

Council for Licensed Conveyancers
Minutes of the Council meeting held on
Thursday 22 May 2025
By teleconference
11.00 a.m. - 12.50 p.m.

Council Present

Dame Janet Paraskeva (Chair)	Milton James
Alan Cogbill	Victoria MacGregor
Sarah Debney	Jenny Quirke
Sheila Kumar, Chief Executive	Sally Szarka
Sarah Ryan	Colin Wilby

In attendance

Ms. A. Cosens	Head of Executive Office (<i>minutes</i>)
Ms. C. Drennan	Deputy Director, Policy and Regulatory Standards
Mr. J. Hinrichsen	Director of Finance and Operations
Ms. C. Richardson	Director of Authorisations and New Business
Mr. S. Ward	Director of Strategy and External Relations

Also present

Julie Parker, Independent Member, CLC
Audit and Risk Committee (Observer)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed members and Julie Parker, Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee to the Council meeting.

No requests to discuss information items at 16-18 had been received.

2. Declarations of Interest

Council members and officers declared an interest in item 3(c) (*Approval of a recommendation by the Remuneration Committee to apply a 3% cost of living increase to staff salaries and non-executive director remuneration*).

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

(a) Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2025

The Council **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

(b) Minutes of meeting held on 27 March 2025

The Council **AGREED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

(c) Ratification of decisions taken outside of Council meetings

Officers and Council members declared an interest in this item.

The Council **AGREED** to ratify the following decisions which had been taken outside of a scheduled Council meeting:

- (1) To apply a 3% cost of living increase to all CLC staff salaries with effect from 1 January 2025
- (2) To apply a 3% increase to CLC Non-Executive Director remuneration with effect from 1 January 2025
- (3) The appointment of Siân Pickett as a professional member of the Adjudication Panel for a four year term of office commencing 1 April 2025
- (4) The appointment of Nick Hawkins as legally qualified lay Chair of the Adjudication Panel for a four year term of office commencing 24 March 2025.

(d) Actions Arising from previous meetings

The Council reviewed actions arising from previous meetings, most of which had either been completed or featured on the current agenda or forward programme of work.

The Council **NOTED** actions arising from previous meetings.

4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive introduced the report, which included updates on the following:

- Engagement with stakeholders to gather feedback on the CLC's proposed approach to ongoing competence, including four online stakeholder events to present the proposed new Ongoing Competency Code, recordings of which are available online [here](#). The CLC had also also met with the Conveyancing Association and the Society of Licensed Conveyancers. The feedback received had been positive, and the CLC expected to submit an application for the revised Code to the LSB by the end of May
- Updates on applications for CLC regulation
- The CLC's work with the Joint Money Laundering Steering Group and in collaboration with the LSB and ICAEW to update its Banking Protocol for Estate Administration
- A report of the [Technology and Innovation Group](#) meeting held on 29 April 2025, chaired by Council member Milton James, including development of a Guide to Procuring AI and Technology

- An annual CLC industry Round Table Event held on 14 May 2025, attended by legal service providers, technology firms and HM Land Registry to review the evolution of conveyancing, the report of which is published [here](#).
- The timetable for issue of the LSB's Discipline and Enforcement review report has been delayed to June 2025; it is anticipated that a draft report would be issued for comment at the end of May 2025
- Increases to the [LSB Budget and Business Plan 2025/26](#) of 11% to provide for additional monitoring activity and investigation of disputes between the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives and CILEx Regulation Ltd and a forthcoming consultation on regulators' approach to discipline and enforcement
- The CLC would be raising concerns at the Legal Ombudsman's proposed increase to its budget of £2m that is published [here](#), and it was noted that the timely issue of its decisions continues to be of concern, particularly in the context of OLC plans to limit publication of its decisions to those that it considers to be in the public interest
- The CLC has responded to a letter from the LSB's Chief Executive with its views on economic growth
- The SRA is proposing an increase to its [budget and business plan 2025/26](#) of 23%
- CILEx has introduced an updated suite of CILEx lawyer titles, including a [Chartered Paralegal](#) title. The CLC is considering writing to CILEx to seek clarification on its plans for regulation of the new titles
- HMRC has been running training sessions for practitioners on avoiding requisitions, which has been promoted by the CLC to its regulated community. HMRC plans to publish requisition data in the future
- The CLC's Chief Executive would be participating in a forthcoming Legal Services sector roundtable on growth that has been convened by the Ministry of Justice; the event, which was originally scheduled for 21 May 2025 would now take place on 24 June 2025
- Following the resignation of LSB Chair Alan Kershaw, the LSB has appointed Catherine Brown as its Interim Chair
- The CLC had a positive meeting with LSB Chief Executive Craig Westwood on 30 April 2025, at which some points of feedback on the Regulatory Performance Assessment process were raised; subsequent to that meeting, the LSB had written to all legal regulators inviting them to provide feedback on the process.

