

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 193rd meeting of the Council held on 24 March 2011 at
the General Optical Council, 41 Harley Street, London W1G 8DJ**

Present: Anna Bradley (in the Chair),
Morag Alexander, Paul Carroll, Peter Douglas,
Liam Kite, Kevin Lewis, Fiona Peel,
Nicholas Rumney, James Russell

In attendance: Satjit Singh, Jeff Cant, David Howell,
Liz Carr, Grahame Tinsley, Joan Burrow

Chair's welcome

7342. The Chair welcomed Members and guests to the 193rd meeting of the Council.

Apologies for absence

7343. Apologies for absence were received from Brian Coulter and Robert Hogan.

Declarations of interest

7344. Members were reminded that they must declare to the meeting any matter in which they had any actual or perceived personal or professional conflict of interest that might influence their judgement. None were declared.

Minutes of the 192nd meeting held on 27 January 2011

7345. The Minutes of the 192nd meeting held on 27 January 2011 were signed as being a true and fair record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the 192nd meeting: for information

7346. Members received **Paper C(11)11** being an update on the matters arising from the previous meeting and progress on action taken.

7347. A question was raised as to peer review CET for those in education rather than in practice and it was confirmed that provision was being made.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

Business Plan and Budget for 2011/12

7348. The draft Business Plan was tabled and the Registrar reported that this would be finalised when electronic comments had been received from Council following the meeting.

7349. The Council received **Paper C(12)11** being the budget for 2011/12. The Director of Corporate Resources confirmed that an underspend had arisen mainly due to:

- i. The impact of rationalisation which resulted in cost reduction;
- ii. The recovery of £300,000 more in income than expected;

iii. Significantly less had been spent on FTP than anticipated.

7350. This had resulted in an underspend of around £800,000 the majority of which was proposed to be used for driving forward efficiency gains and improving customer service.

7351. The budget forecast for 2011/12 followed a detailed review with each budget holder. The only area showing a budget increase is FTP and this is largely due to the decision taken by Council to pursue criminal prosecutions. There is inevitably some budgetary uncertainty in this area. It was noted that the threat of prosecution had already resulted in responses from those targeted, with the result that it had not been necessary to pursue legal action. It was however, also noted that any Judicial Reviews would result in high costs. It was suggested that this risk could be insured against.

7352. **RESOLVED:**

that the budget for 2011/12 be approved.

Performance review

Project milestones

7353. Council received **Paper C(13)11** being the schedule of performance indicators concerning the identified projects by which the Executive will be held to account for the delivery of the 2010/11 Business Plan.

7354. It was suggested that the attached Gantt chart and draft business plan might include too much project work and the executive were invited to review the amount of work in the new business plan to ensure it was achievable.

Key Performance Indicators

7355. The Director of Corporate Resources reported on **Paper C(14)11** which detailed the KPIs and measures and targets for these. It was noted that this would be the last time they would be presented in this form:

Strategic Priority 1

- i. Revalidation – all targets had been achieved and there had been positive feedback.
- ii. Data gaps – there would be a Policy Support Group to address this and this would be strengthened with the arrival of the new Registrar.

Strategic Priority 2

- iii. CET undertaken – it was reported that 76% of registrants were on target.
- iv. Employee turnover/absence – this had not changed but it would not be reported in the new KPIs as it is not an issue for the organisation.
- v. FTP allegations processing time – there are future plans to reduce the time taken, but it was noted that the CHRE were happy with the present times.
- vi. Processing of registration/restoration applications – this was 100%.
- vii. Online retention – over 90% of all registrants had completed their registration online within the timescales. The feedback had been that it was much more convenient.
- viii. Driving down costs – there was a significant reduction and the GOC would continue to give the best service to its stakeholders.

Strategic Priority 3

- ix. Stakeholder engagement – the Chair and the new Registrar are to undertake meetings with all the health regulators, CHRE, DH, the optical bodies and patient and public bodies during April and May. This would be to introduce the Registrar and refresh current relationships.

7356. The Director of Corporate Resources confirmed that the new KPI system would be implemented from 1 April 2011. The targets had not yet been agreed and some things had not been monitored before so may need to be revised. This would be done on completion of the business plan.

