**Report to the Council from the Policy and Research Board meeting on 5 April 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of paper</th>
<th>To report on the key items considered by the Policy and Research Board at its meeting on 5 April 2017.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>For noting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corporate Strategy 2016-19</td>
<td>Performance objective 1: To improve our performance across all our functions so that we are highly effective as a regulator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business Plan 2017</td>
<td>Priority one: Continue to build a cost effective and efficient organisation.</td>
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<td>Decision Trail</td>
<td>In accordance with the General Dental Council Standing Orders for the Non-statutory Committees of Council 2016 the Policy and Research Board will report to the next Council meeting following its meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>The Council is asked to note the report from the Policy and Research Board’s meeting on 5 April 2017.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Authorship of paper and further information | Nicholas Preece, Governance Manager  
npreece@gdc-uk.org  
0207 167 6328 |
| Appendices       | Appendix 1 - Horizon scanning report                                                             |
1. **Executive summary**
   1.1. This paper reports on key issues considered by the Policy and Research Board (the Board) at its meeting on 5 April 2017. The Council is asked to note the update from the Board.

2. **Introduction and background**
   2.1. The key purpose of the Board as defined in its terms of reference is to provide oversight of the development and implementation of strategy, policy and research initiatives and report on them to the Council.
   2.2. In accordance with the General Dental Council Standing Orders for the Non-Statutory Committees of Council 2016, the Board is required to report to the Council meeting following each meeting.

3. **Faculty of General Dental Practice**
   3.1. Mick Horton and Simon Thornton-Wood were invited to discuss the intention of the Faculty of General Dental Practice (the Faculty) to become an independent organisation. The Board asked about the sustainability of the proposed independent organisation, the risks of separating from RCSEng, membership growth including dental care professional (DCP) offerings, the timing of the proposal, the timetable to establish the proposed organisation, stakeholder engagement, opportunities for joint work with the GDC, and how the proposed organisation would act as the objective voice of dentistry.

4. **Fees policy**
   4.1. The Board and other Council members in attendance provided a steer to staff on a future fees policy. This work would be developed and presented to the Council later in the year.

5. **Enhanced continuing professional development (ECPD)**
   5.1. The Board discussed options and timings around the implementation of a new ECPD system. The Board reflected on the Council’s decision to implement changes to the rules in 2018, whether the profession and CPD providers were ready for the changes, and how this might fit with the implementation of any outcomes from the *Shifting the balance* proposals. The Board agreed that ECPD should progress with implementation in 2018 and work to implement any new initiatives arising from *Shifting the balance* be implemented separately. A paper with options would be presented at the public Council meeting on 11 May 2017.

6. **Fitness to Practise case studies**
   6.1. The Board noted the first case study had gone live and a second case study was due to go live shortly. The download response rate of 66% of individuals that landed on the page was a positive result, and the feedback received had also been positive. Work was underway to give the case studies a greater online presence. The case studies were part of a larger piece of work to share with the profession learning points gained from FTP.

7. **Self-filtering mechanism for complaints**
   7.1. The Board reviewed the scope and timescales for the proposed self-filtering mechanism to filter out non-fitness to practise complaints, which had been updated with a go-live in October 2017. This self-filtering mechanism, which leads to the FTP webform would not replace
existing routes for complainants into the GDC, but would ensure all routes provide consistent information. The work would include:

- Engagement with stakeholders, including organisations with a similar mechanism, the profession, accessibility groups, patients and the Professional Standards Authority;
- Development and testing of the webform with the patient panel;
- Ensure it was easily found on the website and that all FTP contact details that appeared on the website go to the self-filtering mechanism; and
- Introducing a similar self-filtering mechanism for the Dental Complaints Service to provide a consistent information.

8. Fitness to Practise end-to-end review

8.1. Work was underway to scope a review, which would be managed separately from *Shifting the balance* but with the same direction of travel. The review would involve staff from across the business and there would be engagement opportunities for the Board and external stakeholders. The two work streams would be:

- FTP policy: establish a framework of compliance and statement of principles for the FTP process; and
- FTP operations: workshops on current state of FTP, process map FTP to identify issues and outcomes, and identify changes that can be implemented in short, medium and long term.

9. Education and *Shifting the balance*

9.1. The Board discussed proposals for a risk-based approach to the quality assurance of education and the process for reviewing the learning outcomes. The development of these proposals was timely because at the end of 2018 the GDC would complete its five-year inspection cycle of programmes that lead to registration. The Board would review the development of consultation documentation ahead of the Council making a decision later this year.

10. Annual Review of Education

10.1. The Board reviewed an analysis of the annual review following Council’s decision to publish it on 16 March 2017. Areas that staff would look into included:

- Engagement options to drive change in terms of quality assurance and raising of standards. There was a plan of work, including stakeholder engagement, over the next few months to address some of the observations.
- What information or messages were of value to different stakeholders. This would consider the value of collating the information into one document, as different themes could be identified for different stakeholders.
- Suitable products for each stakeholder group and their timing, including reporting and assurance for the Council. Data collection had improved so snapshot reporting could be provided.
- What other regulators did and what the GDC could learn.

10.2. The Board were assured that any future reporting (e.g. annual state of the nation report) would not replace this report, but compliment it, as the annual review was well-received by
stakeholders. Staff were encouraged to produce a smaller version of the report that focused on key points, which would be more digestible for audiences. Further guidance would be produced on what information training providers were required to submit to improve the variation in the quality of responses.

10.3. The Council would have more visibility of work on Education through the horizon scanning reporting.

11. Date of the next PRB meeting
   11.1. 29 June 2017.

12. Recommendations
   12.1. The Council is asked to note the report from the Board’s meeting on 5 April 2017.