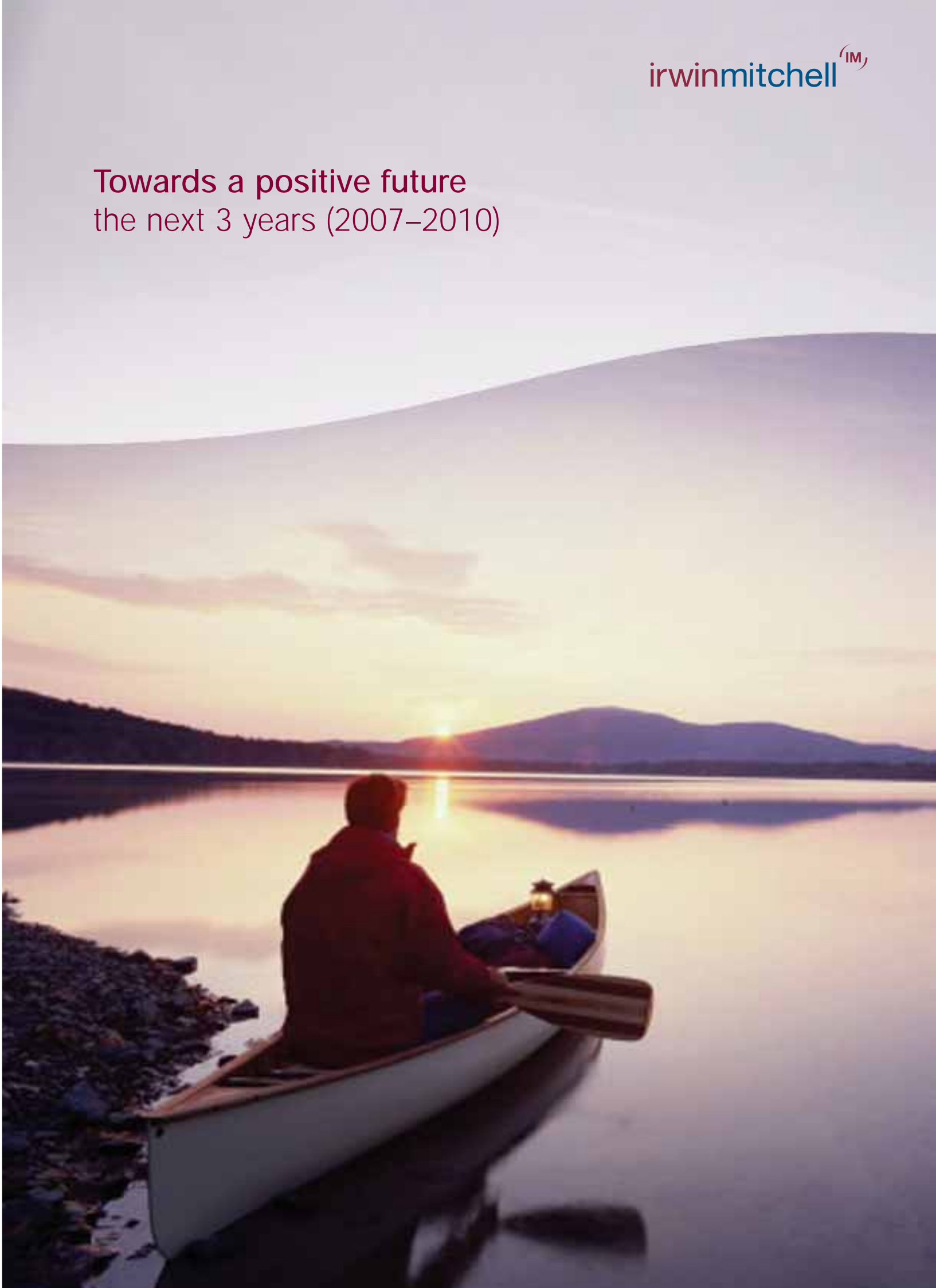


**Towards a positive future**  
the next 3 years (2007–2010)



# Towards a positive future

## We are solicitors who are not afraid to be different.

A nationally acclaimed law firm with strong international capability, we are the only major UK law firm that successfully combines the provision of specialist legal services to both the business world and individuals as well as commoditised legal services to large institutions.

The firm has grown consistently year on year and is one of the leading and most innovative firms in the UK.

We develop and deliver quality products and services based on our clients' needs. Not content with the way we do things, our philosophy is to strive for constant improvement in everything we do.

## A developing strategy

In 2003, we reviewed our strategy and published a paper which clearly defined the firm's vision and objectives and established a clear plan for future growth.

Over the last four years we have achieved many of these objectives.

