

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
General Dental Council  
held at 10.00am on Friday 25 October 2024  
in Closed Session at 1 Colmore Square, Birmingham**

**Council Members present:**

Lord Harris (Chair)  
Reshard Auladin  
Ilona Blue  
Donald Burden  
Anne Heal  
Angie Heilmann MBE  
Serbjit kaur MBE  
Sheila Kumar  
Mike Lewis  
Timea Milovecz  
Simon Morrow  
Laura Simons

**Executive Team Members in attendance:**

Tom Whiting	Chief Executive and Registrar
Stefan Czerniawski	Executive Director, Strategy
Clare Paget	Interim Executive Director, Legal & Governance
Gurvinder Soomal	Chief Operating Officer
Theresa Thorp	Executive Director, Regulation

**Staff and Others in attendance:**

Samantha Bache	Associate Director, Finance
David Criddle	Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO
Lee Avery	Associate Director, People & Organisational Development
John Middleton	Head of People Services
Rachael Gilleard	Interim Deputy Head of Governance
Joanne Rewcastle	Associate Director, Communications and Engagement
Ian Vaughan	Interim Head of Governance (Secretary)
Representative from Campbell Tickell (Board Effectiveness Review)	

## 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Council and Committee members and staff, and noted it was Reshard Auladin's first meeting as a Council Member. No apologies had been received.
- 1.2 It was noted that representatives from Campbell Tickell were observing the meeting as part of the GDC's Board Effectiveness Review.

## 2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 The following declarations of interest were received:
  - a. Item 10 - CCP & Budget - all Council Members and staff present, due to the budgetary provision for staff salaries and Members' fees and Registrant Council Members are expected to declare an interest in respect of any attendant impact of budgetary discussions on ARF levels

## 3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The full minutes of the closed meeting held on 27 September 2024 had been **approved** via correspondence on 22 October.
- 3.2 Council suggested a minor adjustment to the minutes to reflect the recommended changes to the communications principles paper and high-level plan.

## 4. Matters Arising and Rolling Actions List

- 4.1 There were no actions on the rolling action list for the closed Council meeting.

## 5. Decisions Log

- 5.1 No decisions had been taken since the last meeting.

## 6. Minutes of the meetings of the Non-Statutory Committees

- 6.1 The minutes of the following non-statutory Committees were **noted** by the Council:
  - a. The Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting on 18 September 2024.
  - b. The Finance and Performance Committee (FPC) meeting on 14 October 2024 and 16 July 2024.
  - c. The Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RemNom) meeting on 16 October 2024.
- 6.2 The Council **noted** the updates.

## 7. Chief Executive's Report

- 7.1 The Chief Executive provided an update to the Council, ~~highlighting three issues~~. The first related to the anticipated publication of the report into Dental Professionals who had died by suicide while under Fitness to Practise Investigation. ~~A workshop had been undertaken to test responses to the report. Helpful feedback had been obtained and this was now under consideration.~~
- 7.2 ~~The GDC had received an embargoed copy of the final outcomes from the PSA against the standards of good regulation. The Fitness to Practise standard had not been met. The EDI element of the general standard had also not been met due to the lack of a plan and outcomes. However, the GDC had met the standard on registration and credit should~~

~~be given to those involved in achieving this. Full feedback would be received in due course and a group, chaired by the COO, had been set up to oversee EDI delivery.~~

7.3 An update was provided on the work that had been undertaken to determine the root cause of the lost data, the next steps in handling the issue, communications and on the potentially impacted cases and the extent of the impact.

7.4 The Council discussed the following:

a) In respect of the publication of Dental Professionals who had died while under Fitness to Practise investigation, the Council noted that the feedback did not require fundamental change but required potential changes to tone and structure. While right to consider the feedback, Council was keen for the report to be published without significant delay. It was noted that the report would be shared with the Council at the point of publication.

