.	Chief Executive's Report	Noting	CEO
5.	CLC Budget and Business Plan 2021 a) Q4 Performance Outturn b) 2020 Business Plan End of Year review c) Budget 2021 d) Council Workplan 2021	Information Information Approval Approval	DFO DSER DFO CEO
6.	Professional Indemnity Insurance Review Plan	Discussion	DSER
7.	Review of Regulatory Arrangements - Licensing Framework	Approval	DSER
8.	Risk Register and Risk Management Policy a) Principal Risk Register b) Risk Management Policy Review	Approval Approval	DFO DFO
9.	Watchlist and Interventions	Noting	DFO
10.	Published Indicators and Metrics	Approval	DFO
11.	Committee Reports a) Audit and Risk Committee b) Appointments Committee c) Remuneration Committee	Noting Noting Approval	Audit and Risk Committee Chair Appointments Committee Chair Remuneration Committee Chair

No	Item	Type of Paper	Lead
12.	Any Other Business		
13.	Annual Review of PR Kerry Jack of Black Letter Law - Presentation	Presentation	
14.	Dates of Forthcoming Council Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 25 March 2021 (AFS) 5.30 p.m. • Thursday, 29 April 2021 11.00 a.m. • Thursday 22 July 2020 11.00 a.m. • Thursday 11 November 2021 11.00 a.m. 	Noting	ALL

No	Information Items – for discussion on request. Please notify the Head of Executive Office in advance	Type of Paper	Lead
15.	Property and Law News Round Up	Information	DSER

*** Please note start time**

Key: CEO: Chief Executive
DFO: Director of Finance and Operations
DSER: Director of Strategy and External Relations
SMT: Senior Management Team

Declarations of Interest

Council for Licensed Conveyancers
Minutes of the Council meeting held on
Thursday 12 November 2020
By video conference
11.15 a.m. – 1.05 p.m.

Council Present

Dame Janet Paraskeva
Sarah Debney
Heather Foster
Sheila Kumar
Sally Szarka

Alan Cogbill
Heather Foster
Milton James
Andrea Pierce
Colin Wilby

In attendance

Ms. A. Cosens
Mr. J. Hinrichsen
Mr. S. Ward

Head of Executive Office
Director of Finance and Operations
Director of Strategy and External Relations

1. Welcome, Introductions and Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest. No requests to discuss information items at 14-16 had been received.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

a) Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020

The Council **AGREED** that minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

b) Actions arising from previous meetings

Most actions arising from previous meetings were either completed or featured elsewhere on the agenda.

The Chair advised the Council that individual appraisals would be scheduled now that recruitment to non-executive director vacancies had been completed.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** progress with actions arising from previous meetings; and
- (2) **AGREED** to ratify a decision which had been taken by Council members outside of a Council meeting with regard to two Compensation Fund claims.

Action November/20/01: to schedule Council member appraisals.

3. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive introduced the report.

In addition to the updates contained within the report, the Council was advised:

- That the LSB is planning to meet with Chief Executives to discuss its approach to oversight
- As Chair of the Legal Choices Governance Board, the Chief Executive had secured further 3-year funding for the project. The Faculty Office has now taken the Chair of the project and the SRA continues to host the delivery team
- The Legal Ombudsman is consulting on its Business Plan; it is indicating that there will be an increase in its levy in 2021
- The Housing Ministry has been discussing the implications of the Grenfell disaster on building surveying with RICS
- The CLC is working with the SRA and CILEX Regulation to pilot implementation of quality indicators aligned to the CMA's transparency recommendations

The Council **NOTED** the Chief Executive's report.

4. Principal Risk Register

The Director of Finance and Operations advised Council that the Principal Risk Register had been discussed and reviewed by the Senior Management Team and the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2020, whose comments and suggestions had been incorporated.

The Council **AGREED** to adopt the Principal Risk Register as proposed.

5. Watchlist and Interventions

The Director of Finance and Operations introduced the report.

