



THE BAR
OF IRELAND

The Law Library

FUTUREBAR 2024 – 2027

LEADERSHIP OF THE INDEPENDENT REFERRAL
BAR IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

OPTIMISED PRACTICE
CONNECTED COMMUNITY
EXPERT KNOWLEDGE



OPTIMISED PRACTICE
CONNECTED COMMUNITY
EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

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1. FOREWORD

The Council of The Bar of Ireland is profoundly aware of the responsibility we carry as advocates for justice, integrity, and the rule of law. At a time of rapid technological advancement, increasing regulatory activity, and volatile political contexts, this responsibility has never been so acutely felt.

The legal landscape is ever evolving, and with it, the challenges and opportunities that shape our profession. This Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, **FUTUREBAR**, represents our strategic objectives and priorities for the coming three years – a period where we will continue to lead with purpose, adapt with agility, and continue to uphold the highest standards of our profession, thus securing the foundation for a future thriving Bar.

The Bar of Ireland is synonymous with legal excellence, independence and ethical conduct. Our community of approximately 2,100 independent referral barristers embodies these values, providing expert advocacy and legal services across an increasingly broad spectrum of legal domains, jurisdictions and client types.

This strategic plan sets out an ambitious roadmap that not only reaffirms our commitment to these core principles, but also embraces the necessity of innovation, diversity and collaboration in a rapidly changing environment.

In the coming years, we will focus on **OPTIMISING OUR MEMBERS' PRACTICE**, providing robust support systems that enable each barrister to thrive professionally while maintaining the flexibility required to navigate the complexities of technology, regulation, and evolving client needs.

Our community of approximately 2,100 independent referral barristers embodies these values, providing expert advocacy and legal services across an increasingly broad spectrum of legal domains, jurisdictions and client types.

Our commitment to a **CONNECTED COMMUNITY** underscores the importance of fostering relationships – within the independent referral Bar, with the public we serve, and with the broader social, environmental, and political spheres in which we operate. Our role in the wider law reform agenda, and in issues of human rights and the rule of law, have resonated within an Irish, EU and international context.

Our emphasis on **EXPERT KNOWLEDGE** will ensure that we remain at the forefront of legal expertise, continually advancing and adapting our member and collective skills and knowledge to anticipate future demands, technologies and opportunities.

Finally, strategic focus is applied to the **ENABLERS** – primarily the human resourcing and skill sets of our people, as well as the financial and physical resourcing required to successfully implement our

ambitious goals. Futureproofing our estate in line with regulation, future needs and environmental best practice is a key priority. This strategic plan is a declaration of our intent to lead with confidence, to serve with integrity, and to advocate with excellence.

We invite members, stakeholders and staff to engage with **FUTUREBAR**, as we work together to build a future that honours the traditions of the Bar while boldly stepping forward into new possibilities.



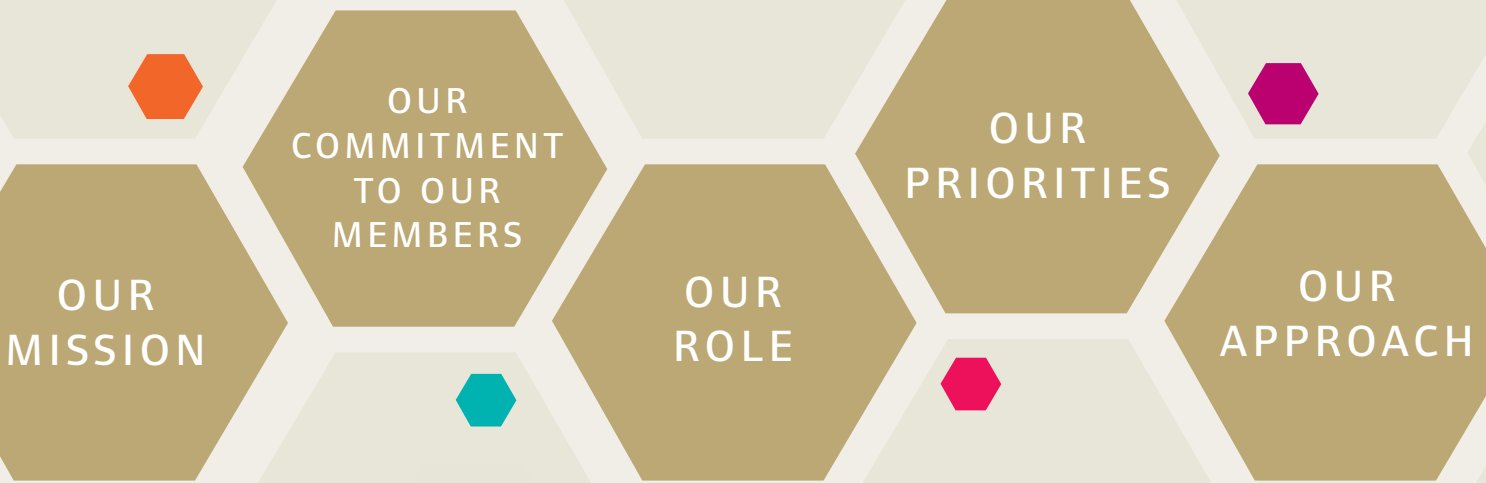
Seán Guerin SC
Chair, Council of The Bar of Ireland