~~b) Council discussed the extent to which the families of the bereaved were aware of the report. It was noted that the families were not aware, and while on balance the preference was to find a way to notify them, the process itself required careful consideration. Issues around consent and the circumstances for the very small number of incidents contained within the report, were discussed. The importance of developing a serious incident review process was considered and it was noted that seeking input from a range of sources, including families affected, might be beneficial.~~

[A representative from Campbell Tickell joined the meeting]

c) The potential publication of the report and the timing of the conference being organised by the Canmore Trust.

~~d) The Council reflected on the work that had gone into developing outcomes against PSA standards and acknowledged the work by the COO, the Executive Director, Regulation and the Associate Director, Registration, in meeting the standard for registrations. Council noted that it was not where it wanted to be on EDI and when developing the plan, the need to be mindful of the escalation policy if a standard was not met for three consecutive years.~~

~~e) Council discussed the data loss incident and sought an update on the age profile of the cases and the root cause of the data loss. Council noted that the impacted cases were being monitored, particularly significantly impacted cases and of the identified significantly impacted cases, it was unlikely at this stage that they would not be able to proceed, although other information may emerge.~~

~~Some of the impacted cases are indefinite suspensions which generally focus on current impairment if the registrant applies for a review. Council requested further information on the age profile of the cases.~~

~~f) Council also noted the plan was for further contact to be made with the impacted parties, notifying them that the data was inaccessible and the Information Commissioners Office. The next update would be to ARC and then any further communications. On the root cause, the Council was informed that the issue was not caused by disk space but occurred when incrementally increasing disk space. Mitigations had been to significantly increase the disk space, moving away from the previous approach which was to increase the space incrementally.~~

~~g) Council was assured that there was no evidence to suggest this was a cyber-attack and noted that the PSA would be informed in due course and advised of the steps~~

~~taken to prevent it happening again. Council reiterated the need to ensure communications were carefully considered and took patient safety into account.~~

7.5 The Council **noted** the report.

## **8. Costed Corporate Plan and Budget Setting 2025-2027**

8.1 The Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO and Chief Operating Officer presented the Costed Corporate Plan (CCP). Council was informed that following the initial review by Council on 27 September, FPC had met to endorse the final changes.

8.2 Changes made and endorsed included the portfolio ratings, which were reviewed and confirmed as correct, meeting the MoSCoW criteria. Environment, Social & Governance considerations had also been included in the final draft plan.

~~8.3 Council was advised that the budget envelope had been increased by £460k since the 27 September review and was provided with a breakdown of where the additional costs had come from (tendering process for the third party supplier of the Managing GDC registration programme and a rewards platform). Council was also advised that the efficiency reserve investment fund had been reduced by £0.7m to £2.7m to maintain forecast free reserves at our target of 3.0 months of operating expenditure.~~

8.4 The Council discussed:

a) The role of the FPC in setting the agreed framework in which to develop the CCP with a focus on a long-term efficiency plan with a realistic approach to risk and a clear and simple presentation. It was noted that the CCP had been developed so as to be Budget neutral, and therefore could be adjusted after the Budget, though some indicative modelling had taken place on changes to employers' National Insurance contributions.

b) Council was pleased to note that addressing sexual misconduct in the context of professionalism was included in the CCP and discussed the likely timeframe for consideration. The importance of the work was emphasised and noted no firm timescales had been included at this stage.

c) Council discussed the proposed budget and the distinction between legal fees and other professional fees in Table 2. The fees included fees for legal advisors, medical advisors and other professional advisors. Council agreed that a further breakdown would be of benefit in the published report. The increase in other areas such as communications and publications was also discussed along with the links to staff engagement and the people and culture programme.

d) Council discussed predicted registration income and the forecasting model applied. It was noted that there had been an FPC deep dive on income forecasting and trends and whether it was considered to be an accurate forecast. The methodology applied to the forecasting was discussed and it was acknowledged that whilst it was a combination of some art and some science, it had been sense checked several times and was considered to be a realistic indicator of future growth.

