

COUNCIL

Report from the Chair of Council

Meeting: 11 July 2018

Status: for information

Lead responsibility and paper author: Gareth Hadley (Chair)

Introduction

1. This report covers my principal activities since the Council meeting held on **9 May 2018**.

Stakeholders

2. **Association of Optometrists:** I attended the AOP annual dinner (**5 June 2018**) and spoke to a wide range of registrant stakeholders. Our discussions covered numbers of current regulatory issues, prominent amongst which was progress with the strategic review of education.
3. **Professional Services Authority:** Together with the Director of Strategy, I met George Jenkins (Chair) and Harry Cayton (Chief Executive) of the PSA (**6 June 2018**) to explain to them the steps that we were taking to ensure that we continued to be effective in the discharge of our public protection duties in the absence of our substantive Chief Executive and Registrar, Vicky McDermott.
4. **Association of British Dispensing Opticians:** Her two-year term of office having recently drawn to an end, I met registrant dispensing optician Fiona Anderson (former President of ABDO) (**7 June 2018**) to discuss her perceptions of the challenges currently facing optics and the roles that might be played by the professional bodies in equipping registrants to meet them.
5. **College of Optometrists:** I attended one of the College's regional CET events (**14 June 2018**) aimed primarily (but not exclusively) at optometrists in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region. This enabled me to observe at close hand registrants' engagement in peer review work and to discuss – both with them and with the facilitators (all of whom were themselves registrants recruited and trained for the role by the College) – the benefits that peer review afforded them in terms of developing the quality of their own professional practice. I also had the opportunity to have long informal conversations with Professor Ed Mallen, the recently elected President of the College, and with Usman Hussain (consultant ophthalmologist at West Suffolk Hospital) who delivered a lecture entitled *Corneal graft surgery: what is new and what the future holds*. Our

conversations focused particularly on the challenges for those professionally involved in optics and the opportunities afforded through strengthened inter-professional working to enhance the quality and effectiveness of eyecare in the United Kingdom.

6. **Optometry Wales:** I attended (**27 June 2018**) the first of *Optometry Wales' Question Time* roadshows planned to take place across the Principality between now and the autumn with the objective of gauging what needs to be done by OW in helping the professions in Wales navigate the future facing optometry by firstly listening to registrants' concerns and aspirations. I participated as a member of the *Question Time* panel (as also did Helen Tilley, not as a Council member but in her capacity as an independent practice owner in Monmouth). The proceedings – chaired David Dimbleby-style, by David Hewlett (Chief Executive of FODO) – enabled me to gain an insight into a range of registrants' views into how they would equip themselves for the challenges foreseen both in the clinical and in the commercial aspects of their work. I also had the opportunity to talk to a number of registrants including registrant optometrist Mike George, current chair of the Association of Optometrists, who was attending not in his AOP capacity but as a practitioner in Wales.

Council and Committees

7. I convened a teleconference of Council members (**17 May 2018**) to discuss immediate steps to be taken following receipt of the news that, for personal reasons, Vicky McDermott would be absent from her position as Chief Executive and Registrar for the foreseeable future. Cognisant of their duty to ensure that the Council's statutory functions are delivered effectively and efficiently with protection of the public as the overarching priority, Council members unanimously agreed (by email resolution dated **22 May 2018**) that:
 - 7.1. I should instruct an executive search and selection agency to provide professional services to assist us to appoint an Interim Chief Executive and Registrar as soon as possible;
 - 7.2. the Director of Fitness to Practise should act as Registrar until an Interim Chief Executive and Registrar had been appointed;
 - 7.3. the three priorities for Council should be in order: (i) the efficient and effective delivery of our regulatory duties in order to protect the public; (ii) the delivery of our key projects which include (but are not limited to) the Education Strategic Review, the CET Review, and the Business Standards Review; and (iii) delivery of the organisational transformation programme (OTP) following the staff consultation exercise then in train;
 - 7.4. due to the Directors perceiving themselves to be compromised in their leadership of the staff consultation exercise concerning the OTP, named Council members should be authorised to chair staff consultation meetings and to lead the consultation process to conclusion;

