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Consultations Section
Legal Services Board
One Kemble Street
London
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Consultation Response: Draft LSB Business Plan 2014/15

Dear Sirs,

We write in response to the above consultation paper as we have a number of observations on the document which are set out below.

Statement in introduction

In the introduction it states "*we are again proposing to reduce our budget – this time by £150,000.*" The predicted budget for 2014/15 set out in last year's LSB Business Plan was £4,398,000. Under the current consultation it is now £4,298,000. Is this not therefore a reduction of only £100,000?

Overview of the role of the LSB

To better inform the general public the LSB could usefully include a simple schematic which shows:

- (a) the relationship of the LSB to the MoJ, OLC, LSCP and the Approved Regulators; and
- (b) how regulatory objectives and principles of better regulation will be applied to the various work streams and their associated costs.

Explanation of the movement in budget categories

Having reviewed the draft budget for 2014/15 against the current 2013/14 budget there appears to have been a number of significant changes in various budget categories, more than just the reduction in accommodation costs outlined in the narrative. Examples of key budget changes in addition to the accommodation cost change are:

Increases

- The increase in the LSCP budget from £41,000 in the current year to £204,000 in 2014/15.
- The increase in governance and support services from £72,000 in the current year to £132,000 in 2014/15.
- The increase in legal references/support from £84,000 in the current year to £108,000 in 2014/15.

Decreases

- The decrease in staffing costs from £2,585,000 in the current year to £2,422,000 in 2014/15.
- The decrease in the depreciation charge from £90,000 in the current year to £30,000 in 2014/15.

The LSB may wish to add in additional narrative in order to explain these changes in the budget.

Further, the draft LSB Business Plan 2014/15 makes no reference to any Capital Expenditure in 2014/15. The LSB should consider including reference to any proposed Capital Expenditure and how it is to be funded. Should there be no such expenditure then this should be stated.

Legal Services Consumer Panel (LSCP)

Regarding the LSB's interaction with the LSCP, paragraph 8 of the draft LSB Business Plan 2014/15 states - *"At this stage in the development of our plan we have not commissioned any specific advice from the Legal Services Consumer Panel for 2014/15. Once we firm up our programme of work, in light of this consultation, we will identify at least one area for Panel investigation and would welcome stakeholders thoughts on this."* Yet at paragraph 60, there is reference to the involvement of the LSCP in two of the research proposals for 2014/15:

- The impact of unbundled services on consumers.
- Consumer experience of on-line divorce.

The LSB may wish therefore to amend the narrative of paragraph 8.

Yours faithfully,

Lynn Plumbley
Chief Executive