

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
General Dental Council**

**held at 11:50am on Thursday 23 September 2021**

**in Closed Session via MS Teams**

**Council Members present:**

William Moyes	Chair
Terry Babbs	
Catherine Brady	
Donald Burden	
Anne Heal	
Jeyanthi John	
Sheila Kumar	
Mike Lewis	
Caroline Logan	
Simon Morrow	
Crispin Passmore	
Laura Simons	

**Executive Directors in attendance:**

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

**Staff and Observers in attendance:**

Joanne Rewcastle	Head of Communications and Engagement
Osama Ammar	Head of Public Policy (item 8 only)
Samantha Bache	Head of Finance and Procurement (items 10 and 11)
David Criddle	Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery & PMO (item 10 only)
Sam Clements	Head of Risk Management & Internal Audit (item 13 only)
Katie Spears	Head of Governance
Lee Bird	Interim Deputy Head of Governance (Secretariat)
Lord Harris	Incoming GDC Chair (Observer – throughout the meeting)
Angie Heilmann MBE	Incoming GDC Council Member (Observer – throughout the meeting)
Sir Ross Cranston	Chair of the Statutory Panellists Assurance Committee (Observer – Item 9 only)
Tyrrell Wright	Incoming Interim Head of Governance (Observer – throughout the meeting)
Elizabeth Gonzales Malaga	GDC's Clinical Fellow (Observer - throughout the meeting)

**Apologies:**

None

**1. Welcome and apologies for absence**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including the incoming Chair, the incoming Council Member, and the Chair of the SPC. He also noted that there were no apologies.

## 2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 In relation to the items on the substantive agenda, the following interests were declared:
- a. New Ways of Working (item 7) – all Council Members and staff
  - b. Regulatory Reform (item 8) – all Members present.
  - c. CCP & Budget – (item 10) – all staff and Council Members (salary, fees, pension provisions in budget).
  - d. Education QA Update (item 14) – Catherine Brady noted that she no longer had a conflict of interest in respect of this item as her relative, who had been a final year dental student, had successfully graduated.

## 3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The Council **noted** that the full and abbreviated minutes of the closed meetings held on 24 June 2021 had been approved via correspondence and that the abbreviated minutes had been approved for publication.

## 4. Matters Arising and Rolling Actions List

- 4.1 The Council **noted** the actions list and requested that dates included in any narrative commentary include the year for increased specificity.

## 5. Decision Log

- 5.1 The Council **noted** that there were no decisions to report for this session.

## 6. Chief Executive's Report

- 6.1 The Chief Executive provided the Council with an update on Legislative Reform and Fitness to Practise Performance.
- 6.2 The Council noted the update.

## 7. New Ways of Working

- 7.1 The Chief Executive provided the Council with an update on the ongoing work to shape New Ways of Working for the organisation following the Covid-19 pandemic and outlined an early view of the pilot scheme. The pilot had commenced on 6 September 2021 and software called 'Team Tracker' had been rolled out to facilitate desk booking and to give greater visibility as to staff working locations. The EMT had decided to terminate social distancing requirements – in line with Government guidance – and this had greatly eased the office capacity issues. Enhanced cleaning, high levels of air circulation and the provision of hand sanitiser were all measures that were still in place and the organisation continued to exceed Government guidelines on safety measures in this respect.
- 7.2 The Council **noted** the update.
- The Head of Public Policy joined the meeting.*

## 8. Regulatory Reform

- 8.1 The Executive Director, Strategy, supported by the Head of Public Policy, presented an update paper on the regulatory reform landscape. The Council heard that the recent re-shuffle had resulted in new junior Ministerial appointments – with Maggie Throup taking on a portfolio with responsibility for Vaccines and Public Health, and Maria Caulfield taking on a portfolio with responsibility for Patient Safety and Primary Care.

8.2 The Council **discussed** the following:

- a. The FPC had approved the initiation of the Regulatory Reform programme of work and the team were initiating a Programme Board to oversee delivery. The team were investing reasonable resource into monitoring risks and, whilst some scenario planning was sensible, the team should not deploy resources to overly plan for unknowable scenarios.

The Council **noted** the update.

*The Head of Public Policy left the meeting.*

## 9. Adjudication Separation

9.1 The Executive Director, Fitness to Practise presented an update paper on the proposed approach to the Adjudication Separation programme of work and asked the Council to approve the planned approach.

9.2 The Council was asked to approve a revised scope to the Separation of Adjudications function project by removing the 'operational improvements to the Adjudications function' and 'case management improvements' workstreams from the scope of the programme of work. This de-scoped work would be delivered as 'business as usual', for the former, and as a separate corporate project, for the latter.

9.3 The Council was also invited to consider the appropriate timelines for this work and whether it should continue or pause, given the changed landscape and imminent regulatory reform.

