

Council, 24 May 2017

Council meeting format

Executive summary and recommendations

## **Introduction**

Ordinarily in July each year, Council consider the dates of meetings for the forthcoming year. This year, following recent council discussion on the effectiveness of Council, this paper has been drafted in order to facilitate a wider discussion on the format of Council meetings and associated workshops to ensure:-

- Council have sufficient time and appropriate forums (both formally and informally) to discuss Council matters;
- business is discussed efficiently;
- Council members' time is being used effectively; and
- value for money is being achieved.

## **Decision**

The Council is invited to discuss and agree the format and frequency of Council meetings going forward and request that the Executive publish 2018 dates in accordance with the decision of Council.

## **Background information**

In January 2014, following the reconstitution of Council, it was agreed that Council should meet over two days and consider departmental performance reporting on the afternoon of day one and then more strategic items on the morning of day two.

However, over time, Council requested to move away from this approach since it was felt that the meetings would be more strategically focused by interdispersing other reports between the departmental performance reports. This is akin to the approach taken to agenda planning pre-2014 when Council was held over one day, normally concluding by 1pm.

As Council members are aware, there is currently a review being undertaken in relation to performance reporting to Council, agenda planning, and the business conducted by the Committees.

## **Options**

Set out below are two options about how we could approach the format of Council meetings. However, consideration should also be given to the frequency of Council

meetings. Currently, we have six meetings per year and, in addition, two scheduled strategic workshops. If we compare that to a number of the other regulators as follows:-

<b>Regulator</b>	<b>No of Council meetings held in 2015/2016</b>	<b>Timings of meeting</b>
GMC	5	09:00 – 13:00
NMC	6	09:30 – 13:00
GDC	9*	13:15 – 16:15
GOC	4	10:00 – 14:15

\* although in 2016, 7 meetings were held and there are 8 scheduled for 2017.

This should however be considered in the context of their governance structures, taking into account that many of the regulators have a number of Committees supporting the work of Council and these meet on a regular basis.

### **1. Council to be held on one day**

If we consider 2017 and the business transacted through Council, it would become apparent that one day would be more than sufficient to hold the formal meeting of Council. In February and this current May meeting, the second day of formal meetings was replaced with ‘workshop-style’ sessions. The March meeting, whilst held over two days, lasted no more than six hours in total. This could quite easily have been held on one day.

In addition to the amount of Council business transacted over the last few meetings, there are other reasons why consideration should be given to holding the formal meetings of Council on one day as follows:-

- With further streamlined performance reporting, we would expect to see a reduction in the amount of data and narrative presented to Council resulting in the paper requiring less time for consideration at Council;
- Since the Education and Training and Audit Committees are giving consideration to their remit (in part to ensure that work is not duplicated between Council and Committees), we could see a further reduction in Council business;
- Some Council members are having difficulty attending both days of Council;
- Although a detailed analysis hasn’t been carried out, there would be a saving on Council members fees in the region of £22k (based on the current remuneration arrangements). This may however be less depending on the approach Council wish to take to informal, workshop-style sessions.

Under the old approach, any workshop style sessions (outside of the February and October scheduled dates) were held on an ad hoc basis. These were held on the afternoon of Council meetings which would allow for a minimum of three hours discussion time. Council members were given advanced notification so that appropriate arrangements could be made.

With an enhanced approach to agenda planning, it would be possible to see those Council meetings which are particularly heavy or light. That way, workshop sessions could be held on those days when an agenda was particularly light. In addition, it will be in the Council's gift to call additional meetings if a particular issue necessitates this.

On the basis that some Council members have long journeys and, in addition, in the spirit of continued networking between Council members, it would still be possible for Council members to travel to London the night before a Council meeting.

## **2. Continue with the two day approach**

Council members may consider that the current format of meetings provides for sufficient time to transact Council business and also flexibility to allow for more regular workshop-style events. Therefore Council may wish to continue with the same format going forward.

### **Considerations**

Should the frequency of Council meetings be changed? If so, how frequently should Council meet?

Do Council members agree that formal meetings of Council should be held on one day, starting at 10:30 am?

Do Council consider that the one hour information sessions are worthwhile and add value? Should they be held at 9:30am preceding Council?

Other than the strategic/developmental sessions planned for January and October each year, should additional workshop sessions be held on an ad hoc basis? Alternatively they could be scheduled based on the agenda plan.

Are there any other considerations that need to be taken into account in revising the approach to Council meetings?

### **Resource implications**

**Option 1:** Should Council be held on one day, employee time attending Council would be greatly reduced. In addition, a large meeting room would now only be required for one day.

**Option 2: No change.**

## **Financial implications**

Option 1: Should Council be held on one day, the reduction on daily rates paid to Council members alone would see a saving of £22k, approximately 37% of the total Council fees budget. There would be further savings made in respect of catering (£100 per day) and travel and subsistence although this element has not yet been quantified and would be difficult to do so without a full understanding of individual circumstances.

Option 2: Currently the budgetary provisions for each Council meeting are as follows:-

Attendance: £7194

Travel and subsistence: £3000

Catering £200

Total: £10,394 per meeting.

## **Appendices**

None

## **Date of paper**

12 April 2018