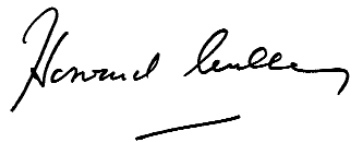
This new plan 'Towards a positive future' seeks to build on the firm's strengths. We will capitalise on new business opportunities arising from a period of radical change in the legal market by providing a wide range of specialist legal services and by being the UK's largest supplier of commoditised legal services to large organisations, institutions and companies.

"Irwin Mitchell is a well established and highly regarded national law firm with a growing international presence.

The firm is renowned for its pre-eminent personal injury service and is the leading provider of commoditised legal services in the UK. Combined with our strengths in both contentious and non-contentious work for commercial clients, other organisations and private clients, we have a truly distinctive profile.

Our vision "to exceed the expectations of every client" and our reputation for progress and growth is underpinned by our brand values - innovation, responsiveness, solutions and value.

While the years ahead will see greater competition in the new market for legal services, they also offer a great deal of opportunity. Moving forward from a strong position, this strategy document outlines our vision for the next 3 years and indicates how we intend to achieve it."



Howard Culley  
Managing Partner  
May 2007





## A changing market place...

Legal and technological advancements coupled with social changes will continue to change consumer buying behaviour, expectations and demand.

The Legal Services Act will generate radical change in the market place in which we operate.

The impact of the deregulation of legal services cannot be under-estimated. The new legislation will revolutionise the way that legal services are purchased and delivered. Likely changes include:

- The emergence of new entrants with household names and brands, significant resources and sales capabilities. These organisations already have experience in delivering exceptional service to large numbers of customers.

- Law firms entering into close relationships with large institutions and embracing alternative business structures.
- Competition for private client and routine commercial work will increase as smaller firms consolidate to seek market advantage and security through merger.
- Widespread re-engineering of legal services to achieve operational efficiencies.

# A positive platform to build for the future

Staying ahead of the expected pace of change, we will capitalise on our current leading position to make the most of the opportunities which these changes will bring. We will continue to offer innovative and efficient solutions to meet the needs of our clients.

As a national firm with international capabilities, we are able to call upon significant resources.

We employ over 2300 people with offices in Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, London, Newcastle, Manchester and Sheffield in the UK and in Marbella and Madrid in Spain.

Understanding the competitive and economic benefits that size brings, we are committed to continued growth.

## Our products and services

We have experience in defining and delivering market led quality products and services and will continue to develop and deliver these effectively:

- As the 5th largest litigation practice in the UK we will continue to develop highly specialised teams to deal with complex contentious matters.
- As the leading personal injury and medical negligence litigation practice in the UK, we will consolidate this pre-eminent position in the UK Personal Injury market. Our objective is to become the first choice law firm for any person suffering personal injury, the first choice legal supplier for institutional referrers and to be the leading provider of international Personal Injury services.
- Our market leading technology, process design and capacity management skills make us the UK's leading supplier of commoditised legal services. With particular strength in the insurance and banking sectors, our aim is to become the first choice 'outsource provider' for companies and institutions who offer their customers legal and associated services.
- We provide and will continue to develop a wide range of high quality non-contentious legal services for companies, organisations and institutions.
- Our strong private client departments have achieved sustained growth. As well as providing specialist advice to individuals, we are meeting increasing demand from financial institutions and other large organisations to provide volume private client services to their customers, employees and members.
- Our investment management company, which provides specialist fund management services for private individuals and is an important part of our holistic service to clients, continues to grow in competitive trading conditions.

**"We develop and deliver quality products  
and services based on our clients' needs.  
Not content with the way we do things,  
our philosophy is to strive for constant  
improvement in everything we do"**

**"A sound financial platform  
enables continued expansion"**

## Business Services

If the firm is to achieve its vision we need to continue to invest substantially in business support areas such as Finance, Human Resources, Training, Marketing, Information Technology and Facilities Management.

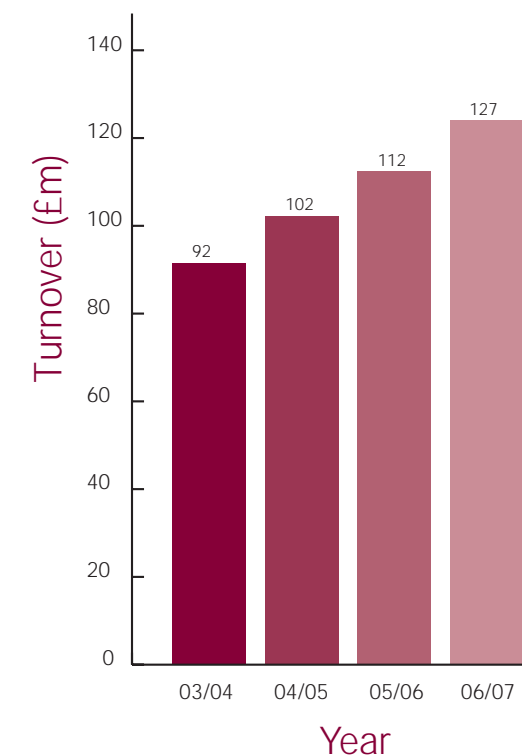
The strategic contribution of these areas to professional business planning and management will be essential to our ability to meet the challenges of the evolving legal services market place.

