

GENERAL OPTICAL COUNCIL

**Minutes of the 219th Public meeting of Council held on
Tuesday 26 July 2016 at 10:00 at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG**

Present: Gareth Hadley (Chair), Paul Carroll, Brian Coulter, Peter Douglas, Rosie Glazebrook, Liam Kite, Scott Mackie, David Parkins, Fiona Peel, Helen Tilley, Glenn Tomison and Selina Ullah.

GOC attendees: Alistair Bridge, Lisa Davis, Marcus Dye (paragraphs 8482 to 8488 and 8394 to 8502), Nicola Ebdon, Donna Francis (paragraphs 8492 to 8493), Jo Fox (paragraphs 8485 to 8486) Simon Greer, Lisa Harmshaw (minutes), Manori Izni-Muneer, Paul Johnston (paragraphs 8503 to 8506), Josephine Lloyd, Philippa Mann (paragraphs 8503 to 8506), Samantha Peters, David Rowlands and Mark Webster.

External presenters: Michelle McDaid (Mott Macdonald, paragraphs 8482 to 8484); Matthew Thurman (Enventure, paragraphs 8487 to 8488).

Welcome

8469. The Chair **welcomed** members, employees and those in the public gallery to the 219th public meeting of Council.
8470. Council **extended** a warm welcome to Mark Webster, interim Director of Resources, who joined the GOC on 18 July 2016. Council **noted** that the outgoing Director of Resources, Josie Lloyd, would leave the GOC on 29 July 2016. Council **extended thanks** to Josie Lloyd during her three years at the GOC, particularly in relation to the successful relocation to Old Bailey, and wished her well for the future.
8471. Council also **noted** that this was Brian Coulter's last Council meeting before stepping down as a lay member of Council on 30 September 2016.

Apologies

8472. No apologies were **received** for the meeting.

Declaration of members' interests

8473. The following interests were declared:
- Item 11 (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) – both **Paul Carroll** and **Liam Kite** declared interests in item 11a (Anglia Ruskin University).

Council:

- **noted** that neither had been involved in any discussions or decisions during the provisional approval process, and had not received any related papers;
- **noted** that both had received the public cover paper but not the related confidential annexes;
- **agreed** that both members could remain in the meeting (unless Council was minded to undertake substantive discussion), but not participate in the discussion and decision;
- Item 11 (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) – **Helen Tilley** declared an interest in item 11c (Cardiff University) as she had applied to undertake the Independent Prescribing course at Cardiff. Council:
 - **noted** that Helen had received the public cover paper as well as the confidential annexes (as Helen advised the GOC of this conflict *after* the meeting papers had been circulated); and
 - **agreed** that Helen could remain in the meeting (unless Council was minded to undertake substantive discussion), but not participate in the discussion and decision; and
- Item six (accreditation and quality assurance framework for education) and item 11 (Accreditation and Quality Assurance) – **Glenn Tomison** declared an interest in both items in case of any reference to Manchester University. Council **noted** these declarations and **agreed** that a decision on whether Glenn would be required to leave the meeting would be taken by Council at the point of discussion, depending on any references to Manchester University.

Minutes of the last meeting held on 11 May 2016.

8474. Council **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2016, subject to one typographical error in paragraph 8438.

Updated Actions – paper C32(16)

8475. Council **noted** the progress made on the actions in the paper. In particular:
- **08(16): improving engagement with patient bodies** – Council **noted** that no further Chairs meetings had been diarised, however the GOC Chair would shortly be meeting with the Chair of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and the Chair of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and would discuss how the GOC could seek to improve its engagement with patient bodies;
 - **05(16): strategic review of education** – Council **noted** that a proposal to publish a call for evidence would be brought to the next Council meeting in November 2016. Further, the Executive intended to informal discussions with stakeholders prior to this to ensure the review addressed the right issues;

- **03(16) – CET end of 2013-15 cycle report** – Council **requested** a more accurate timeline of when the Amendments List would be published. The Executive responded that there were currently no firm timings. Instead, the Executive was continuing to focus on the approach required for communicating changes to the Register generally; and
- **35(15) – Q2 Performance and Management information report (re: conclude the discussions regarding member’s status)** – Council **requested** an update on this action as it had been ‘in progress’ for some time. The Executive responded that the status of Clinical Assessors had now been finalised and recruitment for these roles would be advertised by the end of July 2016, however the Executive was unable to commit to a date for progressing those discussions on other groups of individuals which were outstanding.

