

May 2010

IF ABSs ARE THE ANSWER, WHAT'S THE QUESTION?¹

Stephen Mayson

Professor of Strategy and Director of the Legal Services Institute

1. Introduction

David Clementi started this ball rolling on what have become known as ABSs or alternative business structures over six years ago. So I have to confess that I have spent six years thinking about these issues, what they might mean for lawyers, for regulators, for representative bodies, for clients, for anyone who might think that this might be an attractive market. I'm going to try to share some thoughts with you and draw some threads together.

One of the things about policy is that often you don't come to any conclusion; you just say what the issues are! This is largely what I'm going to do this morning. I want to try to lay out the territory – which means, of course, that whichever side of the argument you're on here, I'm probably going to say something that gives you ammunition, and I'm probably going to say something that upsets or challenges you. And if that's the case, I'll be happy because I'll have done my job! You will go away and say that whichever bit of what I've said supports your argument; and conveniently forget the bits that challenged it!

2. What the answer offers

So, if ABSs are the answer, what's the question? I'll give you what I think the question is later, but what I want to address first is, 'What is it that this answer of ABSs is supposed to be delivering to us?'. From a policy point of view there are a number of possibilities:

- (a) *Competition*: The thread of competition seems to run through all of this – and it's worth remembering that these ideas were formed in a different

¹ This paper is based on a transcript of the keynote address to Law Society of Scotland's conference on ABSs in Glasgow on 7 May 2010.

era, where the economics were different and therefore the drivers were different. We're talking about competition, and some people seem to think that the legal industry isn't competitive enough. I suspect that from where some managing partners sit, that's not an easy case to make! But, there is a view out there that it should be even more competitive. ABSs could deliver that.

- (b) *Greater 'ease of use' for legal services:* Some clients, some consumer groups, think that legal services are too difficult to access and are too difficult to use, and we should make it easier for them. ABSs could be part of that solution.
- (c) *A different complaints profile:* There are too many complaints against lawyers. If lawyers were easy to use, if they were doing a good job, why are there all the complaints out there? I've been horrified recently to look at the numbers of people in England and Wales who deal with discipline and complaints against lawyers – whether they're in the Legal Complaints Service or the Solicitors Regulation Authority – and it's close on a thousand people. That's a thousand people for ten thousand law firms in England and Wales. If you work out how much time any one of those people is spending on any one law firm, as an average, it's close on a month a year! That's an enormous amount of poor or suspicious running through our system. Again, the hope is that different structures, different ideas, might reduce that profile.
- (d) *Fewer restrictions on business structures:* The previous points, of course, benefit the public and the consumers: here's one that might benefit the lawyers: maybe lawyers have been labouring under too many restrictions on what they can do and how they can do it, so let's free them to do something else. The reaction from most lawyers, of course, is 'We don't want to be free; we want to be independent, but we don't want to be free to do what we want because that might make life more difficult for us!'
- (e) *More cost-effective legal services:* Ultimately, the answer might provide more cost-effective legal services. Actually, it's difficult to argue against that one. Whatever the cost currently is, the question is, 'Is it cost effective? Does it provide value for money?' And there is too much evidence around the world that legal services are not cost-effective.
- (f) *Different forms of access to legal services:* opening up the market is likely to bring new methods of access and delivery (such as online services, remote and virtual access, off-shoring, and the like).

So here are parts of the answer. This is largely what these reforms are supposed to deliver to us. And it intrigues me that, certainly in our jurisdictions, the push needs to come from government. Because if you think about all of those things I've listed

so far, they could all have been delivered by lawyers themselves, doing things differently, or doing things better, without any intervention, without any Parliamentary push in any particular direction. So part of the message here is: if this change is needed, and if it's being forced on lawyers, perhaps they are, somewhat, to blame.

3. Why was the question necessary?

Here's a contentious issue! I think, as you look around the world in all the developed legal economies, we have an over-supply of lawyers. What happens when there are too many is that, clearly, competition increases, and all of those people try to keep themselves busy. That usually means that they keep themselves busy doing things that maybe lawyers aren't needed to do. With all that intellect, with all that training, with all that cost of getting to where you are and of staying where you are, you begin to undermine the sheer value of that training, and that intellect, and that added value you could provide, by doing things that frankly don't need to be done by lawyers at all. I'm not going to claim great knowledge of the Scottish system, but I can say with absolute confidence that in England and Wales, we have lawyers doing things that you do not need a lawyer to do (and to be perfectly honest, it would be better if lawyers didn't do them!). But because they're being done by lawyers, they are more expensive than they would be if they were done in some other way.

