Public business

Review of the Council’s performance as a governing body

Purpose
For the Council to review its performance as a governing body and agree next steps

Recommendations

The Council is asked to confirm:
(i) its review of its performance as a governing body; and
(ii) next steps.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At its meeting in February 2012, the Council made a formal commitment to review its performance annually. This commitment relates to the Council’s collective performance as the GPhC’s governing body, not to Council members’ individual performance which is reviewed separately. This review is also separate from the Council’s monitoring of the performance of the organisation, while recognising that the Council has overall accountability for the GPhC’s performance.

1.2 The Council decided to use a variety of methods to review its performance as a governing body. In 2011, the Council committed to three performance review activities, namely:

- Independent observation of a Council meeting by a board development consultant, with feedback provided to the Chair and Chief Executive orally and to all Council members in writing
• An independently-facilitated performance review workshop in October 2011 which identified a number of learning points
• Feedback forms on the business and outcomes of Council meetings, with collated feedback circulated to Council members twice a year.

1.3 At the workshop in October 2012, Council members identified a number of areas to focus on for reviewing and improving its performance, which are presented in this paper for formal consideration.

1.4 The key questions considered by Council members at the October workshop were:
• How well are we doing as a Council?
• In which areas has the Council performed well?
• In which areas could the Council have done better over the past year?
The findings are presented in section 2.

2.0 Areas of achievement and improvement

2.1 A key point made was that, as indicated above, it can be difficult to separate the Council’s performance from that of the GPhC as an organisation i.e. if the GPhC is seen to be performing well operationally then the Council is perceived to also be performing well. Council remained aware of this throughout the session.

2.2 Overall, members considered that the Council had functioned as an effective, cohesive governing body over the past year. The key areas where Council felt it had added the most value to the organisation were:
• Setting the GPhC’s strategic direction
• Developing standards for registered pharmacies and moving towards outcome-based standards
• Reviewing and updating policies inherited from the RPSGB
• Improving engagement with stakeholders (also an area for improvement with regard to registrants – see below)
• Developing a good approach to governance, avoiding involvement in operational issues
• Putting the Council’s values into practice
• Policy work has been handled with authority
• Articulating a need for better information to inform the Council’s monitoring of the organisation’s performance.

2.3 The key areas where Council identified a need for improvement were:
• Horizon scanning and awareness of likely external policy drivers
• Making more information on the Council’s work publicly available
• Giving an effective steer to the executive on priorities and on the level of
• Assessing priorities for the GPhC across Great Britain
• Reviewing education policies, particularly in relation to the pre-registration pharmacist programme
• Improving engagement with registrants.

3.0 Next steps

3.1 Council members have identified a number of ‘next steps’. These are listed below, together with notes on proposed actions to be taken.

3.2 • **Behavioural framework for Council members** – a draft framework is currently being developed and is scheduled for consideration by the Council in February 2013.
• **Next strategy review** – this is scheduled for June 2013 and will include a review of the GPhC vision and strategy.
• **Benchmarking Council performance** – consideration will be given to potential ways of benchmarking Council performance moving forward.
• **Develop performance standards for Council** – as part of the above work, a draft template will be produced to assist the Council in assessing its performance as a governing body.
• **Horizon scanning** – prior to the November Council meeting, members will consider the potential implications of the Francis inquiry report on the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust at an informal working supper, with a further follow up session on priorities and implications at a Council workshop in December.
• **External engagement** – in relation to proposals for the inspection model, initial external engagement sessions have been held. There may also be opportunities for members to attend stakeholder sessions moving forward.
• **Process issues relating to meetings e.g.**
  – **Outputs from workshops** – A note of items discussed at workshops will be included in the Chief Executive & Registrar’s report to Council in future.
  – **Debate on forward work programme** – the Council’s proposed scheduled business will be presented for discussion to Council at the November, February and June meetings.
  – **Review feedback process from meetings** – consideration will be given to introducing a revised feedback process linked to aspects of the Council behavioural framework, once this is agreed. In the
interim members will be invited to provide verbal feedback following the close of formal business at each Council meeting.

4.0 Equality and diversity implications

4.1 The GPhC is committed to assessing the Council’s and individual Council members’ learning & development needs, ensuring they receive appropriate, relevant, equality and diversity training and enabling them to put the equality scheme into practice.

5.0 Communications implications

5.1 The GPhC is committed to openness and transparency and this includes reviewing the Council’s performance as a governing body and identifying areas for improvement as they arise. This paper is published on the GPhC’s website as part of the Council papers.

6.0 Resource implications

6.1 The resource implications of the next steps identified above will need to be covered within agreed budgets.

7.0 Risk implications

7.1 The Council's review of its performance as a governing body is integral to mitigating risk relating to the oversight and strategy of the GPhC. It is therefore of significance that the Council reviews its performance regularly and takes action to identify and address areas for improvement.

Recommendations

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(i) its review of its performance as a governing body; and
(ii) next steps.

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