The Council **NOTED** the Watchlist and Interventions report.

6. Procurement Policy

The Director of Finance and Operations introduced a report setting out changes to the Procurement Policy to align it with current processes and the operational structure. The Council was advised that the policy had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2020, whose recommendations had been included within the policy.

The Council **AGREED** the amendments to the Procurement Policy as proposed.

7. 2020 Business Plan Progress Report and Review

The Director of Strategy and External Relations introduced a report setting out progress with the business plan, which had been reviewed following an internal reorganisation.

The Council was advised that the Senior Management Team is recommending a rolling, three year approach to business planning which will accommodate greater flexibility.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** progress against the 2020 Business Plan;
- (2) **AGREED** the proposed revisions to the Business Plan 2020
- (3) **APPROVED** a rolling 3-year approach to Business Plan development.

8. Compensation Fund Working Group – Progress Update

Alan Cogbill, Chair of the Working Group gave an update on progress with review of the compensation fund arrangements by the Working Group comprising Alan Cogbill, Sarah Debney and Teresa Perchard. The Council was informed that thanks were also due to Andrea Pierce and Sally Szarka for their input on probate considerations.

A report with proposals for the Council's consideration had been circulated subsequent to the Council agenda. The Council was informed that the proposals had been discussed with members of the Legal Services Consumer Panel on 30 October 2020. The Legal Services Consumer Panel is supportive of the CLC's aspirations for the Compensation Fund Operating Framework.

The Council **AGREED**:

- (1) Principles for drafting of the Compensation Fund Framework;
- (2) To request the Compensation Fund Working Group to prepare a revised draft Compensation Fund Operating Framework, taking account of the principles;
- (3) To refer the revised draft Compensation Fund Operating Framework to the Professional Reference Group for review and comment, when completed.

The Council thanked the Compensation Fund Working Group for its ongoing work.

Action November/20/02: To draft the Compensation Fund Operating Framework based on the above principles

Action November/20/03: To invite the Professional Reference Group to review and comment on the revised draft Compensation Fund Operating Framework.

9. Marketing and Communications Evaluation

The Director of Strategy and External Relations provided an evaluation of progress with marketing and communications to support delivery of the CLC's strategy. The Council was advised that particular points of note included:

- The CLC has exceeded targets for earned media coverage
- Despite the pandemic, visitor numbers the proportion of visits referred by other organisations and social media has increased
- Despite cancellation of in-person events, the CLC has retained a presence, including speaker slots at several conferences and seminars
- The stakeholder perceptions survey was smaller than originally planned due to the pandemic, but initial results showed a good understanding of the CLC, its role and communications.

The Council **NOTED** the evaluation of the CLC's marketing and communications over the first 10 months of 2020.

10. Published Indicators and Metrics

The Council considered the indicators and metrics for Quarter 3 of the current year for publication.

The Council **AGREED** to publish the indicators and metrics detailed at Appendix A of the report.

Action November/20/04: To publish the indicators and metrics.

11. Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Report

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented a summary of business considered by the Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2020.

The Council was advised that the Committee had suggested a staff wellbeing survey to assess the impact of remote working, which would be referred to the Remuneration Committee for consideration.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** the report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Action November/20/05: to refer consideration of a staff wellbeing survey to the Remuneration Committee for consideration.

12. Any Other Business

Compensation Fund Claims

An update on consideration of compensation fund claims was provided.

The Council **AGREED** to ratify decisions taken outside of a Council meeting with regard to determination of two Compensation Fund Claims as follows:



13. Dates of Forthcoming Council Meetings

- Wednesday 27 January 2021, 9.00 a.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

14. Q3 Performance Outturn

The Council **NOTED** the Performance Outturn report for Q3, which had been reviewed and discussed in detail by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 20 October 2020.

15. Property and Law News Round Up

The Council **NOTED** the round up review of major developments and the economic outlook that will affect the conveyancing market.

16. Council Workplan

The Council **NOTED** its forthcoming Workplan.

