

**Council**  
**16 May 2024**  
**Business Plan and Budget 2024-25**

<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Purpose</b>	For decision
<b>Issue</b>	This paper provides Council with the draft Business Plan and Budget for 2024-25.
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To consider the draft Business Plan 2024-25.</li><li>2. To consider the draft Budget 2024-25.</li><li>3. To consider the Equality Impact Assessment.</li></ol>
<b>Financial and resourcing implications</b>	These are set out in the paper and specifically Annex B, the budget for financial year 2024-25.
<b>Equality and diversity implications</b>	<p>The Business Plan 2024-25 includes activities that relate to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.</p> <p>In relation to project activity outlined in the Business Plan, Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as required, with the results reported to Council.</p> <p>Finally, an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is annexed to the paper.</p>
<b>Communications implications</b>	The Business Plan and Budget are public documents and available on our website.
<b>Annex(es)</b>	<p>A: Business Plan 2024-25</p> <p>B: Budget 2024-25</p> <p>C: Equality Impact Assessment</p>
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### **Key messages from paper:**

- The draft Business Plan for 2024-25 is presented at Annex A and represents the first year of the new Strategy, through to 2030. The budget is presented at Annex B.
- In discussion with Council in February 2024, the Business Plan has been streamlined to only focus on those activities which progress the Strategy, removing activities which are considered too operational in nature for Council.
- Therefore, the 2024-25 Business Plan is significantly shorter than previous iterations and has a different feel and tone.
- Following feedback from Council in February 2024, we have added measurable actions, timelines and, at the end of the Business Plan, key metrics to demonstrate we are delivering efficient and effective regulation.
- The 2024-25 budget has been balanced with a small surplus of c.£4k forecast. In February 2024, Council noted this may be the case with expenditure proposed as being from reserves for Governance Appointments being brought back into the operational budget.
- An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the introduction of the Business Plan and Budget 2024-25 and is presented at Annex C.

### **Background**

1. The new General Osteopathic Council (GOsC) Strategy began on 1 April 2024.
2. Underpinning each year of the Strategy will be an annual business plan and budget approved by Council. At every Council meeting the Executive team will report to Council progress against the delivery of the business plan and the performance against budget.
3. This paper presents to Council the proposed business plan and budget for the first year of the new Strategy, towards 2030.
4. The paper builds on the discussions held in November 2023 when Council considered the budget strategy and in February 2024 when Council considered the draft Business Plan and Budget.
5. At the February 2024 meeting Council requested more granularity to the Business Plan, specifically around actions and timelines. The Executive have added this into the Plan as well as key GOsC metrics which demonstrate how we are delivering efficient and effective regulation.
6. In discussion around the budget, in February 2024 Council took the view that expenditure suggested as being earmarked from reserves for Governance Appointments should be reflected in the operational budget instead. This

expenditure has been brought back into the operational budget and results in a forecast surplus of c.£4k.

## Discussion

### *Strategy, towards 2030*

7. The Strategy, towards 2030, sets out a new strategic vision and three priority areas.

‘Our vision is to be an inclusive, innovative regulator trusted by all’

8. The three key priority areas of the Strategy are:

- Strengthening Trust
- Championing Inclusivity
- Embracing Innovation

### *Business Plan development*

9. The Business Plan for 2024-25 is attached at Annex A.
10. In a change to previous business plan iterations, this version has been significantly streamlined to only include those items which progress the three key priority areas, removing from the plan detail which the Executive felt was too operational and where delivery arguably better sits with the Senior Management Team. As an example, the 2023-24 Business Plan included activity such as ‘*provide training to panel members*’, and we have removed such detail from the draft 2024-25 Business Plan.
11. As such, the 2024-25 Business Plan is significantly shorter than previous iterations and has a different feel and tone.
12. Headlines from each priority area include:

#### **Strengthening Trust**

- Work collaboratively with osteopathic and wider health stakeholders to gather insight of issues affecting the sector and health system, so to develop an understanding of our role/remit in relation to those issues.
- Work with patients, educational providers and others to understand and develop good practice for the involvement of patients in osteopathic education and training.
- Work collaboratively with the sector to support the transition from graduate to newly qualified osteopath.
- Publish an invitation to tender to scope out our new public website.

