



GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

Minutes of the 201st meeting of the Council held on 28 June 2012 at the General Optical Council, 41 Harley Street, London, W1

- Present:** Anna Bradley (in the Chair), Paul Carroll, Brian Coulter, Peter Douglas, Robert Hogan, Liam Kite, Kevin Lewis, Fiona Peel, Nicholas Rumney, James Russell and Selina Ullah.
- In attendance:** Samantha Peters, Jeff Cant, Maurice Cheng, Neil Drake, Nicola Ebdon, Linda Ford, Phil Hallam, Lisa Harmshaw, Mandie Lavin and Grahame Tinsley.

Apologies

7638. Apologies were **received** from Morag Alexander.

Declaration of members' interests

7639. Rob Hogan declared that he had been appointed as a Professional Services Consultant for Vision Express.

Minutes of the 200th meeting held on 25 April 2012

7640. The minutes were **approved**.

Updated Actions - paper C26(12)

7641. Members **noted** the updated actions as circulated.

Other Matters Arising

7642. Members **noted** that there were no matters arising.

Chair's Report – paper C27(12)

7643. Council **noted** the Chair's report as circulated.
7644. Council expressed their gratitude to the Executive and the Values Working Group for their work to bring the Values to fruition. Council were pleased to have been given the opportunity to engage with staff at the Values Workshop held on 27 June 2012.

Quarterly Review – paper C28(12)

7645. Council **noted** the first of the new style quarterly review reports which aimed to ensure assurance to Council on the variety of work taking place across the GOC and the sector.
7646. Items of particular interest to Council in relation to the report on horizon scanning were:
- Law Commission consultation – the consultation timeline had changed and publication of their analysis was now expected towards the end of summer 2012;
 - As a result of engagement with some students Liam Kite had developed the view that students appreciated their GOC registration as it made them feel part of the profession from the beginning;
 - Clarification was **requested** about terminology regarding whether ABDO had argued in favour of refracting as the regulated function was sight testing.
 - The Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence (CHRE) – would become the Public Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) in autumn 2012 and the structure of the CHRE's future funding arrangements (where regulators will fund the PSA, rather than the Government) was now a matter of negotiation between the CHRE and Treasury. Council **noted** that it was unlikely that the GOC would be required to fund the PSA in this financial year, however it was anticipated that the GOC would absorb the costs within current fee levels;
 - Monitor - the GOC might respond to the Department of Health (DH) consultation regarding the proposed licensing regime which may affect primary ophthalmic services, but that the GOC had not yet established its position on the matter; and
 - Scotland Bill - the Scotland Bill had now become the Scotland Act 2012 and UK healthcare regulatory powers would continue to be reserved to Westminster.
7647. Council **noted** that in relation to the property project, negotiations were progressing.
7648. Council **received** a verbal update on the CET Programme and Standards project to “review standards setting processes in competence/conduct/ performance, and develop or commission new or improved standards in compliance with the standards setting framework”. Items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:

- the outcome of the CET workshops for approvers and providers held on 18 and 19 June 2012 to prepare for the new requirements of the enhanced scheme. A report on feedback and issues identified from the workshops would be shared with Council in due course. Council requested that the report include transitional arrangements and timescales for the approval of provision under the new CET scheme;
- the Standards Committee meeting on 20 September 2012 would be dedicated to discussing the project;
- Brian Coulter as the Council “champion” for the Standards Project will be attending and all Council members were invited to attend the meeting if they wished; and
- the Executive were exploring collaboration with other healthcare regulators in areas such as joint codes of conduct and ethical standards. An inter-regulatory Standards Group has been established to support this work.

7649. Council **noted** a verbal update to the financial report circulated in the quarterly review. Items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:

- better profiling over the past few months had enabled spend to come in much closer to anticipated budget;
- a number of variations were **noted** including the under spend on the CET replacement, overspend in Human Resources and the Secretariat underspend which was due to Council Members keeping costs down on their expenses; and
- Council **noted** that sections on risk, compliance and a regulatory report would be developed over the course of the year.

