



The City of London Law Society

4 College Hill
London EC4R 2RB

Tel +44 (0)20 7329 2173

Fax +44 (0)20 7329 2190

colin.passmore@cls.org

www.citysolicitors.org.uk

Colin Passmore
Chair

The Right Honourable Shabana Mahmood MP,
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice,
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

By e-mail: ps.lordchancellor@justice.gov.uk

11th July 2024

Dear Lord Chancellor,

City Law and the new Government's growth mission.

Congratulations on your re-election as MP and your appointment as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the City of London Law Society ("CLS") to introduce the work of the CLS and to request a meeting with you and our Chief Executive, Matthew Rous. The most important issue we would like to discuss with you is how the CLS, as the professional representative body for over 60 of the largest national and international law firms in the City of London and with a membership of over 20,000 solicitors, can help the new Government achieve its growth ambitions laid out in its election manifesto.

The UK legal profession is a major contributor to the economy, generating over £60 billion p.a. Much of that income is generated in the City of London which continues its long track record as a global finance and business centre. Our members are integral to the City's reputation and success as we make thousands of transactions generated by our national and international client base happen every year. By encouraging both UK and international businesses to choose English and Welsh and Scottish law as their preferred means of governing their contracts and resolving their disputes, our profession can have a key role in boosting the UK's economic growth, and it is important that this contribution to our economy can be maintained and increased in a more competitive world.

The CLS operates over 20 specialist committees, covering different fields of the law and comprising recognised specialists in their fields. Our committees have a credible track record of making their unique expertise available to the Government, regulators and other key stakeholders. By responding to public consultations and requests for help from Government departments, we help to provide expert advice and opinion on pending legislation and legal, regulatory, and professional reform and practice.

As our Committees are a readily available source of assistance to the Ministry of Justice and other Government Departments, Matthew and I would like to explore with you how we can best get our committees to focus on some of the key policy initiatives the new Government will be pursuing. In this regard, we have many experts in the fields of planning, projects, ESG, trade, energy, regulation, finance and AI, to name just a few, who can work with you and your advisers, and with other departments, to look at how your growth ambitions can be realised. We have already started to look at particular issues which we believe must be addressed if UK economic growth is to be achieved.

An urgent example is the Arbitration Bill, which fell during the “wash-up” process last month. In our view, this is a critical piece of legislation vital for modernising our arbitration law and procedures and to secure London’s place as a global centre for arbitration in the face of heavy competition. We can support you and your department in bringing the Bill back to Parliament, if possible in the first King’s speech of the Parliament, and stand ready to assist in any way we can in terms of briefing ministers and officials. Another example is the need to implement the reforms in the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023: the City of London is globally respected as a well regulated and open location in which to conduct business, and we consider that these reforms will assist in maintaining the UK’s highly regarded reputation for integrity.

The CLLS is not just about business and law: we are firm supporters of the rule of law, vital to the maintenance of the huge regard in which English law is held. Our member firms are working successfully to improve social mobility and diversity. We have set up the innovative Social Welfare Solicitors Qualification Fund SWSQF to provide financial assistance to aspiring solicitors working in social welfare law for organisations serving disadvantaged communities. Earlier this year, Labour shadow legal front benchers supported the launch of our City Century project, which is focussed on getting solicitor apprentices into City law firms with a view to having 100 apprentices as partners in law firms by 2040. Over 50 City law firms have joined the programme, and it is having real impact for young people outside the university degree path who are trying to enter our profession. Other initiatives to provide greater access to justice and widen access to the legal profession include City Solicitors Horizons, which supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds into the legal profession, and the Collaborative Plan, by which the huge amounts of pro bono work undertaken by our member firms is coordinated.

Matthew and I would be pleased to have the chance to discuss with you all the work we do across our member firms, but in particular how we can harness that work in order to assist you and your colleagues in your growth programmes over the forthcoming Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Passmore', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COLIN PASSMORE
Chair
City of London Law Society