Matters Arising

8476. There were no matters arising.

Chair’s report – paper C33(16)

8477. Council **received** a report from the Chair updating members on his activities since the Council meeting on 11 May 2016. Council **noted**:
- that Helen Tilley had also accompanied the Chair to the meeting with the Department of Health (DH) in Cardiff on 20 July 2016 and that Council would be provided with an oral update during their confidential session; and
 - that Elizabeth Jones and Barry Mitchell had been appointed as Lay Chairs of the Education Visitor Panel (EVP) and that a press statement would be issued in due course.
8478. Council **noted** that the GOC Chair’s first term of appointment would end on 18 February 2017 and that, as he was also the Chair of the Nominations Committee (NomCo), he would need to recuse himself from relevant discussions in order that NomCo might address the question of reappointment. As a result, Council **agreed** to:
- amend paragraph 2.1 of the terms of reference of NomCo to increase the membership of the Committee to up to six members; and
 - appoint Brian Coulter (Senior Council Member) and Fiona Peel (Senior Council Member designate) to NomCo for the purpose of addressing the Chair reappointment process.

Chief Executive and Registrar’s report – verbal

8479. The Chief Executive and Registrar provided a verbal update on her activity since her written report to Council in May 2016. In relation to the outcome of the EU Referendum, Council **noted** that:
- the Executive were continuing to engage with the DH on legislative reform;

- the Executive were considering the potential impact of recent ministerial and civil service changes on for healthcare regulation;
- the GOC remained committed to adopting a broad push to reform the Opticians Act in order better to equip the professions for the challenges ahead;
- the Legislative Reform Working Group (LRWG) had met to reflect on the implications of the EU Referendum result and would re-scope their planned work as a result; and
- the GOC was in the process of implementing the EU Directive on recognising EU/EEA applications and that this work would continue until Article 50 was triggered at which point the GOC would review any implications accordingly.

8480. In relation to other areas of work, Council **noted**:

- that the Chief Executive and Registrar had met with her fellow counterparts at the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and Care Quality Commission (CQC) and that it was evident from these meetings that there was wide agreement that regulators should be striving to balance the focus on upstream activities (i.e. education and professional development) with those of the downstream (i.e. complaints). Council further **noted** that this was also apparent from the Chief Executive and Registrar's meeting with Scottish Government officials who were also keen to focus on more upstream activities;
- work had begun on preparing the GOC Strategic Plan for 2017-2020, following a series of away days with both Council and employees. The focus for the next three years in relation to registrants would be on education, lifelong learning and development which Council were **committed** to. Council were **encouraged** to view the visual representation of the views on organisational development expressed at the first employee away day. These were displayed on the wall in the kitchen;
- employee turnover continued to decrease and had dipped to 16 per cent following a peak of 42 per cent in 2014/15; and
- the Chief Executive and Registrar had attended an event the previous week where a discussion with Tamara Finkelstein (Chief Operating Officer at the Department of Health) which focused on optics. This was **welcomed** by Council, especially following the recent changes to ministers and within the civil service.

8481. In discussion, Council;

- **questioned** whether the PSA were engaging in the discussions regarding the balance of upstream/downstream activities. The Executive advised that the PSA had not initiated the discussions but were supportive of the focus on upstream activities. However, Council further **noted** that, in the context

of the GOC Performance Review, the PSA focused on performance in relation to registration and fitness to practise, which was not consistent with a focus on upstream activities. As a result the Executive advised that they were engaging with the PSA to identify appropriate performance measures for 'upstream' activities; and

- **questioned** whether the CQC had signalled their desire to undertake inspections in optics like they do for some other healthcare practice premises. The Chief Executive and Registrar responded that this was not the purpose of her meeting with the CQC, however at this time there did not seem to be an appetite for expanding the CQC's workload in this area.