This strategic plan is a declaration of our intent to lead with confidence, to serve with integrity, and to advocate with excellence.



Ciara Murphy
CEO, The Bar of Ireland

2. OUR DRIVERS



Our mission

- To provide leadership and representation on behalf of members of the independent referral Bar of Ireland
- To ensure the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct within the profession
- To deliver valued and quality services for the benefit of members
- To nurture and protect the cornerstone values of the profession, which include:
 - Independence
 - Expertise
 - Integrity
 - Collegiality

Our commitment to our members

- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Transparency

Our role

The Council of The Bar of Ireland is the elected representative body for the independent referral Bar in Ireland. Its role is to:

- consider, report upon and make representations as it considers necessary in all matters affecting the profession;
- play a key role in the conduct and arrangement of the business of the profession;

OUR PRIORITIES

- control and regulate the professional conduct of members of the Law Library; and,
- secure and protect the interests of the profession.

A core value of The Bar of Ireland is to uphold the professional standards of the independent referral Bar, which has a long history and tradition of independence, expertise and integrity.

Membership of the Law Library is comprised only of barristers who have chosen to remain as independent referral practitioners.

Our priorities

Over the lifetime of our 2024 – 2027 Strategy, we will focus on:

- optimising our members’ practice through dedicated supports and use of our resources;
- facilitating a connected community, both of members but also with the wider social, environmental, economic and political environment we operate within and shape; and,
- continuing to enhance our members’ knowledge development through existing and new approaches.

Our approach

With membership at the forefront, the Council will continue to invest in our members’ core competency of legal advocacy and knowledge, delivered through a sustainable practice model that is positioned to maximise opportunities. Drawing from our history and service to the wider public, we will continue to bring the benefit of legal knowledge to advocacy and community outreach efforts.

3. OPTIMISED PRACTICE: SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Wrapping a wide range of services and supports around approximately 2,100 self-employed practitioners provides The Bar of Ireland with a valuable insight into what is required for our members to thrive.

We deliver over 60 services to our members.

Being a member of the Law Library facilitates annual savings of between €7,290 and €14,000 in comparison to the cost of acquiring those services outside of the Law Library structure.

We will focus on four key priorities:



3.1 Expanding the opportunities: Marketing and development

Why?

Our inaugural marketing strategy (2022) sought to build on three main areas of activity: The Bar of Ireland as a representative body; our Specialist Bar Associations as a conduit to key markets; and, our members as experts and practitioners.

The concept of marketing within the profession represents not only a challenge of skill and knowledge, but also of culture.

We recognise the unique nature of advocacy services, and the nature of the market for them.