But, of course, lawyers are doing it, and they feel they have to protect that position, so they do what they need to do to preserve that territory, to keep on doing what they've been doing in the way they've been doing it. Therefore, most of the reactions we see to all these calls for reform – whether from government, from consumers, or from consumer interest groups – is, 'We can't let that happen. We have to be lawyers to do what we do. We can't let other people in to do these things – that's outrageous! Quality will suffer; clients will suffer; justice will suffer; all sorts of things will suffer.' But you know who will suffer most? Lawyers will. And that's how too many people out there see the reaction to these calls for reform.

But if I'm going to lay any fault truly and only at the feet of the legal professions, it is this one: they have not been truly business-like. That's not to say they haven't moved in some direction to be more business-like: most firms have, but they haven't gone far enough, and law firms do not generally regard themselves as truly businesses. Well, there's a great line in Sir David Clementi's report: it's about the number of complaints against lawyers (and most of those complaints are not about being bad lawyers in a technical sense, but are about being bad business people). His line basically is that if you don't think you're in business, it doesn't really matter because you'll soon be out of business anyway. Clients will find somewhere else to go.

So lawyers are in business, and have to be more business-like. They haven't been sufficiently responsive to that call to be more cost-effective, to do things in different ways that either bring the cost down or provide better value for money. They haven't been sufficiently innovative, and the world is catching up and overtaking them.

If you read anything about legal process outsourcing these days, there are an emerging number of LPO organisations; they have turnovers now running into billions. They are doing things that lawyers used to do inside, but did in an expensive way. These businesses do them at scale much more effectively; they can innovate these processes. It started in the back office; it's now in the front office. We ignored it in the back office, but then grudgingly said, 'OK, maybe we need to do something about it'. We *totally* ignored it in the front office because 'that's what lawyers do: we can't outsource that; we can't have other people doing it; we can't have that sort of work being done in other parts of the world, that's just not on'. Well, sorry: it is on, it's happening, and it's overtaking law firms; and, because law firms don't think like businesses, they're in danger of being left behind.

A result of all of this is that lawyers have certainly lost the agenda. It's being driven by government; it's being driven by clients; it's being driven by outsourcers; it's being driven by those who finance whatever we think these businesses are. And if lawyers are not careful, not only will they lose the agenda, they'll lose the plot! They really will begin to lose the ability to practise in any meaningful sense.

I'm starting from the proposition that the pendulum was originally too far in the lawyers' favour, and it's now swinging in the opposite direction. It's moving away from lawyers. My big question is, 'Will it swing too far the other way?'. We don't have to go from one extreme to the other – but that typically is what pendulums do before they begin to find some middle ground. My plea, in a sense, is: let's get our heads around this, let's look at the issues, let's look at what's at stake, and come up with the middle ground to begin with rather than have something which becomes too extreme in another equally unpleasant direction.

Well, I've now insulted all the lawyers, suggested that you're not cost-effective, you're not business-like, you're losing the plot! Let me now pose a slightly different question.

4. Why should lawyers be treated differently?

Should lawyers be treated differently? Is there a case to be made that lawyers are somehow different, that they're not *just* a business? You'll be pleased to hear that my answer is 'yes'. There is a case to be made. There is a good answer to this question 'should lawyers be treated differently?'. It lies in this notion of a 'public good'. There are things that lawyers protect and preserve: the very legal system itself, the things that underpin the rule of law, the effective and efficient

administration of justice, and access to justice. Without lawyers, those things don't happen. They are not protected, they are not preserved, or they become horribly distorted, where there isn't sufficient power and independence in the legal profession.

My very firm belief is that those public good elements of what lawyers do, what they protect and what they preserve are not susceptible to 'normal market forces'. If this set of reforms was only about competition, if it was only about being better businesses and letting market forces determine what happens to legal services, we would be in deep trouble, because it would inevitably compromise those elements of the public good that are necessary to democracy and a decent working economy. So, yes, there is in a sense some special pleading to be done, but lawyers need to be very careful how they do it and the territory they pick.

It's because of this that the consumer interest – however powerful it might be – in my view, can never trump the public interest in those public good elements. Whatever we do with reform, we've got to make sure that the public good is not undermined to a point where it becomes difficult or impossible to sustain.

5. Five ABS issues

I want to deal with five issues around the ABS territory, and look at what those issues are, and what they might mean, in an ABS world.