STRATEGIC

Accreditation and quality assurance framework for education – C36(16)

8482. Council **noted** Glenn Tomison's declared interest in this item in the event of any reference to Manchester University. Council **noted** that there would be no discussion of individual educational establishments during this item and therefore Glenn was permitted to remain in the meeting and participate in both the discussion and decision.
8483. Council **received** a new quality assurance framework which would clarify the GOC's role in accreditation and quality assurance of optical education and qualifications. Council specifically **noted** that:
- Mott Macdonald had been engaged since January 2016 to undertake a fact-finding exercise with stakeholders, education providers, members of the Education Committee, the Education Visitor Panel (EVP) and internal GOC colleagues. This exercise had proved useful and would provide a platform for effective engagement in the Education Strategic Review;
 - the framework clarified the GOC's approach to accreditation and quality assurance, making clear the link to the education handbooks, and would help ensure consistent understanding and decision-making. There was a parallel with the work undertaken to develop the standards framework which now set out more clearly the GOC's expectations in relation to standards;
 - the Education Committee had undertaken a thorough critique of the framework prior to it coming to Council, taking into account issues that had arisen in relation to QA visits previously; and
 - the framework has been welcomed by the chairs of the EVP as it provided greater clarity in a number of areas.
8484. Council **discussed** the framework and:
- **requested** that the documents be checked for consistency of language and terminology throughout;
 - **requested** that the promotion of GOC standards of practice be made more

- explicit;
- **welcomed** the extension of invitations to the chairs of the EVP to attend meetings of the Education Committee to present their visit findings, which Council **agreed** was a step in the right direction in ensuring closer engagement with the education visitors;
 - **requested** that the Companies Committee be made aware of the new framework at their next meeting;
 - **approved** the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Framework for publication subject to the two requests above;
 - **delegated authority** to the Chief Executive and Registrar to approve the final framework prior to publication, commenting that Council was content for the Chief Executive and Registrar to delegate further down to a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) if she desired; and
 - **noted** the further work being undertaken to review the Education handbooks and **delegated authority** to the Chief Executive and Registrar to approve the updated handbooks.

Quality assurance project update – C35(16)

8485. Council **received** an update on the progress with the Quality Assurance (QA) project and **welcomed** the Quality Assurance Manager to her first Council meeting. Council specifically **noted** the progress made to date and that KPMG had been engaged to run a pilot review on Registration processes and that a lessons learned exercise would be undertaken before rolling other further activity to other departments.
8486. Council **discussed** the paper and:
- **stressed** the importance of maintaining the pace, removing some of the complexity and streamlining processes as much as possible;
 - **questioned** why the services of KPMG had been utilised for this project. The Executive responded that the work undertaken by KPMG in FTP meshed with this project and therefore it was sensible to retain KPMG's services in order to maintain progress. Council were **content** and **noted** that on this occasion the Chair of Council had authorised a single tender contract and that, in accordance with the Council's contracts and procurement policy, the exception would be reported to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) at their next meeting; and
 - **requested** that the Registration Committee receive an update on the pilot at their next meeting in October 2016.

Public perceptions survey 2016 – C34(16)

8487. Council welcomed Matthew Thurman, Research Director from Enventure, to present the findings of the second public perceptions survey. Council **noted**:
- the aims: which were to better understand the views and experiences of the

public when visiting an optician, their awareness and expectations of regulation, and to measure and track perceptions over time identifying key themes between 2015 and 2016;

