



HOUSE OF LORDS

The Rt Hon the Baroness Stowell of Beeston MBE
Chair of the Select Committee on Communications and Digital
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW
Email: holcommunications@parliament.uk

Paul Philip
Chief Executive
Solicitors Regulation Authority
The Cube
199 Wharfside Street
Birmingham
B1 1RN

14 April 2023

Dear Mr Philip,

Thank you for your letter dated 3 February 2023. Your progress update provided important insight into the work of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) in relation to Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation (SLAPPs).

Further to this, I would be grateful if you could provide answers to the following questions:

1. What proportion of the SRA's investigations into suspected SLAPP cases are related to economic crime?
 - a. How many complaints about suspected SLAPP cases have you received that are related to economic crime?
2. What are the limits of your fining powers for:
 - a. traditional law firms and solicitors, and
 - b. Alternative Business Structures?
3. What are the main challenges you face in identifying and tackling economic crime-related SLAPPs in the context of the current legal framework?
4. In your view, does the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (in particular section 327) currently provide sufficient safeguards to prevent solicitors from receiving criminal funds to pay for legal cases that aim to stifle legitimate investigations or reporting on economic crime?
 - a. Is there any lack of clarity in this legislation, or associated case law, that would benefit from being addressed to help the SRA tackle SLAPP cases relating to economic crime?

I would be grateful for a response at your earliest convenience.



Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Baroness Stowell".

BARONESS STOWELL OF BEESTON