

**Embargoed until 13:00 on 25 April 2012**

**C(12)2M**

**GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the 199th meeting of the Council held on 22 March 2012 at RIBA**

**Present:** Anna Bradley (in the Chair), Morag Alexander, 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, Mandie Lavin, Grahame Tinsley, Irina Miksa, Neil Drake, Simon Grier, Phil Hallam and Nicola Ebdon.

**Apologies**

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7599. There were no apologies.

**Declaration of members' interests**

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7600. There were no additional interests declared.

**Minutes of the 198th meeting held on 26 January 2012**

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7601. The minutes were **approved**.

**Updated Actions - paper C12(12)**

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7602. Members **noted** the updated actions as circulated. In relation to action point 7 it was agreed that the Executive would inform Council as soon as possible the dates of the Continuing Education and Training workshops.

**Other Matters Arising**

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7603. There were no other matters arising.

**2012/13 Budget – paper C13(12)**

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7604. Council **noted** the content of the paper on the budget for 2012/13 as circulated. Items of particular interest to Council were:

- the budget has been finalised through a series of detailed meetings with Heads of Department which had identified opportunities to do things differently;
- the budget included a nominal general increase in executive

- salary to reflect cost of living (excluding senior management);
- some 2011/12 projects had been carried over into 2012/13 and were reflected even though expenditure would come from the spend to save reserve;
- a separate cost centre had been introduced to deal with criminal prosecutions which was important to ensure transparency;
- there had been a real effort to align the budget to the Business Plan which was welcomed. Council recognised that expenditure may need to change if the business plan changed;
- more was being invested in education and standards than in Fitness to Practise, which was welcomed. It was **requested** that the Executive assess whether the investment in education and standards had the desired effect at the end of the period. It was **noted** that the Executive were developing systems to measure the impact of investment and welcomed the insight and knowledge of Council on this area;
- the Audit Committee would ensure that in the future it would have a greater sight of the budgeting process including a review at the beginning of the process to ensure it was robust and appropriate;
- the Audit Committee would like to keep reserve levels under review in relation to business planning and changes in the external environment. It was **agreed** that the Committee would keep Council informed of its view on reserves; and
- Council **requested** that a phased budget be presented as part of the quarterly review and anticipated an improvement in budget phasing throughout the year.

7605. Council **approved** the 2012/13 budget and **congratulated** the Executive on the improvement in its work in this area.

#### **2012/13 Draft Business Plan – paper C14(12)**

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7606. Council **considered** the draft business plan for 2012/13 as circulated. Council **welcomed** the draft business plan and congratulated the Executive on developing the plan in a way which was a better fit with the vision and strategic plan. Items of particular interest to Council and discussed further were:
- the Executive had devoted considerable time to developing the plan via an interactive and iterative process which included management workshops and a Council seminar;
  - for the first time the Executive had undertaken a high level capacity audit to ensure that it had the resources to complete the plan;
  - the Executive were still developing the plan to ensure that all core

day to day activities were identified and removed from the list of projects;

- the measurement of impact and performance were difficult to define and hard to measure and performance measures and KPIs were still being developed. Some new projects would result in new KPIs being developed during the year as part of the project;
- the business plan may have to be adapted during the year to take account of external issues. Such changes would be routinely reported to Council; and
- the Executive were in the process of identifying how to review and update the plan during the year and how best to feed back to Council.

7607. Following careful consideration Council gave the following **advice** to the Executive in finalising the plan:

- develop the measurement of impact and performance sections to ensure that KPIs were realistic, challenging, specific and measurable and include figures which identified the current measure of impact and performance where available. A clear definition of what success would look like needed to be included. Consider whether an internal audit could assist with the measurement of impact and performance. Ensure that some measurement of how successful the GOC had been in influencing policy as well as public protection was included. Identify which of the measures were for internal performance monitoring and which were for quarterly reporting to Council. Identify which of the key projects should be routinely reported to Council;
- when reporting on performance measurement ensure that a report was provided in relation to any items which did not meet the set target;
- develop the list of projects to ensure that all day to day work was moved to business as usual;
- ensure that the Executive developed its project management capability;
- reconsider the governance project currently identified for 2013/14 to assess whether it could be completed earlier, due to the positive impact it would have on the GOC conducting its work. It was noted the Audit Committee were keen for governance work to be completed as soon as possible; and
- include proposals as part of the capacity audit to ensure appropriate resource was available to monitor policy, ensure effective engagement and provide better support for work undertaken in the regions.

7608. Council **noted** that the finalised business plan would be presented to Council for approval in April. It was **requested** that a separate paper be developed for Council approval in relation to performance measurement to include the process for setting KPIs, connection between KPIs and process for reporting. It was felt that the business plan could be approved separately to performance measurement to enable the Executive more time to develop its performance reporting process and measures.

**Law Commission Consultation – paper C15(11)**

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7609. Council **reviewed** the paper on the consultation recently published by the Law Commission (LC) on its proposals for changes to the legislative framework governing the healthcare professional regulators. It was **noted** that the consultation closed on 31 May 2012. Council **agreed** that the GOC would respond to the consultation on its own behalf. Council had encouraged all stakeholders to respond directly to the LC and was pleased that the optical sector was already engaging with the consultation in a productive and proactive way.
7610. Council **noted** the tight timeframe of the review and that Council meeting time would be used flexibly in order to develop the response and **agreed** that the timeframe for response would result in approval of the GOC response outside of a public meeting.

**Any other business**

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7611. Council **noted** that the Member for Wales had recently attended an Optometry Wales Forum meeting. The Member for Wales had raised the LC consultation at the Forum to help assist consideration of the consultation in Wales.
7612. It was **noted** that the Audit Committee had recently agreed that Lloyds TSB would be the GOCs preferred supplier of banking services; with the proviso that at any time the Committee could make a decision to move some of its reserves to an alternative bank should concerns arise.

**Date and time of next meeting**

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7613. It was **noted** that the next meeting would be at 10.00am on Thursday 25 April 2012.