- the mixed methodology used which included an online survey plus targeted telephone and face to face interviews with quotas set on age, gender and country and qualitative focus groups and telephone interviews;
- that 3,252 responses were received;
- that the term 'optician' was used throughout the research to refer to both optometrists and dispensing opticians as the public did not distinguish between the two roles;
- that the final report considered ethnicity as well as age and gender but had only been commented on where there were statistical differences; and
- the key findings, which were:
 - GP's remained the first port of call for urgent eye problems (40 per cent in 2016, down 14 per cent on 2015), however there were significant differences across the nations for those who would approach an optician in the first instance – England 18 per cent, Northern Ireland 25 per cent, Wales 26 per cent and Scotland 31 per cent;
 - opticians were largely viewed as both healthcare providers and a retailer (49 per cent of respondents);
 - the proportion of those visiting an optician once every two years had remained level (70 per cent in 2016, 73 per cent in 2015);
 - 96 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their overall experience of visiting an optician, with the main reasons for satisfaction being good quality examination or having an issue corrected, the optician was or seemed qualified and staff were polite and friendly;
 - levels of complaints remained low – 92 per cent of respondents had not complained (this was the same in 2015) and 67 per cent thought it likely that an apology would be received from an optician if something went wrong;
 - 71 per cent of respondents assumed that opticians were regulated, however this was lower compared to doctors, dentists and pharmacists and fewer (65 per cent) thought opticians underwent regular training; and
 - awareness of the GOC remains low – only four per cent of respondents could correctly name the GOC and 12 per cent claimed to be aware of the GOC.

8488. In discussion, Council:

- **agreed** that the survey provided good baseline data on public perceptions for the next strategic plan and would be a useful method of tracking trends over time;
- **agreed** that it was important for the GOC to understand the perception of

the role of an optician being both a healthcare provider and a retailer. Council **noted** that the registrant survey was currently live and that this would be helpful in building an evidence base for the future;

- **welcomed** the additional infographic summaries which provided the headline results across the nations surveyed and were a useful addition to the final report;
- **expressed concern** that of the 96 per cent who said they were satisfied with their overall experience of visiting an optician only 15 per cent of respondents said the main reason for their satisfaction was that the optician was/seemed qualified. Council **requested** that the next survey ask whether there should be mandatory display of certificates (like those displayed for pharmacists);
- **suggested** that further thought be given to requiring registrants to display their registration information which would assist in increasing awareness of the GOC. Council **noted** that in Scotland the NHS logo was displayed which further increased perception of opticians being a healthcare provider. Council **agreed** that currently GP's were perceived to be the overall guardians of healthcare and that there was a need to change this perception for the effective delivery of healthcare;
- **requested** that the next survey consider distinguishing between the role of an optometrist and the role of the dispensing optician as each was different and whether it was possible to segment the various stages of the eye exam journey;
- **sought clarification** as to whether the cost of having an eye exam was a barrier to having an eye test. Enventure advised that this question had been asked: cost had not emerged as a significant factor. The main driver appeared to be respondents not considering an eye exam to be a priority or they perceived no problems with their eye sight;
- **commented** on the differences between the nations, which in some cases were significant. Council **noted** that, in Scotland, patients were obliged to seek the services of an optometrist for eye problems because eye-related Accident and Emergency (A&E) services had been closed. This was not the case in England where the separate services remained available. Council **agreed** that not only did eye health require better promotion but that there was also a need for the GOC to collaborate with both the NHS and other health bodies. Efforts might be directed at influencing eye health commissioning policies as well as at promoting closer and more strategic working between Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's); and
- **questioned** whether more effort should be put into raising the profile of the Optical Consumer Complaints Service (OCCS) as they received more complaints than the GOC. Council **agreed** that more effective signposting to the OCCS would be helpful as would registrants displaying OCCS posters in their practices.

ASSURANCE

Financial performance report: quarter one 2016/17 – C37(16)

8489. Council **received** the financial report for 2016/17 for the two months ended 31 May 2016 and the quarter one forecast. Council **noted** one error in the paper at paragraph 18 which should have stated four categories, instead of five.
8490. The main headlines in the report **noted** by Council were:
- actual performance for the two months ended 31 May 2016 showed a surplus of £6,380k compared to a budget of £6,349k – an overall positive variance of £31k;
 - income for the two months ended 31 May 2016 totalled £7.5m compared to the budget of £7.7m – a negative variance of £169k (or 2.2 per cent);
 - the reasons for the variance in income were: the time difference in seeing the impact of the removals of those registrants that failed to complete their CET and the investment income received being lower than budgeted as a result of the slow build-up of the GOC investment portfolio with Brewin Dolphin;
 - total expenditure for the two months ended 31 May 2016 amounted to £1.2m compared to a budget of £1.4m – a positive variance of £200k; and
 - underspends included: cost/efficiencies or improvements in procurement amounting to £17k; normal work fluctuations or areas where contingency budgets had not yet been expended amounting to £57k; activities planned but where delivery had been delayed amounting to £150k; and areas where it has been recognised that budgets were set with unrealistic expectations of what could be delivered amounting to £24k.
8491. In discussion of the report Council **sought assurance** from the Executive as to whether Brewin Dolphin had modified any expectations on investment return following the outcome of the EU Referendum. The Executive advised that no modifications on returns were currently expected, however the Executive had discussed with Brewin Dolphin about the division of investments as a result of the the EU Referendum outcome.

