



The Law Society

Council Bulletin

July 2007 Council meeting highlights

The following is a summary report of the July 2007 meeting of the Law Society Council. It does not replace the formal minutes but is intended as a helpful guide to the main issues considered. Council papers relating to this meeting are available on the [Law Society's website](#).

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Improving governance

The Council has made changes to ensure that the governance of the Society better supports its greater focus on representing and supporting solicitors. From July, the existing board structure was replaced by new arrangements led by a Management Board. The Management Board is part of a structure including a Legal Affairs and Policy Board looking at all areas of legal practice and law reform and representing solicitors, a Membership Board responsible for the provision of services to solicitors and communications with the profession and the Regulatory Affairs Board which will lead on representing the profession's interests to the SRA and other regulators. The remits of the new boards sharpen the Society's focus to ensure that we are supporting solicitors through a period of immense change anticipated in the Legal Services Bill and in other developments driven by government and commerce, and affecting the future delivery of legal services across a broad range of interests.

In the autumn the Council will be considering its own role in the light of these new arrangements.

PC fee kept down

The bulk of the PC fee funds the work of the Solicitors Regulation Authority and Legal Complaints Service and the Council has maintained careful oversight of all

budgets to ensure that the PC fee can be reduced in real terms for the second year running by freezing it at £950 for the year 2007-08. The Compensation Fund contribution was reduced to £300 for the year.

Promoting the role of solicitors

The Council adopted a motion expressing concern over the extension of powers recently exercised by CPS designated Case Workers (DCWs) to prosecute Magistrates remand courts and opposing the proposal that they should be able to conduct trial hearings in the Magistrates' Court. The Society has made representations to the CPS pointing out that DCWs are not officers of the court, that they are not trained to the standard of solicitors nor subject to any regulation.

The Chief Executive reported that he had asked Tesco to amend content on their website promoting legal services they provide that was critical of solicitors, despite the fact that solicitors were delivering those services for them. The Society was also lobbying in Poland against government proposals there to cap hourly rates for legal services.