Chief Executive's Report

Purpose: For noting
Author: Chief Executive

Summary

The Chief Executive's regular report to Council on current issues.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to note the contents of this paper.

Risk management

Where appropriate, risk is covered in each item contained in this report.

Financial impact

No negative financial impact on 2021 budget expenditure.

Diversity and inclusion impact

No diversity or inclusion impact resulting from the contents of this paper.

Communications requirements

This report is an update for Council members only.

Publication status

Not for publication. The report contains information which is: policy in development; intended for future publication; commercially sensitive.

Performance Pack Report – Q4 Out-turn

Purpose: Noting

Author: Director of Finance and Operations

Approver: Chief Executive

Summary

This report comprises of the following elements:

- Overview of financial performance to 31 December 2020
- Operational performance indicators
- Human resources
- Complaints
- Procurement
- Projects

Recommendations

Council is asked to review and note the paper.

Risk management

There are no financial or operational issues identified in this report which need to be mitigated.

Financial impact

There is no direct financial impact.

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion.

Communications requirements

The Audit and Risk Committee considered a version of this report at its meeting on 12 January 2021.

Publication

Not for publication in this form. A summary will be posted on the website.

2020 Business Plan End of Year Review

Purpose: For Approval

Author: Director of Strategy and External Relations

Approver: Chief Executive

Summary

This paper reports on progress against the 2020 business plan. The plan is now amended by Council on a rolling, quarterly basis.

Recommendations

Council is asked to note the end of year outturn against the business plan.

Risk management

The business plan contributes to the management of principal and operational risks.

Financial impact

This is covered in the financial outturn reporting.

Diversity and inclusion impact

The business plan includes measures to promote diversity and inclusion across the regulated community.

Communications requirements

An annual report will be prepared for publication at the same time as the Annual Financial Statements in April 2021.

Publication

This report is not for publication as it contains information intended for future publication.

2021 Budget

Purpose: Approval
Author: Director of Finance and Operations
Approver: Chief Executive

Summary

This paper sets out the proposed budget for the 2021 financial year as developed by the Senior Management Team. The budget proposal takes into account expenditure necessary to deliver on the 2021 business plan as well as the cost cutting measures that were agreed by Council in October 2020.

The budget has been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee on 12 January 2021 and is being recommended for approval.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to approve the proposed 2021 budget.

Risk management

The budget needs to be carefully considered and crafted to ensure that the CLC makes effective use of limited financial resources. The current coronavirus pandemic significantly increases the uncertainty and risk to CLC revenues as CLC income is dependant on regulated practice performance. Lower practice turnovers and practice closures will have a negative impact on CLC revenues. Because of this uncertainty, the Council has taken a proactive approach to reducing expenditure to mitigate the impact of any potential reductions in revenue during 2021 and 2022.

Financial impact

The financial impact is detailed in the attached document

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion.

Communications requirements

There are no immediate communication requirements

Publication

This report is not for publication. Budgetary information will be published within the Annual Financial Statements.

Annexes

None

Council Work Plan 2021

Purpose	Approval
Author:	Head of Executive Office
Approver:	Chief Executive

Summary

At its meeting on 12 November 2020, the Council reviewed progress against Business Plan activities and agreed to adopt a 3-year rolling approach to Business Plan development.

The proposed Work Plan for the Council, which includes agreed Business Plan activities is set out at **Appendix A**.

The Council Workshop on 16 September 2021 will focus on ongoing development of Business Plan activities.

The Council is invited to agree its Work Plan for the forthcoming year.

Recommendations

The Council is invited to approve its Work Plan for 2021.

Risk management

None for the purposes of this report. Risk implications will be discussed within individual reports.

Financial impact

None for the purposes of this report. Financial implications will be discussed within individual reports.

Diversity and inclusion impact

None for the purposes of this report. Diversity and inclusion implications will be discussed within individual reports.

Communications requirements

None for the purposes of this report.