Performance report: quarter one 2016/17 – paper C38(16)

8492. Council **received** the revised format of the performance report for quarter one 2016/17 and **welcomed** the interim Performance and Planning Manager to her first Council meeting. Council **noted**:
- the revised format which was being piloted – it had been developed in line with feedback received to date, the intention was that it would be further refined, particularly, the annexes which would be reduced over time as reporting systems were developed. Further feedback was **requested** as an aid to and a **request** for Council volunteers to provide feedback on the format going forward;

- there was more work to do on developing performance measures and strengthening qualitative reporting: this was underway;
- the challenges in gathering data from various IT systems;
- the aim to create a higher level progress report in relation to achievement of strategic objectives on page three (a summary of annex one); and
- the performance highlights, key challenges and learning and reflection for quarter one on pages five, six and seven respectively in future will include context in terms of risks and mitigating actions.

8493. In discussion, Council:

- **welcomed** the information on 'challenges' on page six of the report and **agreed** that the CRM project would be a helpful case study and learning opportunity for the GOC going forward;
- **requested** an update on the new (pilot) FTP triage process to improve the speed at which new referrals proceed to full investigation or to preliminary closure. The Executive advised that the pilot had started on 1 June 2016 and already some improvement in the triage process could be seen – with a reduction from 42 days to 15 days, with the intention to reduce further to ten days. Council **noted** that older cases were still filtering through the system and that there had been three during the last quarter to be considered by the FTP Committee which had resulted in a significant impact on reported quarterly performance. The Executive were confident that improvements would be seen by November 2016 as new cases progressed through the pilot;
- **noted** that the Executive was working with KPMG to develop key performance indicators (KPI's) in FTP as part of the pilot project and that these would be tested before presentation to Council;
- **requested** an update on how the Executive was progressing with having a KPI for accuracy of the register. The Executive responded that this would be developed as part of the registration QA project pilot and that the internal auditors would shortly be carrying out a 'health check' of the register which would feed into this work. Council **noted** that EEA applications had a mandatory timeframe and that this also needed to be factored into performance assessment;
- the mandatory employee training in Information Governance (IG) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) had been rolled out to both employees and Council and had to be completed by end of October 2016;
- **questioned** what action was being undertaken to resolve the illegal practice cases which were more than one year old. The Executive advised that these cases had been separated out, risk assessed and were considered to be of low harm. The processes had been reviewed and recommendations were being actioned against specific timelines to improve performance. Council **requested** that the actions and timings be included in

- the November Performance Report;
- **requested** that the Executive consider a KPI for information governance breaches;
- **expressed thanks** to the Executive for the revised format which was welcomed and **suggested** that further thought be given to including an overview of performance and that the dashboard needed to provide more contextual information; and
- **expressed thanks** to David Parkins and Selina Ullah for volunteering to help develop the format of the Performance Report.

Accreditation and quality assurance – paper C39(16)

8494. Council **noted** the interests of Paul Carroll and Liam Kite in relation to item 11a (Anglia Ruskin University) and for Helen Tilley in item 11c (Cardiff University) (as minuted in paragraph 8473 above). The Chair **asked** Council whether they were minded to undertake any substantive discussion on these items and it was **confirmed** that no substantive discussion was necessary. Therefore, Paul, Liam and Helen were **permitted to remain** in the meeting for the discussion and decision, but not participate.
8495. Council also **noted** Glenn Tomison's declared interest in this item in case there was any reference to Manchester University (as minuted in paragraph 8473 above). Council **noted** that there would be no discussion of Manchester University during this item and therefore Glenn was **permitted to remain** in the meeting and participate in both the discussion and decision.
8496. Council **received** the recommendations of the Education Committee in relation to courses at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), Cardiff University and the University of Portsmouth.