## A strong financial platform

We have achieved impressive growth over recent years. Our profits reflect this positive trend and a strategy of retaining funds to finance continued expansion is designed to grow the business without jeopardising its sound financial basis. As the market alters, we will consider alternative financial models to support and sustain this growth.

## Changing the business to suit market needs

We will consider Alternative Business Structures and make changes that will enable the firm to take full advantage of anticipated market changes.



# A unique personality and culture

We are different from other national and international practices, not only in the range of services which we offer but also in our approach. We do it our way.

Our culture plays an important role in the delivery of our services:

- In our clients' best interests we provide clear advice in a sensitive and professional manner.
- We have a flexible approach. We realise the need for innovative new products which reflect the changing market and deliver value to our clients. Our experience allows the development and delivery of bespoke legal solutions supported by IT systems and processes.
- We use market leading technology, process design and capacity management skills to grow our unique commoditised business and to improve efficiencies throughout the firm.
- Our lawyers, particularly those involved in litigation, frequently operate at the cutting edge, testing and pushing the boundaries of the law to produce the right results for our clients. Our high profile provides us with an influential voice in shaping legislative and regulatory policy.
- Our secure financial base allows us to invest for the future.
- Both our services and our client base are diverse. We respect and are committed to that diversity.
- We aim to be an employer of choice by creating opportunity, providing reward and respecting the need for a sensible balance between home life and work.
- We believe in our people and invest significant resources in training and developing career opportunities.
- We take social responsibility seriously and are committed to playing an active role in supporting the community.

"A client centred culture  
that celebrates individuality"

# Our vision and commitment

## Our Vision

To exceed the  
expectations of every client

## Our Commitment

To realise the vision, it is vital that everyone understands and is fully committed to our values.

### We are committed to:

- The highest level of service and outstanding client care.
- Combining teamwork and collective goals with individual objectives.
- Providing opportunities for individuals to develop their skills.
- Maintaining a positive and non-discriminatory work environment.
- Constantly seeking to improve what we do.
- Continuous and successful growth.
- Capitalising on market opportunities.
- Developing our business through creative and innovative thinking.

## Our Brand Values

To be renowned for innovative and responsive solutions and for providing value to all clients.



# Towards the future

Always looking for a better way to deliver new and existing services, we understand that our future success depends on how we react to the new and changing market place. We believe that, through listening to our clients and working in partnership with them to define and deliver products and services based on their needs, we will continue to be successful.

Change creates both opportunities and threats and it is important that we recognise and respond to new situations, exploiting opportunities and minimising threats.

Specifically in response to the Legal Services Act we will consider Alternative Business Structures and will continuously review our strategy as the market evolves.

Remaining flexible and responsive will help to keep the business in the best possible shape.

“The market place is changing and only businesses which have a clear vision will survive.

Having defined our vision, it is important that we equip ourselves fully in order to achieve it”

# Seeking continuous improvement for a better future

## Our Leadership

Having effective business leaders is critical to our future success.

We will select and develop our talented people to lead and manage the business. When required, people with appropriate skills will be recruited from outside the firm.

By using a structured leadership and management development programme we will ensure that our people can deliver the goals of the business.

We will ensure that those selected understand the importance of their roles and have time to lead and manage.

## Our People

We will only succeed if we invest in our people.

Members of staff will know what is expected of them. They will be given the training and support needed to meet their objectives.

To realise our vision everyone within the firm will embrace the firm's values and understand its aims.

## Our Financial Management

Having established a solid financial base upon which to build, we must maintain profitability in order to invest for the long term.

We must seek efficiency gains in every part of the business in order to provide our clients with value for money.

Where appropriate, we will consider alternative funding arrangements to ensure that the firm remains competitive.

## Our Products and Services

We will work with our clients to deliver products that add real value to their business or their personal lives.

Concentrating on our established pre-eminence we will capitalise on the firm's position in the provision of litigation and commoditised legal services while continuing to support and develop other more traditional legal services.

We will consider the development of new services to complement and support our existing legal and non-legal portfolio.

## Our Internal Processes

We will constantly review how we work and make changes whenever we can which result in continuous improvement to enhance competitiveness and service delivery. We will strive continually to improve efficiency.

