

**Minutes of the Meeting of the
General Dental Council
held at 12:45pm on Thursday 17 December 2020
in Closed Session held on 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
John Cullinane	Interim Executive Director, Fitness to Practise
Stefan Czerniawski	Executive Director, Strategy
Sarah Keyes	Executive Director, Organisational Development
Gurvinder Soomal	Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources
Lisa Marie Williams	Executive Director, Legal and Governance

Staff in attendance:

Alex Bishop	Head of OD and Inclusion (item 8 only)
Lucy Chatwin	Head of People Services (item 9 only)
Sam Clements	Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit (item 10 only)
Osama Ammar	Head of Public Policy (item 11 only)
Melissa Sharp	Senior Counsel and Head of In-House Legal Advisory Service (items 11 and 15)
Ross Scales	Head of Education - Interim (item 12 only)
Samantha Bache	Head of Finance and Procurement (item 14 only)
Tim Surch	Senior People Partner (item 15 only)
Colin Mackenzie	Interim Head of Communications and Engagement
Katie Spears	Head of Governance
Rebecca Ledwidge	Secretariat Manager
Lee Bird	Governance Manager

Apologies:

None

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that there were no apologies.

2. Declaration of interests

2.1 In relation to the substantive agenda, the Council noted that those Council Members who were seeking reappointment would leave the meeting for the discussion on Item 13 (Terry Babbs, Anne Heal and Jeyanthi John) and that Gurvinder Soomal and Katie Spears would leave the meeting for the discussion on the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme at Item 15. Catherine Brady declared an interest in Item 12 – Education Quality Assurance, as she had a relation studying at a dental institution.

2.2 In relation to items considered via correspondence, all staff and Council Members declared an interest in the pensions scheme funding update. The Chief Executive and other EMT members declared an interest in the EMT Remuneration Policy.

3. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

3.1 The Council **noted** that the full and abbreviated minutes of the closed meeting held on 22 October 2020 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 agreed that all items labelled 'suggest complete' should be marked as completed.

5. Decision Log

5.1 The Council **noted** that it had considered three papers via correspondence:

- a. Pensions – Annual Pension Scheme Funding Update – this paper had been noted.
- b. EMT Remuneration Policy – this paper had been approved.
- c. Annual Committee and Council Workplans 2021 – this paper had been noted.

6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1 The Chief Executive provided the Council with an update on the following topics: COVID-19, EU Exit, Legislative Reform, Registration and communications around the Annual Retention Fee and Budget decisions.

6.2 The Council **noted** the update.

7. Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy 2021

7.1 The Executive Director, Strategy, supported by the Interim Head of Communications and Engagement, presented the paper setting out the early development of a proposed communications and engagement strategy for 2021. The team were keen for strategic input to inform work that would be presented to the Council in early 2021.

7.2 The Council **discussed** the following:

- a. There was a need to be clear about what was within and outwith the GDC's remit. Whilst an understanding of the context in which the GDC operated was important, the strategy should make plain where the GDC was empowered to act and where key issues were for others to tackle. This would further the organisation's ambition to improve public understanding of its remit and purpose. There had been considerable work done to build relationships with stakeholders and this could be capitalised upon by signposting appropriately within a communications and engagement strategy.
 - b. Careful consideration should be given to both maximising the new opportunities that digital engagement offered and using face to face engagement to maximum effect.
 - c. The Council would welcome clear, prioritised strategic objectives, how they differed from what the organisation was currently doing, how it proposed to address them and clear stakeholder mapping to support a segmented communications plan. The Council reiterated that the ambition to speak more directly to the public ought also to be included and that there were specific tasks upcoming in 2021 that needed to be factored into the strategy, such as Chair and Council Member recruitment and outreach to DCPs and the wider messaging around diversity and inclusion.
- 7.3 The Council **noted** the direction of travel and invited the team to bring the work back to the Council for review in early 2021.

8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The Head of OD and Inclusion joined the meeting.

- 8.1 The Executive Director, Organisational Development and Head of OD and Inclusion presented the paper outlining the proposed approach to the EDI strategy. The Council had considered the draft approach at a workshop in October and the strategy had been informed by scrutiny and review at both the RemNom and CSG. The Council was invited to approve a vision statement for 2021-2023, objectives to achieve the vision, key actions and a reporting approach on the delivery of the strategy. The Council heard that there was a need to be simultaneously ambitious but focused on what could realistically be delivered by the organisation and what would effect real change.
- 8.2 The Council **discussed** the draft strategy and noted that it was minded to ask for biannual reports on the progress of the delivery against the strategy once it was approved.
- 8.3 The Council asked the team to refine the strategy and circulate it for approval in correspondence.

The Head of OD and Inclusion left the meeting.