Our objective is to deliver for our members in a way that preserves the trust and integrity of the profession, while also supporting sustainable practice development.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Review** and update our marketing strategy to assess its effectiveness and resourcing requirements. A focus on digital marketing techniques (email campaigns, business-to-business best practices, thought leadership, etc.), as well as traditional approaches, will continue to be built upon.
2. **Deliver** dedicated marketing campaigns across the full range of the organisation's priorities (e.g., culture, history, equality, university outreach).
3. **Design** a priority campaign on alternative dispute resolution (ADR), in particular mediation and arbitration, as it has been identified as a growth area for members.
4. **Explore** work prospects for our members through a development plan for our Direct Professional Access Scheme.
5. **Examine** the market-facing opportunities provided by the Specialist Bar Association (SBA) model, and deliver a bespoke marketing and development strategy for each SBA in conjunction with its committee leadership.
6. **Integrate** marketing and business development skills within our professional development programme and our online/member tools, as well as the adoption of appropriate technology within that ambition.

3.2 Better and smarter: Practice operations and management

Why?

The administration of practice can be burdensome and distracting. We want our members to do what members do best – deliver for clients at various points along the dispute resolution process and various fora – and to efficiently deliver and be remunerated for that work, thus ensuring the development of a sustainable practice at the Bar.

Our goal in respect of practice operations and management is to deliver lean, responsive and effective practice supports at The Bar of Ireland.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Investigate** core practice management supports that currently represent 'pain points' for members, such as a managed 'motions pool' and a more intuitive and dynamic research panel facility comprised of fellow members.
2. **Investigate** the viability of a research-concierge service, where members can market their skills on a project basis to fellow members, and possibly to external parties.
3. **Engage** with key participants, including representative bodies and agencies across the legal services value chain (solicitors, in-house counsel, etc.) on developing a sector standard for payment terms and delivery of fees.
4. **Pursue** ambitious targets for increased usage and awareness of our Fee Recovery Service – communicating its value as a member service with personalised, targeted campaigns to various member cohorts.
5. **Identify** and evaluate, with the leadership of our IT Department, recommended cost-effective technological solutions to practice management, which would add value to our members' work.

3.3 Regulatory oversight and ethics: Our quality assurance

Why?

Client and community confidence in our services is vital to the credibility of not only the membership of the Law Library, but the rule of law.

Since the establishment of the Legal Services Regulatory Authority (LSRA), The Bar of Ireland has constructively engaged with its work programme through various submissions and meetings, as well as modifying our own regulatory and disciplinary ambit.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Fully** implement the efficiencies presented by CONNECT (internal member management system) in respect of the annual professional indemnity insurance renewal process, the Professional Practices Committee (PPC) enquiry process, and other compliance opportunities as they arise.
2. **Monitor** and create value-added member supports and tools in response to emerging trends that arise from the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal and LSRA complaints reports.
3. **Assess**, communicate, and educate the membership on the ethical implications of new modes of practice and technological developments, and recommend what changes if any need to be made to the Code of Conduct, or other codes that might impact on the work of our members.
4. **Engage** with and respond to LSRA developments in relation to the regulation of and access to the professions, as well as direct professional access to barrister services.
5. **Promote** the vital role of the PPC and its knowledge bank as appropriate.

3.4 Collegiality and care: Our human touch

What sets the Bar apart from other working models? The answer to this question can be varied, but it will always include collegiality.

Collegiality at the Bar is the openness and willingness to share knowledge and continue the social contract that has been a defining feature of independent referral Bars throughout the world.

Collegiality as an overarching concept and value at the Bar provides the basis for the following four areas of work over the course of the lifetime of this strategy.

3.4.1 Well-being and mental health

Why?

A fulfilling and rewarding career at the Bar relies hugely on members' intellectual resources. How these are protected, balanced, and nourished is a priority of the Council.

Stress, burnout and work insecurity have been identified as unfortunate features of independent practice. We're looking to change that.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Develop** a dedicated annual programme of Better at the Bar interventions, with a focus on physical and mental well-being, including a focus on dignity at work.
2. **Implement** a partnership approach to provide direct psychological counselling or supports to members who are in acute need of such care.
3. **Nurture** our sporting and social groups – following an examination of their value, reach and supports – in recognition of their valuable contribution and resource to the membership.
4. **Continue** to engage with stakeholders across the legal services sector, international networks and partners, and beyond, on well-being and mental health debates, resources, and developments, so that we can deliver for our members across the country.

3.4.2 Fostering our future Bar: Young Bar

Why?