- 7.5. as a matter of priority, the Chair should issue to staff a communication: (i) outlining the interim arrangements; (ii) confirming that the Council hold their staff colleagues in high esteem and value the contribution that they make in ensuring public protection; and (iii) encouraging staff to engage in the consultation process; and
 - 7.6. (advised by a committee established for the purpose) Council should meet as soon as possible after the end of the consultation period to consider the consultation responses and related risks of delivering the three priorities (in 7.3 above), and make a substantive decision on the structure, speed and direction of change.
8. Council met (**1 June 2018**) to review the arrangements (detailed in paragraph 7) that it had previously agreed to secure the discharge of its duties in the absence of the substantive Chief Executive and Registrar. Following a full discussion, Council agreed that:
- 8.1 the priorities for the interim Chief Executive and Registrar be (i) the efficient and effective delivery of our regulatory duties in order to protect the public and (ii) the delivery of our key projects which include (but are not limited to) the Education Strategic Review, the CET Review and the Business Standards Review, namely the first two stated priorities approved by Council by email resolution on 22 May 2018, following their teleconference on 17 May 2018;
 - 8.2 the OTP, approved in principle by Council on 16 April 2018 and confirmed by Council on 8 May 2018) to deliver a new operating model, subsequently listed as the third of the stated priorities approved by Council following their teleconference on 17 May 2018, be discontinued;
 - 8.3 the interim Chief Executive and Registrar be asked to consider the objectives for the OTP and the responses received to the staff consultation exercise and, so informed, to advise Council on the capacity and change processes necessary to deliver organisational performance improvement in ways that do not put at undue risk the efficient and effective delivery of our regulatory duties and delivery of our key projects;
 - 8.4 the uncommitted part of authorised project cost and contingency provision for the OTP confirmed by Council on 8 May 2018 continue to be held within the Council's reserves and be earmarked for organisational performance improvement projects;
 - 8.5 in order that lessons can be learned, the Audit and Risk Committee be asked to commission from the internal auditor a comprehensive review of the OTP to embrace, inter alia: the business case; the project plan (including the adequacy of sponsorship, resourcing, risk, and the benefits realisation strategy); the effectiveness of project oversight arrangements; the effectiveness of arrangements for employee involvement and participation; and the adequacy of the knowledge and competence of those charged with overseeing and delivering the project; and

- 8.6 the Organisational Change Committee, established by the Council following their teleconference on 17 May 2018, be discontinued.
9. It follows from the decision to discontinue the OTP in the form proposed that the need for a further Council meeting to make a substantive decision on the structure, speed and direction of change no longer arises. However, an additional meeting of Council has been arranged for **12 September 2018** to consider, amongst other things, the draft consultation document for the next stage of the Strategic Education Review (drafts of the proposed new Education Standards and of the associated Learning Outcomes, both of which have been considered by the Statutory Advisory Committees and by the Education Strategic Review Expert Advisory Group).

Management

10. Together with Rosie Glazebrook and Selina Ullah, I had discussions with prospective interim appointments to the office of Chief Executive and Registrar. We decided to offer the position to Adam Sampson. Adam was available to us for two days in each of the weeks beginning 4 and 11 June 2018 and joined us full time with effect from 18 June 2018.
11. In addition to my regular conversations with the Chief Executive and Registrar and with members of the Senior Management Team, I have had:
- 11.1 four long bilateral discussions with members of the SMT; and
 - 11.2 three long bilateral discussions with the interim Chief Executive and Registrar concerning the work and direction of the Council. I have also had discussions with other members of the Executive.
12. Staff consultation meetings chaired by Council members were held on **22 May 2018** and **29 May 2018**. (Clare Minchington chaired the meeting on 22 May; I chaired the meeting on 29 May; Helen Tilley attended both of them).