Concerns at LSB delays in issuing review outcomes which could impact on the CLC's business planning and preparations for future assessments were expressed and it was agreed to write to the LSB. The Council was advised that the LSB's processes for considering rule change applications had changed, with the LSB requiring more information in advance of formal submission.

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

5. Update on 2023/24 Regulatory Performance Assessment

The Deputy Director of Policy and Regulatory Standards introduced an update on the outcome of the [LSB's Regulatory Performance Assessment](#) of the CLC and proposed actions in response to the recommendations, on which views and comments were invited.

The Council was informed that the CLC had received an explanation of the LSB's Narrative assessment that had been included within the Regulatory Performance Assessment (RPA) from its Director of Policy and Regulation.

It was noted that the RPA had identified that the CLC's [Publication Policy](#) exempts information that has been collected or is held to support the development of policy and records of discussion of policy development, publication of which would inhibit the policy development process, and which the assessment considered limits the transparency of its decision making processes.

With regard to a recommendation within the RPA that the LSB expects to see comprehensive evidence of the CLC's use and publication of the application of sanctions and the CLC's approach to managed compliance and informal disciplinary tools, the Council agreed that it would not be appropriate to publish details of disciplinary action that was in progress until an outcome had been determined. As the CLC had provided extensive and detailed evidence in response to the LSB's Section 55 request in connection with its review of Discipline and Enforcement, the report of which has not yet been issued, it was agreed to await the outcome of that review before returning to the LSB's recommendation.

It was noted that a review of the Accounts Code had been included as a priority activity for 2025/26, in line with the RPA's recommendation that it should be revisited in the coming year.

With regard to the LSB's monitoring of how the CLC has improved first tier complaints handling in CLC-regulated firms, the Council was advised that the CLC has been collaborating with the Legal Ombudsman (LeO) on the development of a complaints resolution process and supporting guidance and potential publication of HMLR and LeO data, in addition to a continued focus on complaints during regulatory inspections. The CLC also intends to develop case studies on significant topics and will dedicate issue-specific sessions within this year's programme of Roadshows. The CLC intends to review its [Complaints Code](#) once LeO's model complaints procedure has further advanced. It was, however, observed that the key metric for assessing first tier complaint volumes will derive from LeO's complaint investigation data, including the number of complaints it has investigated and how many of its investigations have resulted in findings or remedies; approximately 50% of complaints made to LeO were adequately investigated at first tier, according to its data, and there has been a decline in the number of complaints made about CLC practices.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** the LSB's Narrative Assessment of the CLC's Regulatory Performance
- (2) **NOTED** and **AGREED** the proposed actions that the CLC is taking in response to the Regulatory Performance Assessment
- (3) **AGREED** to publish Council updates on proportion of cases resolved through managed compliance within its published indicators and metrics
- (4) **AGREED** a draft letter of response to the LSB's Regulatory Performance Assessment of the CLC.

Action: To publish Council updates on the proportion of cases resolved through managed compliance within published indicators and metrics

Action: To issue the CLC's response to the LSB's Regulatory Performance Assessment.

6. Update on the Legal Services Consumer Panel Report on Regulatory Leadership on Access To Justice

The Deputy Director of Policy and Regulatory Standards provided an update on the Legal Services Consumer Panel's (LSCP) report on [Regulatory Leadership on Access to Justice](#), and the action that the CLC has taken since publication of the report on areas within its scope which has included:

- Engagement with stakeholders who are reviewing the training curriculum for conveyancers and who will be including a dedicated module on ethics and professional conduct in the revised curriculum.
- The inclusion of awareness of Ethical Principles within the CLC's application for the Ongoing Competency Code
- The inclusion within the CLC's Roadshow programme of an item on Ethics
- Continued promotion of Ethical Principles contained within the CLC's Code of Conduct
- Early discussions with the LSB about the role they could play as an oversight regulator in facilitating a regulatory sandbox and how it might work in practice to support the use of AI and other technology in the legal sector
- Together with the BSB and CilexRegulation the CLC has commissioned research into digital exclusion which represents a significant barrier to accessing legal services.

The Council agreed that development and leadership of a regulatory sandbox, particularly on the role of AI and technology in legal services would be useful. A suggestion to encourage/facilitate pro bono work, possibly by retired practitioners was also explored, however it was considered that this could be problematic and would offer less protection in the event of litigation.

It was observed that National Will Writing Week, which occurs twice annually, and which raises the profile of its contributors could be promoted, alongside the importance of instructing regulated practitioners.

It was suggested that languages spoken could also be reflected on the CLC's register of regulated practices, and which may be of value to service users.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** the LSCP report on Regulatory Leadership on Access to Justice
- (2) **AGREED** to publish a statement outlining the action that the CLC is taking in response to the report's recommendations
- (3) **AGREED** that the CLC should continue to engage with the LSB on its potential facilitation of a regulatory sandbox for AI and technology in the legal sector
- (4) **NOTED** that contingent upon legislative change, the CLC could contribute to discussions on using unclaimed client account funds to support access to justice.