Our membership in years one to seven represents the future of the Bar. At approximately 541 members, they are digital native, coming from varied backgrounds and careers, largely spanning millennials to Gen Z. A priority exists at the Council to nurture, support and promote leadership from this valuable member constituency.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Undertake** a strategic evaluation of the Young Bar Committee, how it can improve on its role as an effective conduit for Young Bar issues, and its annual work programmes.
2. **Promote** representation of younger members within Council Committees, Working Groups and at Specialist Bar Association Committee level, to ensure that our work and activities take account of this valuable member resource.
3. **Connect** and strengthen the network of young lawyers and young professionals, both national and international, with the Younger Members Committee, in order to lay the foundation for future synergies and collaborations between the Bar and its colleague organisations.
4. **Leverage** visibility and contributions of the younger members in key outreach and community activities (Voluntary Assistance Service (VAS), university, Transition Year, etc.), in addition to media and communications actions, in order to articulate the excellence at the Young Bar.

3.4.3 A Bar for all: Supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion

Why?

Dignity, integrity, and excellence define our members' conduct, and operate as a baseline standard for how we can support our diverse membership and the wider society it serves.

The profession has effectively doubled since the turn of the century, and so too has the richness of our members' identities, backgrounds and experiences. We are committed to acting as a driving force in fostering diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) across the legal profession by building a truly equitable profession, one of true inclusion, respecting our members' individuality.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Fully implement** our Equality Action Plan across its five central pillars, together with reporting a mid-term (2025) review of its progress and effectiveness.
2. **Provide an enhanced** support for our Equality & Resilience Committee, to drive forward a revised and targeted programme of member-focused activities and initiatives in the area of DEI and well-being. This arises due to the central focus of these areas to our members' welfare.
3. **Deliver** an updated and refreshed Equitable Briefing Policy campaign to support firm and practitioner needs, with a dedicated resource to achieve lasting change across the legal sector.

4. **Continue** to examine the profile of our membership through an annual demographic membership survey of new members, so that the results may inform our policies and interactions with the LSRA, universities and other campaigns.
5. **Promote and expand** opportunities for mentorship and similar models of professional contact and collegiality to influence retention and progression at the Bar.

3.4.4 A human endeavour: Invigorating the in-person experience

Why?

At the commencement of this Strategic Plan, it will have been almost half a decade since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Coming through that experience has taught us the value of agility, technology and adopting an entrepreneurial approach.

The practice of law is a human activity; its true value and experience is optimised when we ensure that members come together to share, observe and create.

Over the course of this Strategic Plan, while seeking to retain the importance and opportunities of online/remote settings, we will continue to promote in-person settings for real connection.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Review and report** on the use, trends and requirements that arise in respect of our physical infrastructure, to include seating, meeting rooms/pods, and demands for new uses (e.g., collaborative working spaces) of our serviced property offering.
2. **Engage our Circuits** with a programme of expanded outreach and on-tour initiatives of our services (member information sessions, communications clinics, CPDs, practice management, IT, etc.), which will also serve as an important listening opportunity for our Circuit member needs.
3. **Envision** our physical infrastructure as a marketing and leadership opportunity through a target of increased open-to-sector events, conferences and social engagements through the Sheds and Jorge's at The Bar.
4. **Examination** of the potential growth and development of the Dublin Dispute Resolution Centre as a premier negotiation/consultation location for the legal community.
5. **Monitor** and respond to developments from the Court Service Modernisation Plan and The Judicial Planning Working Group, as well as the operation of other quasi-judicial settings on the use of online, hybrid and in-person hearings and the appropriateness of same.

4. CONNECTED COMMUNITY

We operate as part of a community within a community, and always have the possibility of benefitting from that dynamic.

Our Community Strategic Pillar represents the journey of members on their pathway to practice at the Bar, our impact in our locality and environment, and the enduring connection with those members who move beyond the Bar.

The collective strength of approximately 2,100 members, their combined expertise and understanding of the key debates shaping our country, together with our long history within the Dublin City North area, means that we have a great deal to offer our neighbourhood, the wider community and the policy arena.

In developing our Community priority, we will focus on:



4.1 Good citizenship: environmental, social and governance leadership

Why?

The Bar of Ireland's environmental strategy reflects an understanding that change is needed in how we manage our organisation to work towards a carbon-neutral future.

Achieving the goals set out will involve a collaborative approach across teams in the organisation in order to achieve our 2030 sustainable development goals.