9. People and Organisational Development Strategy - Update

- 9.1 The Executive Director, Organisational Development presented the paper providing an update on the ongoing workstreams within the People and Organisational Development Strategy.
- 9.2 The Council **discussed** the following:
- a. Wellbeing check ins had been organised to ensure that conversations were taking place about how the organisation could support staff. The need to take annual leave entitlements was also being regularly communicated to staff and the

situation was being monitored closely. There had been good levels of interest from staff in the new recruitment pages and the team were working with colleagues to understand any underlying reasons for this.

- b. The Council were interested in the level of engagement and staff morale and heard that the team had invested a lot of time in direct communications with staff throughout the pandemic. The general sense was that staff were tired but well supported by line managers. The next iteration of a full staff survey would likely be externally facilitated.
- c. The Council heard that the team had also developed a proposed new suite of KPIs which would be reviewed by the FPC in February.

9.3 The Council **noted** the update.

Anne Heal left the meeting.

10. Strategic Risk Register (SRR) and Risk Appetite

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

10.1 The Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources and the Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit presented the paper which outlined the current strategic risk position for the organisation. The Council was also asked to approve its current risk appetite in line with the risk matrix circulated by correspondence.

10.2 The Council heard that there were 10 active risks on the SRR; with no new risks and one having been recommended for dormancy since the last update. All risks were now categorised as within appetite.

10.3 The Council had considered the strategic risk appetite matrix by correspondence, as some minor further consideration was required, and the Council **agreed to delegate** the final approval of the matrix to the Chair of Council and Chair of ARC, who would discuss the approach with the Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit, the Chief Executive and the Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources.

10.4 The Council **approved** the SRR.

The Head of Risk Management and Internal Audit left the meeting.

The Head of Public Policy and the Senior Counsel and Head of In-House Legal Advisory Service joined the meeting.

11. Routes to Registration – Update on the MRPQ, ORE and EU Exit

11.1 The Executive Director, Strategy and Head of Public Policy presented the paper which provided the Council with an update on the impacts on the GDC's routes to registration following the end of the EU Exit transition period.

11.2 The Council **discussed** and **noted** the update and asked to be keep updated as and when there were future developments.

The Head of Public Policy and the Senior Counsel and Head of In-House Legal Advisory Service left the meeting.

The Interim Head of Education joined the meeting.

12. Education Quality Assurance – Update

- 12.1 The Executive Director, Strategy and the Interim Head of Education presented the paper which provided the Council with an update on the work of the Education Quality Assurance function.
- 12.2 The Council **discussed** that the team had now met with all BDS and DCP providers and were apprised of their plans for qualifying students in 2021.
- 12.3 The Council **noted** the update.

The Interim Head of Education left the meeting.

Sheila Kumar left the meeting.

13. Council Member Reappointments

- 13.1 Terry Babbs, Anne Heal and Jeyanthi John declared an interest in this item and were not present for the discussion of this item.
- 13.2 The Executive Director, Legal and Governance and the Head of Governance presented the paper and invited the Council to discuss the confidential reports on the Members seeking reappointment.
- 13.3 The Council discussed and **approved** the recommendation for reappointment for all three members. These recommendations would then be submitted to the PSA for scrutiny and to the Privy Council would be asked to make the proposed reappointments.

The Head of Finance and Procurement joined the meeting and Terry Babbs and Jeyanthi John re-joined the meeting.

14. Investment Principles and Strategy Review

- 14.1 The Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources and the Head of Finance and Procurement presented the paper which set out the proposed investment strategy for the organisation in 2021. The Council noted that the FPC had scrutinised and recommended the approach at its meeting in November.
- 14.2 The Council considered the advice from Smith and Williamson on investment risk and **approved** the investment principles and investment strategy for the organisation in 2021.

The Senior People Partner and Senior Counsel and Head of In-House Legal Advisory Service joined the meeting.

15. Pensions: Review of the Defined Benefit Pensions Scheme

- 15.1 The Executive Director, Registration and Corporate Resources and the Head of Governance declared an interest in this item and left the meeting.
- 15.2 The Executive Director, Organisational Development presented the paper which requested approval for the proposed consultation process on closing the Defined Benefit section of the GDC's pension scheme to future accrual.
- 15.3 The Council **discussed** the proposal and noted the following:

- a. The proposed timetable had been planned to enable the consultation to be completed in advance of the next triennial valuation, which would take place in April 2021.
- b. The proposed approach was fair, not only to staff, but also to registrants who funded the scheme.

- 15.4 The Council **approved** the proposal to consult on the closure of the Defined Benefit section of the GDC's pension scheme.

The Head of Finance and Procurement, the Senior People Partner and Senior Counsel and Head of In-House Legal Advisory Service left the meeting, and the Head of Governance re-joined the meeting.

16. Any Other Business

- 16.1 There was no other business.

17. Review of the Meeting

- 17.1 The Council discussed that the papers had been good, and the agenda had allowed sufficient time for discussion, although it had been a long day.

The meeting was closed at 15:55pm