5.1 Cost

The first issue is that the cost of legal services is generally seen to be too high. I think it's too high for all sorts of reasons, and part of it is about inefficiency, not being innovative, not using technology, perhaps using more expensive people than we need to. The question, I suppose, is does that mean that it's an inefficient market? Well in part, yes, it does. In part, lawyers have been able to get away with this higher-than-needed cost in the marketplace because they have been protected from normal market forces. The first bit of the balancing act is to make sure that we don't let market forces rip to the point where we undermine the public good that's required in legal services, but we also need to let enough of those forces rip to make sure that where lawyers do provide services, they are as efficient, cost-effective and as much value for money as they can be.

Where you have an over-supply of lawyers in a fragmented marketplace, you have a real problem with the underlying cost of legal services. If there are too many of these expensive people in the market, who expect to earn a lot of money, who expect to progress to a certain level in their businesses, who expect a certain status and the rewards that go with it, and they're fragmented in small businesses – which, around the world, still typically is the case – then you have expensive bodies spread over a

number of fragmented businesses each of which has ordinary costs of operation and being in business that become replicated within the marketplace as a whole. That has to be an inefficient market.

I don't really care how it happens, but we have to sort that problem out if we are going to be able to sustain legal services as a healthy, profitable business. Here's the choice: lawyers do it for themselves, or we have other people do it to them. But make no mistake: if other people do it— whether it's government, or financiers, or other people who look at business differently – they're not going to do it in a way that's going to make lawyers feel comfortable. They have absolutely no chance in that debate. If you want a decent outcome to this question, my message would be: grab the issues for yourself, and sort them out for yourselves.

We have a cost issue. Legal services are too expensive, and the extraordinary thing is when you go out and talk to clients and ask them how many times they *don't* go to lawyers when they have a legal issue, it's actually quite high. There are a lot of private clients out there who would use lawyers if they perceived the cost to be more cost-effective and represent better value for money. There are lots of small businesses who would do the same. There is a latent market for legal services we just don't get. So this isn't necessarily all bad news: if lawyers can reengineer how they deliver legal services, we might actually find more clients going to them than less. Lawyers would not be cutting their own throats; we would see an expanding *market*.

Finally – and I won't labour this point – there are good business practices out there and law firms generally just ignore them.

So what's the ABS answer to this cost issue? It is to shift the barriers to entry to promote competition and reduce the costs. The basic message here is: we don't trust lawyers to do it for themselves, or to do it in the right way, or to do it for the benefit of the market and clients; we are going to let other people in. Notice that what I've said is 'shifting' the barriers, not 'removing' the barriers. For the most part, even with ABSs, this remains a regulated business. Interestingly, a lot of people who finance businesses like barriers to entry, because it stops a lot of other people getting in as well. If they can get in there and get their first-mover advantage, they're happy. So it isn't that general business doesn't like regulation: what it wants is *equivalent* regulation that allows them to do things in a way that anyone else could. It's a question of getting in there and doing it well, not being excluded from it for some long-lost notion of principle. This is the 'shifting barriers' point that will, however they do it, bring down the cost of legal services.

5.2 Asymmetry of information

This is the economists' issue. The problem here is that we need lawyers, but there is an imbalance in the provider-client relationship. Typically, from the client's

perspective, lawyers have power and they charge a lot of money: that's an asymmetry of both information and power in the lawyer-client relationship. Wherever there is an asymmetry, you could argue – on a public good basis – that you need to protect the client in that imbalance. The four principal areas where they need protecting are the four Cs:

- (a) The *choices* about which lawyers they can engage: this is why referral arrangements can be so contentious – they can distort the client's choice of lawyer. Who ought to have the right to make that choice? It should be an informed client. In too many instances, it's not.
- (b) The *competence* of lawyers needs to be assured where they have knowledge that clients rarely experience, cannot vouch for, and on whose decisions they make their own life choices. We have to assure competence.
- (c) We also have to deal with *complaints* in the imbalance in this relationship.
- (d) Finally, if something goes wrong, and the lawyers behave badly, we have to be able to *compensate* clients.

There are, then, areas where regulation necessarily is required – and it doesn't matter whether you're a lawyer or not: if you're providing legal services, those things need to be preserved in the public interest for the benefit both of the public and individual clients. The public interest does, it seems to me, suggest a need to regulate providers. This is not about de-regulation; it's not about non-regulation; it's not about light-touch or heavy-touch regulation: it's about regulating the provision of legal services to preserve public interest and the rights of clients.

