

## **Master of the Faculties - Priorities for 2017**

At the annual Notarial Forum meeting held at The Faculty Office on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017, the Master of the Faculties, Charles George QC, outlined his priorities for the calendar year 2017. The Forum is an opportunity for senior members of the two representative bodies – the Society of Scrivener Notaries and the Notaries Society of England & Wales – to meet the Master, the staff of the Faculty Office (FO) and the members of the Master's Qualifications Board and Advisory Board to discuss matters of interest and concern to the profession.

The Master's priorities are directed principally to the Faculty Office and amount to a 'business plan' for the year whilst recognising that there will be other matters requiring attention that will arise throughout the year. The priorities for 2017 may be summarised as follows:

- A. To monitor the operation of the Advisory Board and Qualifications Board under their respective new Chairs.** Both Boards have new lay Chairs following the retirement of the previous incumbents. The Master requires the FO, as Clerk to the Boards, to work with the new Chairs to ensure a smooth transition to enable the excellent work of the Boards to be maintained.
- B. To finalise provisions in relation to Entity Regulation.** The Master is keen to ensure that the FO develops a regulatory regime which provides a proportionate and targeted approach to the regulation of notarial entities where two or more notaries are practising in partnership or where, as appears to be increasingly the case, a single notary is practising within a limited company or an LLP.
- C. To amend Rule 19 of the Notaries (Conduct and Discipline) Rules 2015 to provide for a single standard of proof in all disciplinary matters at the civil standard.** Although the current dual standard of proof provided for in the rules has not been tested, it is increasingly clear that other disciplinary tribunals are moving towards a single standard of proof at the lower, civil, standard. The Master has asked the FO to consult on this proposal with a view to moving to the civil standard of proof.
- D. To make further significant progress towards Accounts and Costs Transparency.** The LSB are asking all regulators to provide clear, and readily available, data on the cost of regulation. Whilst the FO already publishes much of the data, including full accounts, there is a need to make this more visible on our website. This will also include a requirement for wider consultation on matters such as the annual practising certificate fee.
- E. To continue actions to comply with the Regulatory Standards Action Plan.** Good progress has been made to date but there are further matters requiring attention to which the FO is committed throughout the year.
- F. To work to meet the recommendations in the Competition and Market Authorities' Market Study into the legal market.** At the time of the meeting the full implications of the CMA report and recommendations was still being assessed but significant work, in conjunction with the other Approved Regulators is likely to be required.