ARU – foundation of Science (FdSc) in Ophthalmic Dispensing

8497. Council **considered** the recommendations of the Education Committee to approve the conversion of the provisional approval status for the FdSc Ophthalmic Dispensing course at ARU to full accreditation. In discussion, Council **sought assurance** from the Executive that all the conditions that required completion prior to full accreditation had been fulfilled. The Executive advised that all the conditions had been met.
8498. Council **accepted** the recommendation of the Education Committee and:
- **granted** full accreditation to the FdSc in Ophthalmic Dispensing at Anglia Ruskin University;
 - **agreed** that the next quality assurance visit should be scheduled within three years of the date of the last visit; and
 - **agreed** that the visit report should be published on the GOC website.

Cardiff University – post-graduate certificate in Therapeutic Prescribing for Optometrists

8499. Council **considered** the recommendations of the Education Committee in relation to Cardiff University. In discussion, Council **noted** that if Council were minded to provisionally approve this course it would be with conditions attached. The standard process for provisionally approved courses includes a GOC visit each year until one cohort of students had completed the full course. Council **noted** that if, during the year, condition(s) were not met the GOC would take action. The conditions were suitably worded to make the GOC expectations clear in terms of requirements and timescales.
8500. Council **accepted** the recommendation of the Education Committee and:
- **granted** provisional approval for the post-graduate certificate in Therapeutic Prescribing for Optometrists at Cardiff University subject to the conditions as set out in paragraphs 20.1.1 to 20.1.5 of the paper; and
 - **agreed** that the next accreditation visit be scheduled to take place by July 2017.

Portsmouth University – Master of Optometry

8501. Council **considered** the recommendations of the Education Committee in relation to Portsmouth University. In discussion, Council **questioned** why the student numbers had been agreed at 16 and not higher. The Executive responded that these were set in discussion with the University based on the findings of the visit and to take account of the other conditions which have been set. The University advised that these numbers would be financially viable. Council **noted** that student numbers could potentially be increased in the future, subject to adequate resourcing and support by the University and prior agreement by the GOC.
8502. Council **accepted** the recommendation of the Education Committee and:
- **granted** provisional approval for the Master of Optometry programme at Portsmouth University, subject to the conditions as set out in paragraphs 28.1 to 28.7 of the paper; and
 - **requested** that the Executive engage with Mott Macdonald to develop a framework for making decisions regarding student numbers going forward.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 for lunch and reconvened at 13:10

OPERATIONAL

Information Governance policies – paper C40(16)

8503. Council **received** the draft Information Governance (IG) framework and policies for approval, following their consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 4 July 2016. Council **noted**:

- that the framework was a formal clarification of the IG standards expected across the GOC and were applicable to both employees and members;
- the framework merged 12 policies into six with an average of nine pages in length for each, which compared well to the other healthcare regulators and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO);
- each policy had been summarised into a 'toolbox talk' briefing sheet which had been delivered in face to face training sessions to 97 per cent of all employees and focused on the processes to be followed;
- All employees had already satisfactorily completed the mandatory IG e-learning modules and that this training would be rolled out to all members and refreshed annually;
- that the ARC had requested the inclusion of further diagrams and flowcharts which would be prepared for inclusion; and
- work was underway to put the framework into a handbook which would further reduce the total length due to removal of any duplicated sections.