Publication status

For publication.

Annual Cycle	27 January 2021 Council meeting	11 March 2021 Workshop	25 March 2021	29 April 2021 Council meeting Q1 Results	10 June 2021 Workshop	22 July 2021 Council meeting Q2 Results	16 September 2021 Workshop	11 November 2021 Council meeting Q3 Results	Issues for future discussion
Strategy and Planning				2021 Business Plan Update		2021 Business Plan Update Education		2022 Business Plan and Budget planning Quality Indicators – assessment of sector-wide pilot and next steps	
Performance and Risk	Management Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q4 Performance Outturn Interventions and Watchlist Compensation Plan Business Plan 2020 outturn Property News Round Up Key Performance Indicators 2021 Budget Principal Risk Register Risk Management Policy CEO report			Management Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q1 Budget Outturn Interventions and Watchlist Compensation fund Business Plan 2021 Progress Property News Round up Key Performance Indicators Principal Risk Register CEO report		Management Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q2 Budget Outturn Interventions and Watchlist Compensation fund Business Plan 2021 progress Property News Round up Key Performance Indicators Principal Risk Register CEO report		Management Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Q3 Budget Outturn Interventions and Watchlist Compensation fund Business Plan 2021 progress Property News Round up Key Performance Indicators Principal Risk Register CEO report	
Governance	Annual Committee Chairs' reports		External Auditor's Report and Management Letter CLC Financial Statements 2020	Committee Chairs' reports Review of Delegations	Practice Fee Setting	Committee Chairs' reports Annual Review of Council Terms of Reference		Committee Chairs' reports	<i>Council meeting format</i>
Regulatory Activity	Licensing Framework	Regulatory Fee Setting		Regulatory Fee – Consultation Equality Code		Regulatory Fee setting Compensation Fund Operating Framework Review of Code of Conduct – approval of plan Licensing Framework Adjudication Panel Rules - Review		ARR Results	
Ad Hoc Business Plan Items	Annual review of PR Professional Indemnity Insurance	Professional Indemnity Insurance		Annual Evaluation of Education New premises solution Professional Indemnity Insurance - Consultation				Staff Handbook post Covid review Annual evaluation of communications Professional Indemnity Insurance	

PROFESSIONAL INDEMNITY INSURANCE REVIEW PLAN

Purpose:	For noting
Author:	Director of Strategy and External Relations
Approver:	Chief Executive

Summary

This report invites the Council to consider principles for a strategic review of the CLC's Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements.

Recommendations

The Council is invited to:

- (1) Consider the proposals for a strategic review of the CLC's Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements
- (2) Agree the principles for a review of the CLC's Professional Indemnity Insurance arrangements

Risk management

The risk management impact of the work proposed in this paper has been set out within the report.

Financial impact

The financial impact of the work proposed in this paper are captured in the budget paper that is also before Council.

Diversity and inclusion impact

The review of the PII scheme will include an assessment of whether any particular groups in the regulated community are disproportionately impacted by any proposed changes to the PII scheme.

Communications requirements

Engagement of brokers and insurers on the issues set out in this paper began in 2020. Developing proposals to address those issues and the consultation on them will involve a great deal of engagement with the regulated community, brokers and insurers and other stakeholders.

Publication status of this paper

This paper is not for publication. It contains information which is: policy in development, intended for future publication.

REVIEW OF REGULATORY ARRANGEMENTS – LICENSING FRAMEWORK

Purpose: For agreement
Author: Director of Strategy and External Relations
Approver: Chief Executive

Recommendation

The Council is asked to agree an approach to agreeing the Licensing Framework.

Risk management

The proposals set out in this paper will remove risks to the effective application of CLC policies to protect consumers.

Financial impact

The financial impact of the work proposed in this paper is captured in the budget paper that is also before Council as one of the Special Projects.

Diversity and inclusion impact

The review of the Licensing Framework will include an assessment of whether any particular groups in the regulated community are disproportionately impacted by any proposed changes to the PII scheme.