e) Council noted that the reference to portfolio planning exercise and how the proposed priorities contribute towards mitigating the Strategic Risks and key Operational Risks currently held on our risk registers. The ELT have been looking at the Strategic Risk Register and therefore the need to ensure future alignment and mitigation was emphasised.

f) Council considered the broad financial implications with a discussion on resource requirements, provisional registration, remuneration and using the reserves to address

any change in National Insurance contributions. Council also noted that the total rewards recommended option had been accounted for in the CCP.

g) Council noted that initial thoughts on the next steps from a financial ARF perspective had already begun and would be developed at FPC in due course.

- 8.5 The Council **discussed** the CCP 2025-27 plan, the 2025 budget and the decision to retain the current ARF fee levels for 2025.

## 9. Review of the Financial Delegated Authority

- 9.1 The Associate Director, Finance presented an update to the Financial Delegations Policy following consideration by the Finance and Performance Committee which had endorsed the proposed amendments.

- 9.2 ~~The Council discussed:~~

~~a) Special payments and noted that it appeared to be the only area where an upper limit was not applied. Council discussed the application of an upper limit, the process around issuing special payments and reporting to Council. Council considered that it should have oversight and can advise but acknowledged that only the Accounting Officer can approve a special payment. Council acknowledged that not all cases would need to be reported but considered a framework could be established where, for example 'novel and/or contentious' payments below a certain financial level could be reported to Council and those above the threshold agreed in consultation with the appropriate member(s) of Council.~~

~~b) Council noted that Accounting Officer Decisions were scrutinised by the NAO as part of the financial audit and therefore there were assurance mechanisms in place but there was scope to create a framework for further assurance to Council or a Committee of the Council. Council agreed that the Executive would develop a framework around special payments and present it to the Chairs of ARC, FPC and RemNom.~~

Council discussed the consideration given to the financial delegations by the FPC and noted that the discussion at FPC had been on the changes during the year and how the approved priorities were moved in and out of the plan. FPC had felt that the initial proposal needed more detail on how this would work in practice and the impact on headcount and grade inflation. FPC considered that the Chief Executive should be granted the flexibility to take decisions that are not constrained by financial arrangements and the delegations should reflect the increasing maturity of organisation.

- 9.3 The Council **approved** the update to the Financial Delegations Policy subject to a further review of the special payments delegation relating to the CEO.

[The Associate Director, People & Organisational Development and the Head of People Services joined the meeting]

## 10. Total reward Benefits Package

- 10.1 The Head of People Services presented a comprehensive overview of the benefits proposals approved by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) as part of the Total Reward project.

- 10.2 The Council was asked to approve the benefits package as it did not sit within the current budgetary envelope. The Council noted that the proposals had been scrutinised by the Finance and Performance Committee from a financial perspective, and that the Remuneration and Nomination Committee had discussed several elements of the package including maternity/paternity leave, disability leave and volunteering days.

10.3 The Council discussed:

a) A number of elements including bank holidays, noting that it varied across the nations. Council noted that the bank holiday entitlement was eight days. Working patterns and the practical implications of having flexitime, reasonable adjustments and compressed hours was also discussed. Acknowledging that the principles around flexitime were to be developed, Council noted that flexitime was seen as an important benefit, even with the other working arrangements available including hybrid working.

b) The Council discussed the practical implication of the changes, including the systems to be used to implement the proposals and what other potential benefits could be obtained for example where to recalibrate resources.

c) Council was pleased that FPC and RemNom had been consulted on the development of the rewards package and had the opportunity to work through the proposal. Council anticipated a positive response from GDC staff and was pleased that staff actively engaged with its development.

10.4 The Council **approved** the benefits package.

## **11. Any other business**

11.1 There was no other business.

11.2 The Council **noted** the date of the next meeting – 6 December 2024, Wimpole Street, London.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am.