

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
General Dental Council
held at 12.00pm on Friday 1 April 2022
in Closed Session held in Colmore Square, Birmingham**

Council Members present:

Lord Harris	Chair
Terry Babbs	
Ilona Blue	
Donald Burden	
Anne Heal	
Angie Heilmann MBE	
Jeyanthi John	
Sheila Kumar	
Mike Lewis	
Caroline Logan	
Simon Morrow	
Laura Simons	

Executive Directors in attendance:

Ian Brack	Chief Executive and Registrar
Gurvinder Soomal	Chief Operating Officer
Stefan Czerniawski	Executive Director, Strategy
Sarah Keyes	Executive Director, Organisational Development
Lisa Marie Williams	Executive Director, Legal and Governance

Staff and Others in attendance:

Osama Ammar	Head of Public Policy (items 7 and 9)
Samantha Bache	Head of Finance and Procurement (items 8 and 11)
Lee Bird	Interim Head of Governance (throughout the meeting)
Clare Callan	Head of Case Progression (throughout the meeting)
Colin Mackenzie	Head of Nations and Engagement (item 11)
Joanne Rewcastle	Head of Communications and Engagement (throughout the meeting)
Katie Spears	Head of Governance (throughout the meeting)

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from John Cullinane, Executive Director, FtP, and welcomed Clare Callan, who was attending in his stead.

2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 All Council Members and members of the Executive Management Team declared an interest in the Annual Report and Accounts (item 11) due to the disclosures in the Remuneration Report.
- 2.2 All registrant Council Members declared an interest in Corporate Strategy (item 9) and the Review of Fitness to Practise Internal Guidance (correspondence item C2).

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The full minutes of the closed meeting held on 2 December 2021 had been **approved via correspondence**.

4. Matters Arising and Rolling Actions List

- 4.1 The Council **noted** that the one action marked as '*suggested complete*' could be considered completed.

5. Decision Log

- 5.1 The Council **noted** that there were three decisions taken by correspondence since the last meeting.

6. Chief Executive's Report

- 6.1 The Chief Executive provided an update to the Council on:

New Ways of Working (NWOW)

- 6.2 The pilot scheme had been suspended in December 2021, when revised Government guidance had encouraged home working due to the pandemic. It had restarted in March 2022. The EMT reviewed the pilot quarterly, with a formal mid-point review at six months. With the hiatus in the pilot, this midpoint would now fall at the end of May.

Covid-19

- 6.3 Covid-19 sickness levels in the organisation continued to be quite high. These higher levels were expected to continue for some time and the organisation was considering carefully how best to plan for further variants, changes in Government guidance and ensuring the safety of staff and the public who attend the GDC offices.

Regulatory Reform

- 6.4 The Chief Executives of the Healthcare Regulators had discussed the longer-term programme for regulatory reform with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

Adjudications Separation

- 6.5 This work was on track that was due to be launched in the summer.

- 6.6 The Council **noted** the updates.

7. International Registration Consultation Response

The Head of Policy and Research joined the meeting.

- 7.1 The Executive Director, Strategy presented the paper to Council for approval.
- 7.2 The Council noted that there was broad support for the proposed changes, and it was supportive of the consultation response.
- 7.3 The Council **approved** the proposed response to the consultation.
The Head of Policy and Research left the meeting.

8. Strategic Risk Register

- 8.1 The Chief Operating Officer presented the Strategic Risk Register, that had been remodelled since the Council had agreed a revised risk appetite. The Council noted that one new risk had been identified, none were recommended for dormancy and four risks were currently outside of risk appetite.
- 8.2 The Council noted that its ownership of the SRR meant that amending the SRR required Council approval. This tied finalisation of the SRR for Council to the governance and approval structures for Council papers with the unintended consequence that the EMT was somewhat constrained in presenting a fully updated picture of new and emerging risks. It was agreed that a new approach was now appropriate, and the Council discussed how best to tackle how it would take appropriate assurance on strategic risk.
- 8.3 The Council **approved** the SRR and **agreed** that
- The Council would set the strategic risk appetite for the organisation annually and review the SRR annually.
 - The ARC would continue to scrutinise, oversee and challenge the Executive on strategic risk and would report its assurance levels to the Council at each of its meetings.
 - The Executive and the ARC could also bring exceptional strategic risks to Council for consideration as appropriate.

Action: Chief Operating Officer and Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit to review and revise the risk management framework and policy in line with the revised approach from Council.

9. Corporate Strategy 2023-2025: Draft for Consultation

The Head of Policy and Research re-joined the meeting.

- 9.1 The Executive Director, Strategy presented the paper which outlined the draft consultation material in relation to the 2023-2025 Corporate Strategy and sought approval to publish the draft consultation.
- 9.2 The Council noted that it had not taken any decisions on the ARF for 2023 yet, nor had it decided how to treat any rises in inflation. The Chief Executive acknowledged this but reminded Council that at three yearly intervals, when a new Strategy was adopted, consultation on that strategy was necessary and had to run to a timetable which preceded the detailed CCP planning process.
- 9.3 The Council **asked** that the FPC scrutinise the appropriate ranges for the ARF that were to be communicated in the consultation document at its May meeting where the budget and corporate planning items were already on the Committee's agenda.
- 9.4 The Council was supportive of the tone and broad content of the consultation document and noted that the final iteration of the Strategy would be completed following the consultation feedback.

- 9.5 The Council **approved** the Corporate Strategy for publication for consultation **subject to the points raised above**.

The Head of Policy and Research left the meeting.

10. Communications and Engagement Strategy

- 10.1 The Head of Communications and Engagement presented the paper and noted that the portion of the paper which addressed future priorities and activities were for information only, and would be subject to scrutiny through the budget and corporate planning process in the usual way. The Council was invited to approve the strategy and note the activities proposed to deliver it.
- 10.2 The Council heard further information as to the work surrounding the improvements to the organisation's digital communications offering.
- 10.3 The Council **approved** the Communications and Engagement Strategy and noted that a package of activities proposed to deliver it would be developed and would go through the budget and corporate planning process.

11. Annual Report and Accounts 2021

The Head of Nations and Engagement joined the meeting.

- 11.1 The Head of Nations and Engagement presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021, and the Council noted the level of work required to bring a comprehensive draft forward at this point in the year. The Council **agreed** that detailed feedback on the content could be provided to the Head of Nations and Engagement via email if necessary.
- 11.2 The Council **noted** the update.

The Head of Nations and Engagement and left the meeting.

12. Any Other Business

- 12.1 The Chair of ARC provided an update on the internal audit providers and the timeliness of the delivery of their audit reports. These reports were important to ensure that the assurance framework was robust and, whilst there were not currently issues that would impact the ability of the Accounting Officer to sign the ARA, it was vital that the existing concerns were tackled to ensure that this did not become a problem. The Council **noted** the update.

13. Items considered by correspondence

- 13.1 The Council **noted via correspondence** the:
- a. Education Quality Assurance Update;
 - b. Review of Fitness to Practise Internal Guidance; and
 - c. Annual Report on Significant Litigation

The meeting was closed at 15:25pm