Developing a formalised approach to environmental and sustainability priorities drives positive social and environmental impact to mitigate climate change, improves operational efficiency, and enhances our financial performance both in the short and long term.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Formalise** an organisation-wide environmental, social and governance statement in line with best practice, having regard to any statutory requirement that might arise over the lifetime of the Strategy, and drawing from the organisation's wider activities (Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS), TY Programme, etc.).
2. **Foster** our pro-bono record, through the implementation of EY recommendations in respect of VAS, and identify emerging opportunities for our members to assist those who fall within the justice gap.
3. **Report** periodically to our membership on our sustainability performance, having particular regard to the work of the Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee and its published 2030 Sustainability Roadmap.
4. **Formulate** a standalone estates strategy to take account of sustainability, operational performance and demand, and set out a schedule of key maintenance, refurbishment and safety investments/financing required over the period of this strategy.
5. **Share** our expertise on the environmental and biodiversity priority through the delivery of staff, member and public lectures with a focus on environmental justice and sustainability campaigns.

4.2 Policy and law reform: Advocating with expertise

Why?

Our policy and law reform function has two core driving forces: the public interest in discussions regarding law and courts reform; and, safeguarding the independence of our members' practice, which serves the court.

In upholding those interests, what we say, how we say it, and who we say it to, are increasingly specialised functions of Council. Our credibility in public debates arises from our credibility as professionals; as such, we continue to incorporate our values within our policy and law reform agenda.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Continue to actively engage** in relevant law reform consultations, including with the LSRA and similar, that impact on access to justice or the quality of our administration of justice.
2. **Undertake a review** of our activities in support of the rule of law, including future iterations of our annual Human Rights Award and our promotion of the 'cab rank' rule.
3. **Consider** necessary responses, including a public affairs campaign, on matters of fees and remuneration of barristers through State schemes, including criminal and civil schemes, as well as other bodies.
4. **Engage** with our colleagues as part of cross-border and international networks, ensuring knowledge sharing and collaboration on future partnerships and projects, such as the protection and promotion of the common law as part of our European membership.

4.3 Valuing the profession: Fostering the Bar membership lifecycle

Why?

Three significant inflection points arise outside of practice at the Bar:

- introducing the Bar to young adults (TY Programme);
- attracting young professionals (King's Inns and university campuses); and,
- preserving the heritage and continued contribution of past members (alumni network and legacy project).

As an organisation, we have come to realise the value that resides outside the Bar and that we would like to connect with.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Engage** proactively with schools to foster an early interest in the legal profession by offering and promoting the Look into Law TY Programme in accessible and inclusive formats, while continuing to review and revise the Programme.
2. **Position** the career of barrister and the devilling experience to a diverse and wide range of prospective students, with a focus on making the profession accessible to a diverse and talented student body. Our Denham Fellowship and similar interventions should be considered within this action.
3. **Establish** partnerships and continue to foster links with university law societies in order to align the development of what we have to offer and have set out within our Paths to the Bar Action Plan.
4. **Recognise** that the nature of legal services is such that exciting new roles also arise outside of the Bar. Maintain a connection with those members through an annually programmed alumni network.
5. **Continue** to add to our legacy project, as a way to conserve and pass on the benefit of our past members' wisdom.

5. EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

The success of our members is almost exclusively based on best-in-class advocacy, having speedy access to legal information, understanding the implications of legal developments as they arise, and developing a proficiency in the technology to assist them in delivering their professional services.

Our Knowledge Development strategic pillar arises from recognition that our members' practice is based on their interpretation and application of legal knowledge to a wide range of circumstances and facts.

In developing our Knowledge Development priority, we will focus on:



5.1 Knowledge is power: Library and research

Why?

Our members' access to relevant and emerging legal resources is a defining contribution to the success of their practice.

As the primary dedicated legal library in the State, the library, research, and knowledge role of The Bar of Ireland is one of our core activities.