8504. Council **discussed** the draft policies and:

- **welcomed** the framework which Council considered was a big step forward in improving IG processes at the GOC;
- **requested** that Council be provided with the 'toolbox talk' briefing sheets;
- **noted** the short turnaround time between the ARC and Council meeting and **welcomed** the further work planned to include diagrams/flowcharts and turn the framework into a handbook which Council agreed would further slim down the overall length;
- **agreed** that implementation and training was key, that communication should be a high priority and **welcomed** the training which had been undertaken to date. Council also **noted** that routine compliance checks were already under way and posters regarding data privacy and security had been put up;
- **noted** that the SIRO, Data Protection Officer (DPO) and information asset managers would require additional training to ensure they fully understood the policies;
- **questioned** why the framework did not mention homeworking, iPads and removable media. The Executive responded that these were covered in the IT policy;
- **requested** that the Executive identify if any members used shared personal email accounts and **agreed** that every member should have their own GOC email account;
- **approved** the format of the policies as a framework;
- **noted** that currently the Chief Executive and Registrar was the SIRO for the GOC and **requested** that Council be advised if this role were subsequently transferred to a different person;
- **agreed** to delegate authority to the SIRO for approving the final policies;

and

- **agreed** that the handbook should be considered and approved by the ARC at their next meeting.

Internal Speaking Up (whistleblowing) policy and Investigations policy – paper C41(16)

8505. Council **received** a revised Internal Speaking Up (whistleblowing) policy and internal Investigations policy for approval, following their consideration by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 4 July 2016. Council **noted**:
- the research undertaken to develop the policy;
 - that the comments provided by ARC had been taken on board in finalising the policies;
 - that the draft policies had been presented to employees to ensure that they were clear and accessible;
 - that the GOC was committed to not allowing workers to suffer detriment for raising concerns which was one of the main findings from the Francis Inquiry; and
 - the planned implementation arrangements.
8506. Council **discussed** the draft policies and requested that the policies be checked throughout prior to publication to ensure consistency between the policy and annexes. Council **delegated authority** to the Chief Executive and Registrar to finalise the policies for publication.

Audit and Risk Committee (ARC): terms of reference – C42(16)

8507. Council **received** revised terms of reference (ToR) for the ARC which were discussed by the ARC at their meeting on 4 July 2016. Council:
- **approved** the terms of reference; and
 - **agreed** the delegations as set out in paragraph 14 of the paper.

Nockolds contract extension – C43(16)

8508. Council **received** a paper which sought Council's agreement to extend the current contract held by Nockolds Solicitors (Nockolds) to provide the optical dispute mediation service (OCCS) for a period of two years from 1 April 2017. Council:
- **noted** the work undertaken by Nockolds since being appointed to provide the optical dispute mediation service; and
 - **agreed** to extend the current contract for a further two years, until 31 March 2019.

Council registrant and lay member appointments – C44(16)

8509. Council **received** a paper to consider and agree the role description and person specification for four new Council members.

8510. The Chair of Council **expressed thanks** to Council members for completing the skills audit prior to the Council meeting. The Executive advised that a summary, including any gaps, would be circulated to Council shortly. Council **agreed to delegate authority** to the Nominations Committee to consider and recommend the mix of skills and experience required to meet the future needs of Council following consideration of the results of the audit. Council **requested** that 'technology skills' should be considered as these were currently light within Council.
8511. Council **considered** the role description, person specification and essential criteria for all Council members (existing and new) and desirable criteria for new Council members and **delegated authority** to the Council Chair to finalise the role description, person specification and essential criteria following NomCo's consideration of the mix of skills and experience and an opportunity for Council members to comment on recommended changes by e-mail.
8512. Council **agreed** that the term of office for the new Council members would be four years and **noted** the plans for the selection campaign, including the provisional timetable.

Council forward plan – paper C45(16)

8513. Council **noted** the forward plan of activity for Council for 2016/17.

Any other business

8514. Council **extended** thanks to Brian Coulter for his valuable contributions during the last eight years which included him acting as interim Chair, Chair of the Education Committee, a member of ARC and the Remuneration Committee (RemCo) and undertaking the role of Senior Council member. Brian extended his thanks to both Council and the Executive for their work and support during his tenure, which he was very proud of.
8515. There being no other business, the meeting closed at 14:10.

Date and time of next meeting

8516. The next public meeting of Council would be held on **Wednesday 16 November 2016** at 10 Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7NG. The time of the meeting was to be confirmed.