Communications requirements

All of the proposals in this paper will involve engagement with the regulated community, representative bodies and other regulators as well as other stakeholders. Where formal consultations are needed, this is noted in the paper.

Publication status of this paper

Not for publication. The policies under development will be published in due course.

Principal Risk Register

Purpose: Approval
Author: Director of Finance and Operations
Approver: Chief Executive

Summary

This report details the principal risks of the CLC together with controls currently in place and further mitigating actions being taken to manage the risks.

Recommendations

The SMT recommends that Council approves the Principal Risk Register as recommended by the Audit and Risk Committee.

Risk management

The report is a key reporting document in CLC's risk management.

Financial impact

There is no financial impact in relation to this paper.

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion from this paper.

Communication and publication requirements

This paper is for Council only. This report is not for publication as it contains information which is policy in development and commercially confidential.

Annexes

Annex A –Principal Risk Register

Annex B – Issue Log

Risk Management Policy Review

Purpose:	Approval
Author:	Director of Finance and Operations
Approver:	Chief Executive

Summary

The risk management policy was last approved by Council on 31 October 2019. The policy is reviewed and approved annually. The Audit and Risk Committee reviewed the policy at the meeting held on 12 January 2021 and agreed to recommend it to Council for approval without amendment.

Recommendations

Council is asked to approve the Risk management Policy.

Risk management

The report is a key reporting document in CLC's risk management.

Financial impact

There is no financial impact in relation to this paper.

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion from this paper.

Communications requirements

This report is not for publication as it contains information which is policy in development and commercially confidential.

Background

The risk appetite is reviewed and approved annually.

CLC Watchlist & Interventions

Purpose: Noting

Author: Director of Finance and Operations

Approver: Chief Executive

Summary

This is a regular Council paper which provides an update on the practices that have been assigned to the watchlist.

The CLC's aim is to ensure that it raises regulatory issues with a practice as early as possible to avoid the risk of a practice failing to meet its regulatory responsibilities. Where it concludes that issues with a practice are or may become significant, that practice is placed on the watchlist and is monitored intensively to mitigate risk to the consumer; risk of claims on that practice's professional indemnity insurance; and ultimately on the CLC's Compensation Fund. SMT review the watchlist on a weekly basis and by exception when necessary.

A progress update on the interventions that have taken place since the beginning of 2017 is also included.

Recommendations

Council is asked to review and note the paper.

Risk management

Active management and monitoring of practices placed on the watchlist enable the CLC to mitigate the risk of losses to consumers, claims against PII insurance policies and ultimately the Compensation Fund.

Financial impact

Failure of any practice may have a significant adverse impact on the consumer, the CLC and the profession.

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion.

Communications requirements

There are no communication requirements.

Publication

Not for publication. The report contains information which is confidential and relates to regulatory enforcement action

Published Indicators and Metrics

Purpose:	Approval
Author:	Director of Finance and Operations
Approver:	Chief Executive

Summary

This is a regular report to Council which includes Indicators and metrics for the quarter just ended. Following Council approval this report will be published on the CLC website.

Recommendations

Council is asked to review and approve the attached report.

Risk management

The publication of metrics and indicators is one of the ways we demonstrate transparency and good governance.

Financial impact

There is no direct financial impact.

Diversity and inclusion impact

There is no impact on diversity or inclusion.

Communications requirements

There are no communication requirements.

Publication

The report is published on the CLC website quarterly after Council approval.



CLC Council Meeting

Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Report

Purpose: For Noting
Chair: Jenny Quirke

Summary

This report summarises the business considered at the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2021. (Appendix A).

Draft minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 12 January 2021 are included. (Appendix B)

In line with the Audit and Risk Committee's Terms of Reference, the Chair of the Committee presents an annual report on the work of the Committee during the year. An annual report which summarises the conclusions of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2020, with particular reference to the CLC's risk, governance and internal control framework is included at Appendix C.