So what do ABSs do here? Well, they increase competition to improve the access that clients have to sources of legal advice, but they seek to do it on a regulatory level playing field, so if we get people coming in who don't behave like lawyers, or who don't organise their businesses like lawyers, they are nevertheless subject to the same obligations to deal with clients in that equal or equivalent way.

5.3 One-stop shops

The third issue is the notion of one-stop shops – the multidisciplinary practice or MDP. We get lawyer resistance to this initiative on the basis that clients don't need it or want it. It's actually very difficult to prove because, of course, if you have a regulatory framework, sustained by lawyers and the regulation of lawyers, that says you can't do it, then where are clients going to get the experience from that this might be something they want? It's just an exclusion, and difficult to prove that clients don't want it. Actually, when you go and talk to clients and raise the issue with them, there's a lot more open-mindedness about this than there is typically within the legal profession. Most people (by volume, rather than by value) who buy legal services are occasional buyers of those services: it's not something they do

regularly. They don't have the market knowledge, and often they don't have a lot of time. So you put those things together – 'I don't have a lot of time; I don't have a lot of knowledge; but I do have a problem that spans a number of professional requirements' – there's quite a good case to be made. Someone who came to me, or to whom I could go and say, 'This is my problem; it has different dimensions: take it away from me', is quite an attractive proposition.

Now, if you have a very sophisticated buyer, the need for that disappears. I accept that the MDP initiative – which has been tried at what many people refer to as the top end of the market – was not terribly successful before. But I'm not addressing these comments to the top end or the sophisticated end of the market; on the contrary. There's a need, I think, for us to think about this. If you imagine a local community – whether it's a market town, or a suburb in a city, or otherwise relatively well-defined geographical area – if within that area you could put together the best lawyer, the best accountant, the best real estate people, the best wealth advisers, and so on, you could have a very attractive proposition. When you think about that package being offered by a High Street retail brand (and that's quite likely), the alternative local offering based on well-known, well-established, good quality professionals could be a perfect antidote to buying a brand. But of course, unless lawyers offer it, they're not even in the market.

The second source of resistance on this – and I understand this one and to some extent I might sympathise with it – is that if we have MDPs, lawyers are going to lose control. That's probably true, because most of these businesses, I think, are not going to be driven by lawyers, because inherently they don't want to. Their resistance based on loss of control is arguably more accurately interpreted as special pleading to protect them from competition. Well, let me tell you: there is no public interest in that argument! It cannot run; it can't be allowed to run; and it certainly won't succeed.

It's really a question of embracing the market, what the market wants, understanding where you are in that market, what services you'd like to sell to the clients you want to act for. I think MDPs are going to be a supply-driven change, not demand-driven: the clients probably don't know what they want until they see it. So there will, I think, be some innovations here, where some groupings of suppliers – whether they're groupings of professionals or groupings achieved by other consolidators or retail brands – who will start offering these combined multidisciplinary services, and they'll begin to shift the client expectation of what buying professional services looks and feels like. You can either be in it, or out of it: that's your choice. Survival is optional!

What's the ABS answer on this? It is to remove the restrictions against multidisciplinary practice to allow that innovation to take place, but still – remember – within a framework of regulation. This is probably one area where the regulators have their biggest challenge. How do you regulate across professional boundaries,

where they will keep their own distinct regulators? I'm not going to pretend that it's easy, but human ingenuity will find a way of dealing with it – and there are rules about competition, there are rules about professional practice, there are expectations that we can all articulate and find ways of delivering.

5.4 Alternative providers

These are the non-lawyer entrants who might come in and start delivering legal services. Totally new entrants: they might be branded; they might be banks; they might be insurers; they might be retailers; they might be backed by private equity: they could be anyone. Most of the resistance offered by lawyers to this development is that 'there is no doubt, if we let these non-lawyers in, quality will fall'. As if lawyers are the only arbiters of what good quality legal services look like! Lawyers would have the moral high ground on this if there were no complaints against lawyers. But there are claims in the thousands against lawyers that require high professional practice fees, that require high numbers of people to deal with these complaints because law firms won't deal with themselves and they are then escalated. The cost of not having good quality legal services is already manifesting itself; it's there to be seen – and, incidentally, there to be stripped out. If you think the cost of regulation is too high, then deal with this complaints issue. If retailers come into this market and they have a complaint against them, they are not going to regard it as an assault on their legitimacy; they are not going to regard it as a threat to their survival. They will deal with it, quickly, efficiently, and probably with a client who leaves with a smile on their face. It's not going to escalate up to some disciplinary problem that costs you and the profession a lot of time, energy and money.