Library & Information Services are delivered across three principal sites in Dublin, together with a Law Library in Cork, and partnerships with technological universities in Waterford and Letterkenny.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Integrate** digital as a value and priority of the Law Library and our knowledge management work through a dedicated digital library vision, with a particular focus on generative artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging research and task tools.
2. **Leverage** our internal knowledge management competencies and channels, including Dlí Nua and Barrister's Desktop, to support a wide range of practice areas, specialist bars, and the wider professional development programme.
3. **Strengthen** our relationships with national and international library networks to benefit members and librarians, in respect of best practice and quality assurance, and to understand growth areas.

5.2 Advancing professional growth: Professional development and education

Why?

Professions never stand still.

As new practice areas emerge, the law continues to evolve. As challenges change and develop, barristers' practice needs to reflect an ever-evolving legal, social, economic and wider landscape.

Different modes of professional development need to be explored, and applied, in order to meet the demands of modern practice. In preserving and building the reputation of Irish legal services, both at home and abroad, the quality of knowledge and expertise of our members is core.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Review** our pupillage year and recommend necessary changes with a view to retention and delivering a gold standard pupillage experience.
2. **Deliver** an engaging programme of high quality continuing professional development opportunities for our members, ensuring that selection and range of offerings are optimised to reflect member needs and sectoral opportunities and have regard for the further enhancement of the core competencies of the profession (advocacy, negotiation, drafting and legal expertise).
3. **Proactively position** the Bar to respond to LSRA educational reforms.
4. **Explore** ways to make learning flexible, collaborative and more accessible.

5.3 Technology in practice

Why?

Integration of technology with all facets of our work is non-negotiable. While the advantages can be identified by reference to speed and efficiency, we are acutely aware of the risk management and possible negative externalities relating to technology.

Advances in generative AI and the development of large language models have immediate implications for the practice of law and the processing of large amounts of information.

Over the course of this Strategic Plan, the adoption and use of technology by our stakeholders will also have a significant impact on our members' work.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

- 1. Formulate and support** a dedicated working group to report on the implications of generative AI on our members' work and environment, its impact on our supports (e.g., library, practice management) and action agreed recommendations within that body of work.
- 2. Interrogate and engage** with the Courts' Modernisation Programme and 2030 Vision to ensure that the valuable role of in-person courtroom advocacy in the litigation process is safeguarded.
- 3. Expand and develop** a tech-aware capacity among our members and staff, so that we can deliver better and faster for our clients and members, as well as drive efficiencies in all our work.
- 4. Engage with and provide leadership** within the wider community (Oireachtas, Government Departments, law tech, academia, etc.) on the intersection between technology adoption (in particular generative AI) and the delivery of legal services, its human rights implications, and other legal implications.
- 5. Deliver** a validation and audit service of emerging technologies for members (e.g., cybersecurity) so that trust and the integrity of the tools they rely on can be assured.