Recommendations

Council is invited to:

- (1) Note the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 12 January 2021 and summary report and to put any questions to the Chair (Appendices A and B);
- (2) Note the Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and put any questions to the Chair (Appendix C)

Risk management

The Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee include strategic oversight of the CLC's processes for risk, control and governance, which are reviewed and scrutinised at each meeting to provide an opinion on the discharge of functions.

Financial Impact

The Terms of Reference of the Audit and Risk Committee include review of accounting policies and practice, compliance with laws and accounting standards and the process for review of the annual accounts prior to their submission for external audit.

Diversity and Inclusion

There are no specific diversity and inclusion considerations, however as a regulator the CLC has an objective to support an independent, strong, diverse and effective legal profession as well as to act in the best interest of clients and to promote ease of access to services. These factors are incorporated within the accountability for risk and governance and audit reviews.

Communication and publication requirements

This report is for Council only as it contains information which is policy in development; commercially confidential and intended for future publication.



Appointments Committee Chair's Report

Purpose: For Noting

Chair: Dame Janet Paraskeva

Summary

The Council has established an Appointments Committee, the remit of which includes:

- The appointment of Council and Adjudication Panel members
- The appointment of the Chief Executive and where requested other senior staff
- Where applicable to determine extensions to the term of office of non executive members and succession planning.

A summary of business conducted by the Appointments Committee during 2020 is included within the Chair's Annual report at **Appendix A**.

Recommendations

The Council is invited to note the report and to put any questions to the Chair.

Risk management/Financial Impact/and Diversity and Inclusion are considered in all Appointments Committee discussions and decisions.

Communication and publication requirements

This report is not for publication as an overview of the Appointments Committee's work will be included within the Annual Report.



Remuneration Committee Chair's Annual Report

Purpose: For Approval

Chair: Colin Wilby

Summary

The Remuneration Committee supports the Council's responsibilities for the remuneration, recruitment and retention of staff and Council and Committee members.

A summary of business conducted by the Remuneration Committee 2020 is included within the Chair's Draft Annual report at **Appendix A**.

The Committee has conducted an annual review of its terms of reference agreed to recommend an amendment to section 18 to make explicit that the Remuneration Committee has responsibility for the oversight of non-standard terms for termination of employment of the Chief Executive or other Executive Directors if this arises. The recommended amendments are shown in tracked changes at **Appendix B**.

Recommendations

The Council is invited to:

- (1) note the report and to put any questions to the Chair;
- (2) Approve the amendments to the Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference shown in tracked changes at **Appendix B**.

Risk management/Financial Impact/and Diversity and Inclusion are considered in all Appointments Committee discussions and decisions.

Communication and publication requirements

Not for publication. Committee Terms of Reference are published within the Corporate Governance Framework and a summary of the work of the Remuneration Committee will be published within the CLC's Annual Report.

PR Plan 2021

Purpose: For noting
Author: Black Letter Communications
Approver: Director of Strategy and External Relations

Summary

The CLC's PR agency, Black Letter Communications, has prepared a PR plan to support delivery of the CLC's strategy.

Recommendation

Council is asked to comment on the proposed PR approach for the CLC for 2021

Risk management

Communicating our work to protect the consumer, to ensure compliance in the regulated community and to support innovation is vital to managing a range of reputational risks to the CLC.

Financial impact

None arising from the paper. The CLC's communications plan for 2021 will be driven by the business plan.

Diversity and inclusion impact

None arising from the paper but the inclusivity of our communications work will need to be considered in the business planning process.

Communications requirements

None arising from this paper.

Publication status of this paper

This paper contains information which is: policy in development; commercial and is not for publication .

Property and Law Round Up

Purpose: For noting

Author: Director of Strategy and External Relations

Summary

This is the regulator review of major developments and the economic outlook that will affect the conveyancing market

Recommendation

Council is asked to note the contents of this round up.

Risk management

The information and forecasts in this round up inform our planning and risk management.