Action: To publish a statement outlining the action that the CLC is taking in response to the LSCP's recommendations

Action: To continue to engage with the LSB on its potential facilitation of a regulatory sandbox for AI and Technology in the legal sector.

7. Update on the 2024 Annual Regulatory Return

The Council reviewed the summary findings of the [CLC's 2024 Annual Regulatory Return](#) (ARR) and the planned actions and key messages arising from responses. The CLC had a 100% response rate.

The survey had focused on trends in property registration requisitions and cancelled probate applications, in addition to general questions about the practice, type and volume of work, future plans and anti-money laundering processes.

In addition to particular trends, including the increased prevalence of Hawala banking and the use of crypto-currencies, where there may be a further need for guidance or policy revisions, the Regulatory Monitoring Team will be following up on any identified issues of concern with individual practices.

It was observed that cyber insurance cover is of potential concern, and which would be followed up in an article in the May 2025 newsletter to practitioners, although it was acknowledged that there is an element of cyber insurance cover within standard business insurance packages.

It was also noted that some respondents had not known transaction volume figures, the relevant information for which must be held, as it is required by Professional Indemnity Insurers. This was potentially due to the scope of knowledge of a person completing the questionnaire, and it was suggested that the CLC may in future wish to include guidance on the sign-off of the ARR to firms.

The Council **NOTED** the headline findings from the 2024 Annual Regulatory Return.

Action: To consider guidance for regulated practices on sign-off of their responses to the ARR

8. CLC Business Plan

The Council reviewed progress with [the Business Plan](#) for the first Quarter of 2025.

Most Business Plan Items were on either track or completed. It was noted that submission of proposed Adjudication Panel Rule changes had not yet been finalised, to enable them to take account of the views of the recently appointed Adjudication Panel Chair and that the Chair of the Consumer Reference Group is working to extend the Group's membership.

The Council **NOTED** progress with the Business Plan.

9. Education and Training Annual Report

The Director of Authorisations and New Business introduced the Annual Education and Training Report, which included:

- Overview of the pipeline of CLC lawyers
- Overview of the student pipeline
- Diploma review
- SQA Partnership Review

The Council **NOTED** the Education and Training Annual Report.

10. Principal Risk Register

The Principal Risk Register had been discussed and reviewed by the Senior Management Team (SMT), who had identified no new risks. The Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the Principal Risk Register in detail at its meeting on 28 April 2025, whose comments were included within the report. The Audit and Risk Committee had agreed to recommend the Principal Risk Register to the Council.

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

11. Anti-Money Laundering Update Quarter 1, 2025

The Council reviewed the quarterly update on Anti Money Laundering supervision activities and forthcoming work.

The Council **NOTED** the update on Anti Money Laundering activity.

12. Published Indicators and Metrics

The Council considered the indicators and metrics for Quarter 1 of 2025 for publication.

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

Action: to publish the indicators and metrics for Q1

13. Committee Chairs' Reports

(a) Audit and Risk Committee Chair's Report

The Council received a report summarising the business considered at the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 29 April 2025.

The Chair's report included:

- Governance Statement and Quarterly Statements of Internal Control
- Director of Finance's Quarterly Update which was also included on this Council agenda
- Review of Principal Risk Register, which was also included on this Council agenda
- Audit and Risk Committee Self-Effectiveness Assessment
- An update on the Annual Internal Audit Programme, including progress with finalisation of an advisory audit of Microsoft 365 security.

The Council:

- (1) **NOTED** the draft minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025 and summary report.

(b) Remuneration Committee Chair's report to Council

Officers and Non-Executive Directors declared an interest in this item.

The Remuneration Committee Chair introduced his report to Council, which included:

- Update on current staffing issues
- Annual review of remuneration
- Revisions to the CLC's Standards of Business Conduct Policy, which would be retitled to Standards of Business Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy and revised to include examples of conflicts of interest
- Updating of the Staff Expenses Policy
- Updating of the Adjudication Panel Remuneration Policy
- Self Effectiveness Review of the Committee

- Annual review of the Committee's Terms of Reference, following which no changes were being recommended.

The Council **NOTED** the Remuneration Committee Chair's Report to Council.

15. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

16. Dates of Council meetings

Forthcoming meetings of the Council have been scheduled as follows:

- Thursday 24 July 2025
- Thursday 20 November 2025, which would be in person and would also include a Council Workshop.

INFORMATION ITEMS

17. Q1 Performance Outturn

The Council **NOTED** the performance outturn for Q1, which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 29 April 2025.

18. Property and Law Round Up

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

19. Council Workplan 2025

The Council **NOTED** its forthcoming Workplan.