## Our Technology

We will continue to invest in technological solutions to drive greater efficiencies and improved service levels.

## Our Communications

Good communication is imperative in maintaining an efficient and attractive work place.

We will continue to develop systems to ensure we are able to communicate effectively with each other and our clients.

"It is vital that we continue to improve our systems and operations. If we are to continue to compete successfully, we must get better at what we do and embrace new methods"

# Seeking new business opportunities

Because we are no longer just a law firm which provides legal advice, but a business which offers legal and associated business solutions, we will embrace change to ensure that we can respond positively to new business opportunities.

## Developing our products and services

We will continue to develop new products and services which complement our existing service and provide value to our clients.

We will exploit our position as market leaders in supplying commoditised legal services to large institutions and organisations by offering:

- Bespoke legal and associated business solutions.
- Outsourcing services.
- Products and services which can be marketed under the customers' brands.

## Business Partnerships

We will develop close partnerships and joint business ventures with financial and other organisations which share our vision.

## Mergers and acquisitions

The firm will actively consider mergers with or acquisitions of law firms and associated businesses in order to accelerate realisation of our strategic aims.

## External appointments

We will attract experienced professionals who can significantly improve and add to our business offering.

## Regional coverage

We are committed to exploiting the growth potential and profile of our existing offices. We will seek to undertake work in the most cost effective locations within our office network.

While our offices in Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle and Sheffield will continue to grow, special attention will be placed on the development of our new offices in Glasgow and Manchester as we seek to build our presence within Scotland and the North West.

We will continue to explore opportunities to expand our existing geographical coverage within the UK.

## London

The firm has a well established presence in London and its office is recognised for litigation and dispute resolution both in the UK and internationally. Opportunities to enhance our private client services and the portfolio of our corporate offering will be taken to achieve the overall aim to provide a 'gateway' to the City and to support our developing international practice.

## International

Our objective is to "build a significant and recognised international presence".

To achieve this we will:

- Expand our Spanish operation and its counterpart in London in order to establish one of the leading Anglo-Spanish practices. As part of this strategy we will consider opening other offices within Spain to support our existing office network in Marbella and Madrid.
- Develop our international networks and establish a number of formal alliances in identified jurisdictions.

## E-Commerce

The web has revolutionised the way in which people live and transact business. Driven by client demand, the ability to offer a fully integrated on-line service is vital in securing our future success.

Building on our strong on-line presence, over the next three years we will accelerate the development of our e-commerce capabilities to ensure we remain at the forefront of the 'on-line' revolution.

Future development will place greater emphasis on the sales and solutions capability of irwinmitchell.com as well as the ability to provide integrated extranet solutions.

## Policy forming

We are facing considerable legislative, environmental and social change which will have a far reaching impact on the markets in which we operate.

It is imperative that our well recognised voice in shaping and defining changes in law reform and regulation is further developed so that we can respond to change.

To achieve this we will actively pursue a public relations and public affairs programme to enable the firm to respond to the issues that will determine the future for our clients and our business.

## Future opportunities

The firm's strength has always been in its ability to remain flexible and respond quickly to market opportunities when they arise.

We will continue to review, assess and respond to good business opportunities even though they may not be in accordance with existing strategic plans.

"Changing the business to take advantage of emerging markets and to respond to threats is vital for future success"



## Social Responsibility

Irwin Mitchell takes its role in the community seriously and believes that business success carries the responsibility to give something back to society. As such, we are firmly committed to social responsibility and encourage and support our staff in a wide range of pro-bono activities through which they can confirm the vocational aspirations of a legal professional.

The firm is committed to pursuing policies and strategies which will, wherever possible, reduce the impact that our business has on the local and global environment or ensure that the impact is neutral.

In partnership with our staff, Irwin Mitchell will continue to support the IM Charity Foundation to benefit charities in our regions.

## Diversity

The firm's diversity policy, training and strategy ensures that all employees and clients are treated fairly and with respect and dignity at all times. We are committed to valuing visible and non-visible differences in our existing and potential employees, clients and stakeholders, promoting a policy of fairness and inclusion.

## A total strategy

This strategy document is a framework for ensuring that we take the firm forward in a carefully planned way over the next 3 years.

Impacting on all aspects of our service, the plan establishes high level priorities. It must, however, remain flexible enough to respond to global or national events and regulatory changes that may have a major impact in the markets in which we operate.

Each division and business support function will establish clearly defined objectives, with specific plans on how to realise our collective aspirations.

With everyone in the firm committed to our vision and fully understanding what is required of them, we will be able to work together, with a common purpose, to achieve our aims for the next 3 years.

“We will define and deliver  
quality products and services based  
on our clients’ needs.

We will ensure that these products and services are  
**developed and delivered effectively”**



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