Financial impact

None arising from the paper.

Diversity and inclusion impact

None arising from the paper.

Communications requirements

This paper will be published on the CLC website.

Publication status of this paper

This paper is for publication.

PROPERTY AND LAW ROUNDUP

DIGITISATION

The sector continues to make progress towards a more fully digital property transfer process.

HM Land Registry

Last HM Land Registry removed the last strict requirement for paper and wet-ink signatures in the conveyancing process by [accepting electronic signatures](#). HM Land Registry is now working towards accepting the even more secure and convenient qualified electronic signatures and have just completed a consultation on a HM Land Registry [standard for Digital Identity verification](#). This year HM Land Registry also intends to launch a new [new Digital Registration Service \(DRS\)](#) which will simplify applications and how to check the information as it is added. This will help avoid some of the more common errors and ultimately speed up turnaround times by reducing requisitions. The service will be available to all portal users from spring 2021.

Digital ID

Elsewhere, the Digital ID Working Group of the Home Buying and Selling Group is also working on a digital standard for ID verification as part of the national framework that is being sponsored by DCMS.

Data access

We have begun discussions to encourage Innovate UK to help fund development of a common data architecture and trust framework for property transfer that will aid collaboration and speed up transactions if a shared pool of data can be developed on a decentralised basis.

Property Logbooks

Data is also being tackled by businesses developing property logbooks and by another sub-group of the Home Buying and Selling Group. Comprehensive logbooks could both be facilitated by and help to improve provision of more data upfront as properties are being marketed. Pilots of such tools are already being developed.

Upfront data

The Home Buying and Selling Group's BASPI form, that sellers are invited to complete as they put their property on the market is available for use and has been piloted. We expect soon some new initiatives that will make its adoption easier and more widespread.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Regulation of Property Agents

A consultation opened in the summer of 2020 on a Code of Conduct for property agents, but it seems that there has not been any new development since then. '

Reform of Leasehold

The government has announced proposals for the reform of leasehold following a Law Commission report. It is not clear when the necessary legislation will be introduced.

THE HOME BUYING AND SELLING MARKET

SDLT and LTT Holidays

Many organisations and individuals have made representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer about the risks arising from the cliff-edge end to the current land tax holidays in England and Wales. The Treasury line at the moment is that there is no plan to make any changes but that all taxes are kept under review.

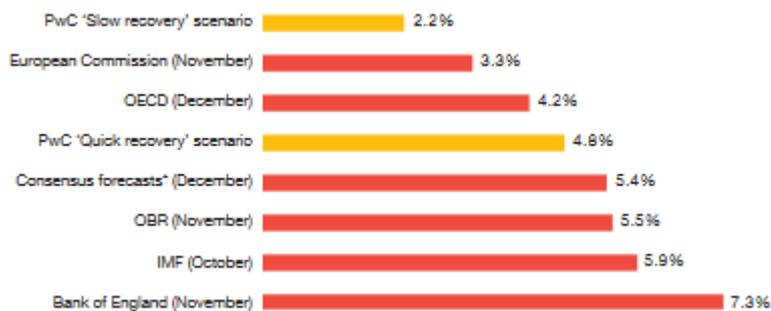
RICS Residential Market Survey

The survey of activity and expectations undertaken in December and released in January found that, although indicators on enquiries, sales and instructions were still positive, although impetus has cooled recently. It also found that house price inflation remains elevated across most parts of the UK, with the exception of London and that the expectation was that sales market momentum will fade further in the coming months.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

PwC recently provided this useful comparison of GDP growth projections, which shows a very broad spread of projections.

Figure 1.7: Comparison of GDP growth projections, 2021



(*) HMT comparison of independent forecasts (December 2020) – average of new forecasts made in last month
Sources: PwC, EC, OECD, HMT, OBR, IMF, BoE

What is not clear is how this might translate to the velocity of home buying and selling as predictions of the likely unemployment rate in the coming years are equally divergent