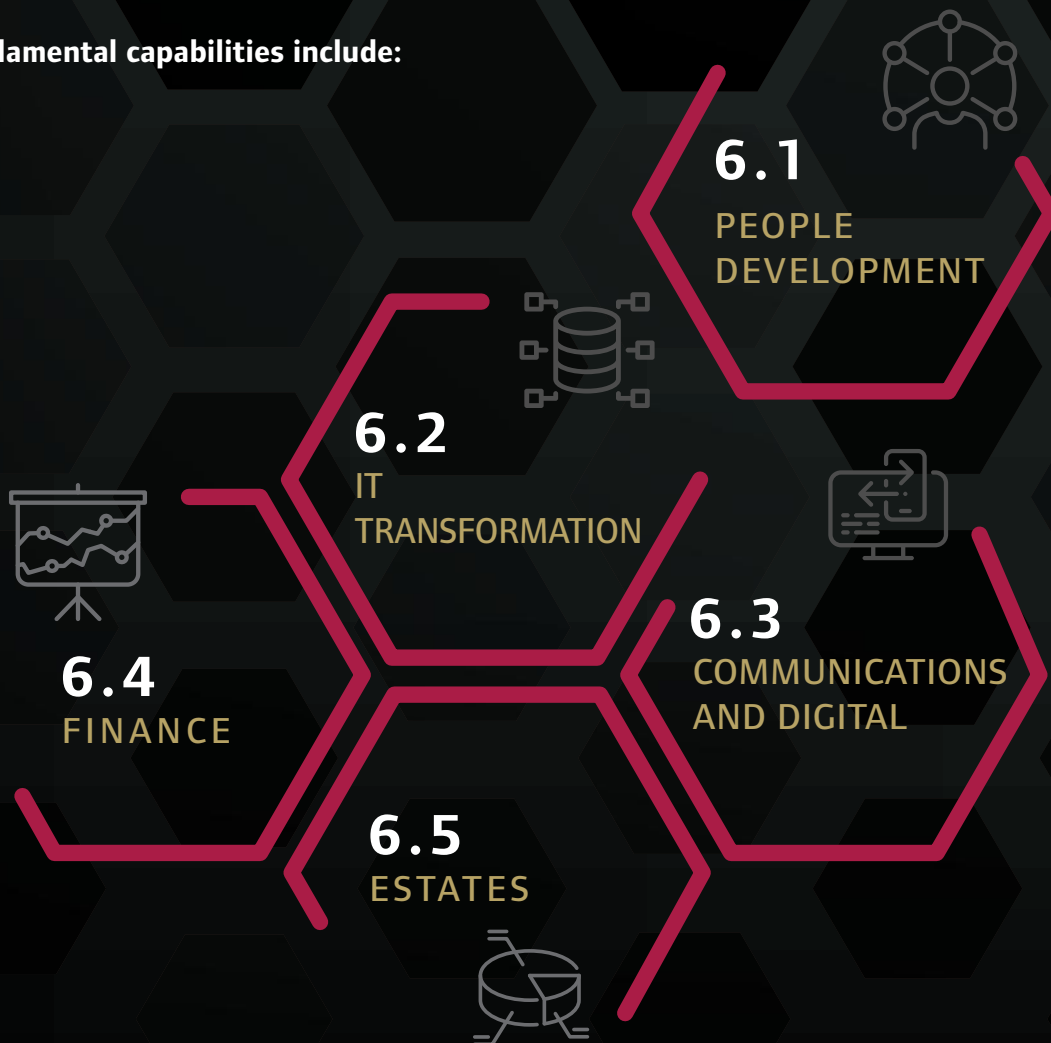
6. HOW WE ACHIEVE: OUR INTERNAL COMPETENCIES

In order to implement our key priorities as outlined in our three pillars, our internal resources are essential to execute the Strategic Plan.

Described as 'levers', the following capabilities encompass the resources, processes and systems required to translate our strategic goals into tangible actions and outcomes.

Levers are fundamental to the successful implementation of our Strategic Plan, and enable us to execute effectively, drive efficiency, adapt to change, satisfy members, and mitigate risk.

These fundamental capabilities include:



6.1 Human resources: Investing in and supporting our talent

Why?

Goals and ambitions, without the talent to deliver, are mere thoughts.

The science and experience of the workplace remains one of the unifying challenges across all sectors, as organisations contend with technology and new modes of working, as well as an intergenerational mix.

Systemic diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) practices in the work environment are a duty for a responsible employer, not a choice. We choose to lead on this front and to work proactively to safeguard diversity and belonging at the Bar.

By focusing on the right tools and frameworks, set against a safe and supportive culture, we can ensure that our organisation has the right people with the right skills in the right roles to drive strategic success.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Provide** appropriate workspace and structures conducive to delivering on our operational and strategic needs, in addition to considering mechanisms to embed a co-creation and cross-functional culture.
2. **Spark** innovation and diversity of thought among teams comprising of colleagues from various backgrounds, skills and work experience. Instil inclusive work practices, transparent employee policies and fair recruitment procedures absent of unconscious biases.
3. **Drive** a 'learning forward' mentality by establishing a learning framework for staff, creating development opportunities, high performance goals, and defined career progression pathways, allied with Strategic Plan actions.
4. **Introduce**, through targeted training, a coaching and mentoring culture, empowering employees through encouragement and support, which in turn releases true skill potential.
5. **Increase** staff engagement and leadership through dedicated staff social and community opportunities, and other colleague-inspired initiatives.

6.2 IT: Our transformation and innovation opportunity

Why?

Our IT function facilitates our business operations, drives digital transformation and evolution, and enhances the experience of our members in their practice.

Cybersecurity and data privacy represent critical factors in the delivery of our IT services.

