

News from the Board

Reflections on our April Board meeting – Anna Bradley

05 May 2021

One of our most important tasks as a Board is to make sure the current and future activities of the SRA are the right ones. That means we need to keep our 'finger on the pulse' of what is happening in the sector.

To help achieve this, we have been holding virtual sessions with different law societies so Board members can hear first-hand what's top of mind for the profession. Over the past couple of months we have met with local groups from Devon and Somerset and Manchester and also representatives of the sole practitioners group. I want to thank them for their time.

These conversations have given us lots of insight into areas like anti-money laundering, the professional indemnity insurance market and how people feel about the Solicitors Qualifying Examination.

Ahead of our April Board meeting, we took a rather different approach and held an evening seminar, giving us an opportunity to talk with expert voices on key areas in which there has been significant change over the last year. This included the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on law firms, diversity in the profession following the death of George Floyd, and the post Brexit regulatory landscape.

All of these discussions helped the Board in a workshop session on our future policy work and plans for our 2021-2022 Business Plan and budget. We are consulting on our draft business plan during May and June. This consultation brings together the work we plan to do with details of next years' proposed budget and what this means for practising certificate fees. The consultation also gives details of the proposed Compensation Fund contributions.

When you read the consultation you will see, that the Covid-19 pandemic is woven through our planning. There are details of our major research project with the University of Oxford which will lay the foundation for a future ramping up of lawtech work. There's also raft of evaluation of recent regulatory change and research to direct future regulatory action.

Collaborative work in relation to the UK exit from the EU, and key workstreams around standards of advocacy, continuing competence, anti-money laundering and better information for consumers also feature. More widely, access to justice and equality, diversity and inclusion, including

social mobility, are themes that are threaded through all our planned activities.

The Board are keen that we establish a clear sense of what it is we would like to be able to achieve in all these critical areas. This consultation will be your opportunity to let us know what you think, so please do take part.