## **Championing Inclusivity**

- Publish in-year Equality Impact Assessments for all policies and processes which allow GOsC to demonstrate changes made or mitigations put in place where it has identified that there is an undue impact on those with protected characteristics.
- Conduct a comprehensive review, and make amendments, of all Fitness to Practise guidance both at the initial stages and hearings stage of the Fitness to Practise process to ensure the guidance adequately address allegations that involve racist and discriminatory behaviours.
- Publish a new Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Framework 2024-30.
- Increase EDI data collection, and publish results, as part of registration renewal following implementation of the new CRM system.

## **Embracing Innovation**

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the GOsC Threshold Criteria for Unacceptable Professional Conduct taking into account developments within wider regulation and regulatory reform and feedback from Internal and External Stakeholders.
- Implement new CRM system within GOsC and ensure a smooth transition for internal and external users.
- Embed the GOsC Values within strategic decision-making culture at Council and report on where/how this has happened.
- Scope and develop a financial and asset strategy which underpins GOsC business continuity and sustainability.

## *Budget*

13. Council and the Executive recognise that the environment is one which is challenging and there are financial pressures on all types organisations across all sectors, be that inflationary pressure, volatility within cost models and, as is the case for many within the healthcare sector, pressure on workforce numbers with a lower number of new entrants to a profession and/or retaining existing registrants on the Register.
14. With that context, the Senior Management Team present to Council a budget which has a small forecast surplus for approval alongside the business plan for the first year of the new strategy.
15. Total income is expected to be c.£2.87m with expenditure forecast to be c.£2.866m resulting in a small surplus of £4k.

### *Income – Registration fees*

16. Within the income forecast is money received from registration fees. The income projection is based on the data we hold within our CRM system and our understanding of the movement of the Register, which appears to be plateauing but not yet declining. As at end March 2024, we have 5,519 registrants on the Register which does not represent a fall/decline in total registrant numbers.
17. However, we are conscious that the impact of very limited growth or a plateau in growth is that income may decline as those joining at a reduced registration fee are replacing registrants who pay a higher registration fee, meaning a potential negative financial impact for the GOsC. We will keep this under very close review in the year and have taken a cautious and prudent approach to registration fee forecasts.
18. For 2024-25, registration fee levels are not expected to change; however, Council will need to consider the financial viability of keeping fees at the same level into the future. With this in mind, the Executive will be developing a financial and asset strategy which will go through Audit Committee and Council scrutiny. The strategy will be developed this year ahead of the November 2024 Council meeting where the future budget envelope is discussed.
19. Applying this approach means that we forecast registration fee income to be £2.84m for 2024-25. This represents an increase on the November 2023 budget strategy paper but it is a lower registration fee income forecast than the current financial year 2023-24 (£2.87m). We consider this approach to be cautious and prudent within the context of our challenging environment around student numbers and retention of the existing registrant base.

### *Income – Investments*

20. The budget for 2024-25 does not propose any changes to the investment portfolio which Council has previously considered and agreed. However, the GOsC is holding excess funds in its bank account which could be put to better use, through for example, short-term low-risk bonds. Such an approach could generate around £10k in the 2024-25 year, which while not a vast income stream, still represents a contribution towards a balanced budget.

### *Expenditure*

21. Council members will note that the budget for 2024-25 is similar to previous years, however we have recognised that there needs to be a tightening of spend due to inflationary pressures all organisations are currently facing.
22. The budget takes account of:
  - Our Education Quality Assurance costs.

- The need to ensure our organisation infrastructure is maintained.
- The need to ensure sufficient funds are available for our statutory processes.
- The need to pay staff and members of the Governance structure.
- Monies set aside as designated funds from reserves.

### *Equality Impact Assessment*

23. In preparing the Business Plan and Budget for 2024-25, the Executive have also prepared an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This is attached at Annex C.

24. Key headlines from the EIA are:

- Workstreams within the Business Plan will be individually assessed for EDI implications. Council and/or its Committees will consider those implications as part of the papers presented to them.
- The Business Plan reflects the new GOsC Strategy, which has a key priority area to 'Champion Inclusivity'.
- The income budget is predominately funded by registrants who pay their annual registration fees. Registration fees are not expected to increase in 2024-25.
- There is no data which suggests that approval of the Business Plan and Budget will adversely impact on people with each/any protected characteristic.

### **Recommendations:**

1. To consider the draft Business Plan 2024-25.
2. To consider the draft Budget 2024-25.
3. To consider the Equality Impact Assessment.