To meet the increased focus on applications and digital transformation, the IT Team will require additional skill sets and resources across the duration of the Strategic Plan.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Expand** the functionality of CONNECT to enhance member experience as well as improve efficiencies across the organisation's activities.
2. **Provide** leadership and expertise to members as well as staff in the application of data privacy, cybersecurity, and digital services regulations, to assist with full regulatory compliance.
3. **Conduct** a training needs analysis of our IT Team to ensure that the needs of membership and the implementation of this Strategic Plan can be successfully met.
4. **Establish** an IT and systems resource group, with members and key IT staff, to gain greater member insight into the use of our IT services and assist with future planning.

6.3 Communications: Connecting effectively to drive informed engagement

Why?

Engaging in our work, seeking change and impact, and strengthening our relationships all rely on the skill and execution of our communications function.

Equally, our communication efforts must be appropriately targeted towards our key audiences, taking advantage of new and traditional practices, supported by a skilled team.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Undertake** a mid-term (2025) review of our website's performance and functionality, and continue to build it out as a primary and recognisable gateway to our members' services.
2. **Invest** in necessary skill development and training to account for quickly evolving changes in the digital communications sector, including the value of an in-house technical competence for web and app optimisation.
3. **Conduct a research and analysis exercise** with our audiences to determine the effectiveness of our communications, media, public relations and branding approach, incorporating such results into a dedicated communications strategy.
4. **Explore** short-form storytelling to better represent the complexity of The Bar of Ireland's activities, and in particular the choice of media and platforms to target younger audiences and our members.

6.4 Finance: Supporting the Strategy

Why?

Financial performance is a key enabler of our strategic objectives. Over the years, the organisation's finances have proven to be resilient, having successfully navigated the major challenges of several recessions and most recently, the impact of the pandemic and the energy crisis.

The Bar of Ireland's finances are underpinned by a stable membership base, a recently updated subscription model, and an effective reserve policy.

The Bar of Ireland's business structure includes five other trading entities, which have been established to manage a specific range of services, all of which trade successfully as stand-alone entities.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Develop** a longer-term financial plan to support the key strategic objectives identified in this plan.
2. **Complete** the recalibration of subscription rates for non-Dublin-based members, recognising that the discounted model required adjustment as more services are now available to all members in all locations.
3. **Upgrade** the internal financial management system to ensure best-in-class financial controls that can manage and report on financial performance in an accurate, timely and informative manner.
4. **Establish** a fund to meet the investments required to address the output of the Property Strategy and to upgrade all properties' façades and building systems.
5. **Review, assess and update** value for money information to demonstrate the key financial benefits of membership.

6.5 Estates: Building on progress

Why?

The provision of localised serviced premises in the vicinity of the legal quarter is an essential member service and benefit.

We occupy 302,111 sq. ft of office space over six buildings, providing seating, lockers, offices, meeting rooms, parking, restaurants, and a members' club, all supporting member needs and organisational requirements.

The Bar of Ireland is a key tenant occupying space in the Four Courts and Criminal Courts of Justice. We also lease and manage additional properties in Cork and Dublin.

Our estate must ensure that we can service the future needs of the profession and the organisation. This requires a strategic approach to the development, maintenance and financing of our estate as a whole.

Key actions we will deliver over the lifetime of this strategy are:

1. **Complete** the creation of a strategy for the Distillery and Jameson Buildings.
2. **Develop** a long-term refurbishment and building facility upgrade plan for properties owned by the organisation.
3. **Continue** to progress the environmental sustainability agenda.
4. **Develop** a strategy for the ongoing upgrade of the Four Courts and other leased premises of The Bar of Ireland, to support member needs and encourage member on-site attendance.
5. **Continue** to progress improved management and reporting systems in our estates portfolio, including building compliance, health and safety, environmental sustainability, etc.

7. REPORTING ON OUR WORK

The foregoing represents an ambitious and necessary intention on the part of the Council of The Bar of Ireland, which underpins our mission and our role as a representative body for members of the independent referral Bar, and the community they serve.

Regular reporting to the Council and our members on the implementation of this Strategy is essential to ensure that we are making progress and can be held to account. Reporting will be undertaken through:

- publication of the Annual Report to members;
- Chair communications to members; and,
- CEO quarterly reports to Council.





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