9.4 The Council **discussed** the following:

There was strong agreement that the Separation of Adjudications work should continue now, at pace. It was clear that it was good practice for a regulator to produce as separate an Adjudications function as possible and that, whilst legislative reform was necessary to produce legal change, administrative changes should be made expeditiously.

9.5 The Council **approved** the revised project scope for the Separation of Adjudications project and the proposals to de-scope and separate the areas outlined in the paper as 'operational improvements to the Adjudications function' and 'case management improvements' workstreams from the scope of the programme of work.

*The Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO joined the meeting.*

## 10. Costed Corporate Plan 2022-2024 (CCP) and Budget 2022

10.1 The Chief Operating Officer, the Head of Finance and Procurement and Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO presented the latest iteration of the CCP, Budget, CCP Funding Paper and Contingency Management Framework for the Council for discussion.

The Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, provided his advice on this iteration of the CCP and Budget.

10.2 The Chair of the FPC noted that the AO advice provided a fair summary of the risks that the organisation needed to manage in the process. He also noted that the Council should satisfy itself that the overall programmes of work were appropriate.

- 10.3 The Council **discussed** the following topics: inflation, income caution, ARF levels, Executive Director assurance statements, the project portfolio and the budget for 2022.
- 10.4 The Council heard that the FPC would review the final iteration of the CCP and Budget before the October Council meeting and would provide its assurance, as appropriate, following that additional review point.
- 10.5 Subject to the discussions above, the Council **noted** and **approved** the direction of travel for this work.

*Anne Heal and the Head of Business Intelligence, Delivery and PMO left the meeting.*

## 11. Reserves Policy 2022

- 11.1 The Head of Finance and Procurement presented the paper proposing the reserves policy for 2022 for the organisation. The FPC had reviewed this approach and recommended to the Council. The Council noted the Accounting Officer assurance on the proposed target level of free reserves.
- 11.2 The Council discussed that the level of free reserves was designed to ensure that the organisation could remain a going concern to deliver its statutory functions.
- 11.3 The Council noted the proposed approach prior to its presentation for approval in October.

*Anne Heal re-joined the meeting and the Head of Finance and Procurement left the meeting.*

## 12. Communications Principles – CCP, Budget, Annual Retention Fee Levels

- 12.1 The Executive Director, Strategy and Head of Communications and Engagement presented the paper outlining the proposed approach to communications around the key decisions the Council would make in October on the CCP, Budget, Annual Retention Fee levels and the Reserves Policy.
- 12.2 The Council **discussed** the proposed approach and noted that the proposals would return to the October Council meeting for final approval and welcomed an additional review at that point.

*The Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit joined the meeting.*

## 13. Strategic Risk Register (SRR)

- 13.1 The Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit presented the paper which outlined the strategic risk position for the organisation. The Council heard that there were nine active risks on the SRR, one new risk had been identified and that none had been recommended for dormancy. Two risks had increased in residual risk exposure, one had decreased. Two risks were outside of the Council's risk appetite and all others were within appetite.
- 13.2 The ARC had reviewed the SRR at its September meeting and its recommendations had been incorporated into this iteration of the register.
- 13.3 The Council **approved** the strategic risk register.

*The Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit left the meeting, and the Head of Education Policy and Quality Assurance joined the meeting.*

#### 14. Education Quality Assurance – Update

- 14.1 The Executive Director, Strategy presented the paper providing an update on the work of the Education Quality Assurance team and asked the Council to consider whether a move to a less frequent reporting cycle was appropriate now that this area of the organisation’s delivery was more stable, having addressed the huge changes in the education sector throughout the pandemic period.
- 14.2 The Council **noted** the report and praised the work of the team over the period of difficulties brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council noted that it did continue to want to hear updates on this function, given the continuing uncertainties for the next graduating cohort, but **agreed** that the next update on this work should be at the March 2022 Council meeting.

*The Head of Education Policy and Quality Assurance left the meeting.*

#### 15. Any Other Business

- 15.1 The Chair of ARC noted that the Committee had highlighted the importance of the Executive focusing on two areas of key organisational importance over the next few months; firstly, ensuring that EDI issues were being considered and monitored thoroughly (particularly in respect of those involved in FtP proceedings) and in relation to the risk created by the *Somerville v NMC* judgment.
- 15.2 The Council noted that the October Council meeting was planned to take place remotely and that the IT and Governance teams were working closely to find a hybrid meetings technology solution that would allow for effective hybrid meetings.

#### 16. Review of the Meeting

- 16.1 The Chair noted that this was the final meeting for both himself and Catherine Brady. The Senior Independent Council Member thanked both the Chair and Catherine Brady for their exceptional service to the organisation and wished them well for the future.

*The meeting was closed at 15:50pm*