Review of Governance policy and Governance and Assurance Framework

Purpose
To confirm the Council’s governance policy and the governance and assurance framework.

Recommendations
The Council is asked to agree:

i. the governance policy at appendix 1; and
ii. the governance and assurance framework at appendix 2.

1.0 Background

1.1 One of the important tasks undertaken by the Council in its designate phase was to agree the governance framework for the GPhC. The Council designate agreed an overarching governance policy in March 2010. At the same time, an integrated governance & assurance framework was agreed, providing an overarching structure for the various policies and processes. The Council ratified these decisions in April 2010.

1.2 A review of the governance policy and framework is now due. This is part of the Council’s routine review of established policies; it does not form part of any broader consideration of governance issues that may arise from the Law Commission’s consultation or CHRE’s review of board size and effectiveness. The indications are that both the governance policy and the governance & assurance framework remain broadly fit for purpose, although a further review may be necessary if, for example, the role of the Council changes significantly.
1.3 **The governance policy**
The Council’s governance policy is set out below:

‘The Council is responsible for deciding on the organisation’s aims, and for making sure that they are achieved. The Council accounts for the organisation’s performance to Parliament and to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, representing the public.

The GPhC organisation is headed by an executive which manages the staff, resources, and business of the organisation.

The executive is required to assure the Council as to the organisation’s achievement of the aims set out by the Council, and as to the management of the risks facing the organisation.

This policy is implemented through the GPhC integrated governance and assurance framework.’

1.4 The policy is framed to meet the Council’s requirement for a governance policy which is compatible in principle with Policy Governance, expressed in GPhC terms. The Council’s legal accountability to the UK and Scottish Parliaments is explicit in statute, which is not the case with the Welsh Assembly but the policy reflects a political imperative to acknowledge the GPhC’s accountability to the public in Wales, through the Assembly. This would remain appropriate as regards the Scottish Parliament if the Scotland Bill is enacted and regulation of all health professions is re-reserved to Westminster.

1.5 Minor changes are proposed to the second and third points in the governance policy, so as to reflect more clearly that the Council holds the organisation to account through the CE&R. The CE&R is accountable to the Council. The directors and other staff are accountable to the CE&R, either directly or through line management. An updated draft of the governance policy is at appendix 1.

1.6 **The governance and assurance framework**
The governance and assurance framework is at appendix 2. Two components have been added to the framework since it was first agreed: the risk management guide and the anti-bribery statement. The titles of other components have been adjusted to match the policies agreed by the Council.

2.0 **Equality and diversity implications**

2.1 The Council’s equality and diversity scheme is one of the key elements of the governance and assurance framework.
3.0 Communications implications

3.1 The governance and assurance framework is published on the GPhC’s website, together with individual components of the framework such as declarations of interests and the remits of the Audit & Risk and Remuneration committees.

4.0 Resource implications

4.1 Activities which enable the framework to operate, such as Council and committee meetings, are factored into budget planning. This paper does not raise any additional resourcing issues.

5.0 Risk implications

5.1 The governance policy helps to clarify the roles of the Council and executive, reducing the risks of overlap or gaps between their respective work and responsibilities.

5.2 The governance & assurance framework indicates how each component supports the governance policy and, above all, the GPhC’s purpose. This is intended to help ensure that governance policy and procedure continues to be purposeful and that this is visible to the public, professions and other stakeholders.

Recommendations:

The Council is asked to agree:

i. the governance policy at appendix 1; and

ii. the governance and assurance framework at appendix 2.

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Draft updated Governance Policy

The Council is responsible for deciding on the organisation’s aims, and for making sure that they are achieved. The Council accounts for the organisation’s performance to Parliament and to the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly, representing the public.

The GPhC organisation is headed by the Chief Executive & Registrar (CE&R). The CE&R manages the staff, resources, and business of the organisation.

The CE&R is required to assure the Council as to the organisation’s achievement of the aims set out by the Council, and as to the management of the risks facing the organisation.

This policy is implemented through the GPhC integrated governance and assurance framework.
Performing effectively in clearly defined roles
- Role descriptions for Council Members, Chair and Chief Executive
- Scheme of delegation
- Audit and risk committee
- Remuneration committee
- Performance monitoring and evaluation

Our values and living up to them through our behaviour
- Council values
- Underpinning principles
- Equality and diversity scheme
- Register of Interests
- Register of Gifts and Hospitality
- Council Members' Code of Conduct

Our aims
- Statutory purpose
- Strategic plan
- GPhC Corporate Plan
- Directorate business plans
- Team and individual objectives

Developing the capacity of the Council to be effective
- Appointments process
- Members' induction
- Standards for ongoing education and training for Council members
- Reflective meetings practice
- Member and Chair appraisal process

Taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk
- Consultation and engagement policies
- Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions
- Risk Management Guide
- Anti-bribery statement