This quality issue is not, then, the sole preserve of lawyers. In fact, it's a multi-faceted thing that most law firms are not getting their heads around. There's difference between technical quality (which is actually what lawyers mean when they say 'quality will fall' – that these non-lawyers won't get the law right) and service quality – being available, speaking the client's language, doing the work quickly, doing it when you say you're going to do it, sending a bill that has some connection to their expectation. And those 'other people' are pretty good at doing those things: they understand customer service. But it's also about utility: it's giving clients advice they can use, that's helping a business person get off the fence.

Value for money is going to be found in that complete package of those three dimensions. Lawyers over-emphasise the first one, but that's not the route to quality. I don't think that quality is going to fall, necessarily; there's still a lot lawyers could do to raise it. What we seem to forget is that when brands come in, they are passionate about their reputation: they're not just going to lose a legal reputation if they get this wrong. If they are multidisciplinary offerings in their own right because they are retailers, banks, insurers, and so on, they have a lot to lose.

They cannot afford to take that risk. This notion that new people will pile it high, sell it cheap, and sell it bad, is not a great argument to run for resisting it.

The ABS answer is that, again, we remove the restrictions to allow that innovation and competition to take place – but, again, on the basis of equivalent regulation. This is not a free-for-all; it is something that still has to meet certain minimum requirements and expectations.

5.5 Alternative finance

The final issue is alternative sources of finance – outside investors, in other words. Lawyer resistance, again: ‘It’s not needed, we don’t want it. We can finance ourselves, we can borrow’. That was a great argument three years ago. But what’s happening? Two things are beginning to combine. The first trend of slimmer partnerships started well before the ABS debate and the recession. We’ve been seeing slimmer equity ownership in law firms to maintain or improve profitability. So we now have fewer owners who become the base on which firms borrow; and those fewer owners, typically, are debt-constrained themselves because they have mortgages and other commitments. That constrains the ability of the business itself to raise debt. This is a structural problem that law firms have been facing. Now factor in the second feature: a changed banking climate, where money is not so easy to come by. Times are changing, yet firms are still saying, ‘We need to compete; we need to gear up; we need to innovate; we need to invest’.

My question is: where is the money going to come from? Not enough law firms will have that internal capacity to take themselves to the next level. They may have to think about external investment of some kind. Don’t just think about that as equity investment: look at what Dewey & LeBoeuf have done recently. But it is still external in a way few have thought about it before.

The other resistance is: ‘These people are going to interfere with our judgement, with our ability to serve our clients well’. Frankly, that’s not in the outsider’s best interests in the long term. Why would you do that, and undermine the very thing you’re trying to sell in quantity to a marketplace? If the word goes out that you skew lawyers’ advice, and you force them to act in certain ways, that’s going to destroy their business. You can make the point, but I don’t think it flies very far. And let’s be honest: lawyers are not immune to undue influence either. Look at the way some client relationships have developed, and the influence some clients have as a percentage of a firm’s business. Look at some of the internal targets that law firm managers – often misguidedly – impose on people inside the firm: tell me that this doesn’t influence behaviour and some of the choices that lawyers make, and possibly even some of the advice given. Lawyers cannot take the moral high ground on this one, either. I’m not going to pretend that undue influence is not there as a

possibility with outside involvement, it certainly is. But is it going to undermine the issue of alternative finance to a point of it not being viable? Absolutely not.

The ABS answer here is to allow those forms of investment, to allow that innovation, remove the regulations that restrict it – but with, again, some regulatory territory that helps to bolster the business against some of these (potentially) malign influences. So, a fitness test before you let these outsiders in. Regulatory obligations are imposed to ensure that the outsiders behave, in a sense, like lawyers would – or at least to behave professionally, as lawyers should.

There are also key individuals – the Head of Legal Services and the Head of Practice² – who themselves have an obligation to the regulator to ensure that these professional obligations are complied with and that the terms of any licence that are issued to the business are also complied with.

If you look at these responses from a regulatory point of view, they are about as robust as they could be. What happens beyond here is about implementation: it's about attitude and making it happen. Good and bad practice is no more or less likely with non-lawyers than it is with lawyers.