7650. Items of particular interest to Council in relation to the Advisory Committee update were:

- Council **requested** that they would like to see important observations and/or comments from the Committees included in future reports;
- Council **requested** to see the work plans for each of the Committees; and
- Council **noted** the next quarter meeting dates and an invitation was extended to all Members to attend Committees if they wished.

7651. In relation to the stakeholder and communications report Council were reassured that the Executive were pursuing an issue for those in Northern Ireland who were seeking independent prescribing.

7652. Council thanked the Executive for the new style quarterly review report which they found helpful, especially in the light of so much activity. Council **agreed** that the level of detail was sufficient and looked forward to it being developed further.

Corporate Performance Measurement – paper C29(12)

7653. Council **noted** the Corporate Performance Measurement Report as circulated and **noted** that since the last Council meeting, further reviews of the Performance Indicators had been undertaken via cross-team workshops and the Senior Management Team (SMT) with regard to methodology, continuous improvement, fit with the strategic aims and measurement.
7654. In relation to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:
- Council felt the KPIs had clearly moved forward and were now connected with the Business Plan, whilst acknowledging that they would require adjustment over time to ensure they were fit for purpose;
 - a “baseline” of 80% had been set on a number of the KPIs to be ambitious and supportive of the considerable change which had taken place in the organisation over the last few months;
 - there was a heavy reliance on annual surveys and consideration should be given to sending questionnaires at the point of interaction so that data could be gathered on a regular day to day basis;
 - consideration should be given to how the Values would help to demonstrate progress across the range of KPIs, for example, in delivering public protection;
 - consideration should be given to identifying how Internal Audit could help to assess performance; and
 - measuring the impact of what regulators do appeared to be a common problem for all health care regulators. Council **agreed** that some research by the CHRE/PSA and DH would be valuable.
7655. In relation to the Core Activity Performance Indicators (CPIs) items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:
- that third Education and Standards CPI should be updated to reflect the GOC would concentrate on compliance and developing awareness of both the value and usefulness of undertaking real CET; and

- **requested** that the Executive re-consider the business plan to ensure that target completion dates were realistic and delay any less essential projects to ensure that the business plan for 2012/13 was achievable. The Executive should report the final business plan back to Council.

7656. Council **delegated authority** for finalising the KPIs and CPIs to the Chair and Chief Executive.

Financial Statements 2011/12 – paper C30(12)

7657. Council **received** the audited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2012. Council **noted** that the accounts had been audited by Crowe, Clarke and Whitehill and that their preparation had been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Opticians Act. Further Council **noted** that the Audit Committee had considered the Financial Statements on 27 June 2012 and recommended that they be **approved**.

Items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:

- the predicted outturn of £700k had reduced to £500k and Council **noted** the reasons for this as early investment in some of the “spend to save projects”, dealing with remaining costs from reorganisation and a review of the register of fixed assets;
- total reserves continued to be robust, however, some projects in the Business Plan had yet to be fully costed;
- Council fee income had been higher than planned; and
- there were some presentational / text matters to be finalised.

7658. Council discussed the Reserves Policy as set out in paragraph 4.2 of the Financial Statements and **confirmed** that the policy accurately reflected the various discussions by Council to date. Council **noted** that there were currently three reserves and that the final part of the Policy would shortly be amended to cover each of these reserves in line with the discussion at the Audit Committee.

7659. Council **delegated authority** to the Chair of the Audit Committee to finalise the required amendments in the Financial Statements.

7660. Council were satisfied and **agreed** the Audited Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2011/12.

2012-13 Retention Report – paper C31(12)

7661. Council **noted** the 2012-13 Retention Report as circulated. Items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:

- as of 27 June 2012, 49% of students had applied for retention online; and
- Council congratulated the team on the success of the online retention scheme.

Any other business

7662. There were no items of other business.

Date and time of next meeting

7663. It was **noted** that the next meeting would be at 10.30am on Wednesday 24 October 2012 at the General Optical Council.