Business case for IT Integration

7357. The Director of Corporate Resources reported that it had been agreed in principle to upgrade the GOC's IT systems to allow for a much more efficient system with a single point of entry for registrants. The next stage of commissioning would take place over the next couple of months.

Accommodation update

7358. The Director of Corporate Resources reported that Audit Committee had discussed this and it was agreed that they would continue to investigate further options and report back to Council at its May meeting. It was confirmed that legal advice had been sought and the GOC is able to sell the building.

Devolved administrations support

7359. Council received **Paper C(15)11** being a discussion paper on support to Members on devolved administration matters. In line with the strategic plan it was proposed that a member of the strategy and policy team should provide support for the devolved administrations. There had been some support in the past but it was agreed that this should now be formalised.

7360. It was also agreed that there should be centralised support for all Council Members in their attendance at meetings on GOC's behalf and that Members feedback from such meetings would also be circulated by the central team.

7361. It was also agreed that Council should aim to identify opportunities to meet with the key stakeholders in all of the UK nations, if appropriate holding Council meetings in the devolved nations to fit with wider stakeholder engagement.

Report on behalf of the devolved administrations

7362. Council received **Paper C(16)11** being reports from the lay Members of Council from the devolved administrations.

Update from Wales

7363. Fiona Peel reported that with the vote for the Welsh Assembly to have direct power health policy in Wales was likely to be increasingly different from England.

7364. The Optometry Wales Council and AGM would be held the following week and Fiona would report to them on Council's decisions.

Update from Scotland

7365. Morag Alexander reported that Optometry Scotland were interested in the work of the GOC and would like a closer relationship with the GOC.

7366. The Chair had agreed to attend the AGM of Optometry Scotland on 9 May 2011 and to speak at the NHS Education Scotland Optometry Advisory Committee annual conference on 6 November 2011.

Update from Northern Ireland

7367. There was no update from Northern Ireland.

Structure of Council meetings

7368. The Council received **Paper C(17)11** being proposals for the future structure of Council meetings, items to be reserved for private meetings and media relations.

7369. The following timetable for future Council meetings was proposed:

09:30 private discussion (possibly with the Chief Executive)

10:30 public meeting of Council

13:00 lunch

14:00 private meeting/seminar of Council

17:00 close.

7370. It was noted that this would allow for a press briefing over lunch and publication of the press statement on the same day as Council.

7371. It was also noted that the earlier start would require some Members to be provided with overnight accommodation. However, provision for this had been made in the 2011/12 budget.

7372. The paper included a proposed policy for items that would be reserved for private discussion. Members agreed that the list included in the paper should be adopted and that the agenda for the private meetings would be agreed with the Chair beforehand.

7373. The Chair asked for comments from the public gallery and the Chief Executive of the AOP commented that it was a sensible list for items to be covered at private meetings and the others agreed. The consensus of the members of the public gallery was that the revised timings were a good idea and the members of the optical press welcomed the idea of a press briefing over lunch following the meeting.

7374. **RESOLVED:**

- i. that starting with the May meeting of Council, the revised timetable would be used;**
- ii. that the policy on items for private discussion be adopted;**
- iii. that a press briefing would be held over lunch following the public meeting**

7375. Council Members also received **Annex 1** to the paper which showed the proposed schedule of key matters to be considered by Council month by month. It was agreed that the draft budget should be brought to Council in February.

7376. It was also agreed that it was difficult to arrange meetings at short notice and therefore it would be helpful to have monthly meetings booked which could be cancelled later if necessary.

7377. **RESOLVED:**

that monthly meetings should be put in the diary as soon as possible which could be cancelled later if necessary.

Determinations of FTP hearings

7378. The Council received **Paper C(18)11** being the determinations of FTP hearings held between 26 January 2011 and 22 February 2011.

Stakeholder engagement activity

7379. The Council received **Paper C(19)11** being information on GOC stakeholder engagement activity since April 2010.

Any other business

7380. No further items were raised.

Date and time of next meeting

7381. The next Council meeting will be held at **10:30** on **Thursday 19 May 2011** at 41 Harley Street, London W1G 8DJ.