6. So, if ABSs are the answer, what is the question?

So, back to where I started: if ABSs are the answer, what *is* the question? I'm afraid the lawyers are not going to like the question! It seems to me that, when you boil it down, it's this: Why are lawyers so slow to change, so slow to take up best business practice, and so slow to adopt innovation; and what is it we can do to forestall them from using the professional principles they hold dear (quite rightly) as a justification for resistance? The answer is a new regulatory framework. The truth is lawyers have been rumbled! They've had it good for a long time, but they're not quite performing as they should; and if it takes something from outside to shake them up, then that's probably what needs to happen.

7. Reform needs a balance

When we try to pull it all together, we need a balance in all of this – and that is where I've come out, having looked at ABSs over the years. We have to balance three principal interests: the lawyers, the clients, and the public interest.

We do need to remove restrictions that get in the way – not just in the way of other people who wish to provide legal services, but in the way of lawyers providing a better and more cost-effective service. But we do need regulation to make sure that this vital public interest isn't compromised. There is an inexorable (and probably

² These are the Scottish equivalents of, respectively, the Head of Legal Practice and the Head of Finance & Administration in the Legal Services Act 2007.

inevitable) shift from lawyer to client as the pendulum moves. But are we in danger of moving from one imbalance to another? I think we are. We need to be mindful of that, and make sure it doesn't happen.

The public interest therefore becomes for me one of the key elements of regulation and of ABSs in particular. It's not the same as the client or consumer interest. Sometimes you would do things for clients, but the courts, for instance, won't let you. That's because the public interest outweighs the particular client's interests. We have to maintain that.

We have to preserve and protect the public good to make sure that both the private and public markets for legal services work well. There is a potential conflict for the State: it has to be the guardian of the public interest and of the rule of law and so on, but it is also a buyer of legal services and has an interest in cost-efficiency – certainly if it is funding through legal aid, it has a very particular interest in how legal services are delivered and whether they can be innovated. Balancing the two could be problematic.

So where should this pendulum stop? If the goal is market-based reforms, the fundamental question is: what sort of market are we talking about? It cannot be a *free* market, because that will potentially undermine the public good. What we need is a *fair* market, and that's a very different proposition.

Competitive markets assume or require certain features, including independently contracting parties, each with sufficient knowledge of the other, and equality of bargaining power. These are not necessarily features of the delivery of legal services. It is the nature of what lawyers do that they have knowledge that others don't have: you can't have, in that sense, equivalent knowledge, or equivalent or equal bargaining power. We need to make sure that we then protect those who are in a position of vulnerability.

We also know from what's been happening in the economy that the 'efficient markets hypothesis' – on which a lot of competition and regulation theory is based – has been shown to be severely lacking in recent years.

So what I say to the regulators is that we need to remain risk-aware. There are things that could still go wrong here; but they are not terminal risks that mean we shouldn't move ahead. The regulators do need to be hands-on; they can't step back, and it's not light touch; and they do need to be uncompromising in making sure that compliance with this robust regulatory framework actually happens. If it doesn't, we are all doomed: there would be no point in doing it if compliance is not assured.

And the message for lawyers is that this notion of being professionals – and just professionals – is being replaced. ABSs could accelerate that process of change, but equally could accelerate your responses. These reforms provide new opportunities for doing things differently, and better – not only in clients' interests, not only in the public interest, but also in your own interests. What I want you to remember

through all of this is that these aren't opportunities that are being given to others unfairly: they are open to everyone – including the lawyers. You can take advantage, or not. The odds are, though, that if you don't, you might be victims.

So I say to the regulators: be careful. I say to the lawyers: think about and seize the opportunities. Good luck! Thank you.

Legal Services Institute

The Legal Services Institute was established by the College of Law in November 2006. Its principal objectives are to:

- (a) seek a more efficient and competitive marketplace for legal services, which properly balances the interests of clients, providers, and the public;
- (b) contribute to the process of policy formation, and to influence the important policy issues, in the legal services sector and, in doing so, to serve the market and public interest rather than any particular party or sectional interest;
- (c) alert government, regulators, professional bodies, practitioners and other providers, and the wider public, to the implications of these issues; and
- (d) encourage and enable better-informed planning in legal services by law firms and other providers, government, regulators and representative bodies.

The Institute seeks to form and convey independent views; where the College might have views as a provider of education, these are expressed separately.

The Director of the Institute is Professor Stephen Mayson, who can be contacted at:

Legal Services Institute
The College of Law
Gavrelle House
2 Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8HQ

Tel: +44 1483 216393

E-mail: Stephen.Mayson@lawcol.co.uk

Web: www.college-of-law.co.uk/about-the-college/legal-services-policy-institute.html