

Minutes of the Board Meeting

- Date / time:** 27th March 2024, 5.00pm
- Venue:** Via Zoom
- Present:** Chair: Stewart Francis (SF),
Non-Executive Directors: Chelsia Lake (CL), Chris Palmer (CP),
(LB), Frances Dewhurst (FD), Ann Green (AG). Laura Beer (LB)
Jonathan Jelley (JJ) and Johnny Hebron (JH)
- Apologies:** Saqib Rehman (SR)

Introduction and apologies

1. SF welcomed all Directors and the staff team to the meeting. There were no members of the public present at this meeting. There was one apology.
2. SF noted that Jess Slater (JS), Healthwatch new CEO was in attendance.
3. SF drew attention to recent press coverage of the lowest satisfaction rate with the NHS ever, so never has Healthwatch and the voice of the patient been required so much.

Declarations of interest

4. There were no declarations of interest.

Appointment of CEO

5. SF welcomed JS to the meeting and thanked her for joining this meeting as well as a few others in this period before starting the role on 13th May. JS gave the board a brief resume of her career and commented that it is a privilege to have been invited to these meetings in order to meet the board and staff members.
6. JS stated that the charity she has worked with for 19 years, SERVE, is an older persons charity and they support people with disabilities. In addition, they lead on the voluntary sector infrastructure in North Northamptonshire which will be relevant for Healthwatch. She has been one of the leads to engage and actively embed the voluntary sector in the ICS at the Place level.
7. She has a passion for engaging with the community and for co-production and supporting the processes to ensure the engagement happens. She is a regular visitor to the area due to her daughter being an active footballer in the local league.
8. Sf commented that he is pleased that she will be able to take up a seat on the population health board which he has been doing up till now. He invited JS to actively join in the meeting if she wished to do so.

Minutes of the previous meeting

9. The minutes of meeting on 24th January 2024 (attached) were reviewed along with the action log items. The minutes were agreed as being accurate with an amendment to section 31 where the initials are incorrect.

Action log

10. SF reviewed the action log.
11. CTJ updated that the volunteer survey has been completed so that ideas from the results can be incorporated into the recruitment campaign. A break-down of the survey results and feedback is available. SF commented that the Board is keen to support the volunteer process as there is an opportunity here to better work with our volunteers.
12. SF reminded the meeting that for the past two years we have been talking about the importance of the decision making process being as close to the patients and those in care as possible. This has meant a tiered process across the county, one of these tiers is the neighbourhood level where we can be most influential and effective. There is a direct link here for the volunteers so in that context the volunteers are an important part of the ongoing strategy.
13. CTJ commented that there is an ongoing continuous process to recruit and retain our volunteers and to keep their interest in being involved. She acknowledged that we may not be making advantage of this opportunity and there is still work to do.
14. SF updated that the communications team will not be changing the websites at this time following further consideration.
15. SF advised that there are discussions with the ICB and Healthwatch regarding the work with PPGs as we do not want to be duplicating this area of work. CTJ commented that we have already made progress in working with the PPGs and would not wish to lose this but we also do not wish to repeat ICB work and we do keep a record of which PPGs attend our forums, this is available for the Board. JJ confirmed that he has had meetings with ICB and reiterated our willingness to be involved in the PPG work, this will be progressed. SF commented that this is not just about duplication but about intelligence which we need and can feed back to them in usual process.
16. CTJ updated that she has met with Sue Ryder and they will be attending the forums as a follow up from the Summit and she will shortly be meeting with North West Anglia and Arthur Rank to invite them to attend our forums.
17. CTJ updated that the East Cambs area is now being covered by a temporary member of engagement staff and we have already seen an uplift in feedback from those areas.
18. Other items in the action log are included in the CEO report and the GPG report.

Action: CTJ to collate the volunteer survey results and strategy for recruitment and bring to next Board meeting.

Action: CTJ to send the list of PPGs involvement in the forums to the Board.

Business Development Report

19. SF introduced the report from JMc who was unable to attend. SF explained that this report takes the form of an update and not a strategic document.
20. JJ highlighted that JMc does the role on part-time hours along with other responsibilities, he thanked her for her work as external funding is important to the organisation.
21. The target for external income has been exceeded in the year 23/24 and he drew attention to the graph showing growth of income over the past few years which is a success.
22. There has been no update regarding the funding for a project with the CUH Regional Cancer Hospital, the decision had been expected in March 24 but we have not heard yet.
23. AG asked how we decide that the target for non-statutory income is to be at least 25% of our total income for each year and if it is consistently exceeded should this target be reviewed. She commented that due to the precarious nature of the arrangement with the local authorities we need to consider expanding additional opportunities. SF pointed out that the 25% includes all the Partnership Board funding so this could leave us vulnerable, he suggested that this needs to be addressed in the strategic paper.

Action: CEO to produce a strategic paper for business development.

The Board noted the report and thanked JMc.

Chief Executive's report

24. SF introduced the CEO report (attached) which he took as read. CTJ highlighted the visit from Prof David Croisdale-Appleby. She also commented that there has been a lot of activity particularly by the engagement team who are finding that the project surveys are impacting the number of feedback forms they are able to complete because people will do just one or the other and the surveys are an easier option when at events.
25. SF thanked CTJ for the comprehensive report which provides a lot of information for them. FD commented that it is interesting that we have heard from a higher number of younger people recently rather than the older people we normally hear from. SF asked if when we see this level of detail do we need to target efforts to reach other groups.
26. Member of staff Sue Allan (SA) responded that there has been an increase in the younger feedback due to the amount of work the team are doing in schools and colleges and they are attending more family events. CL raised the point that the age span in this group is larger than others as well so that will also indicate more people being in this range. SF commented that the ranges do not reflect the overall demographics of the area either because the area has a younger demographic

than the country as a whole even though there is an ever increasing older population.

27. No further points or questions were raised in relation to the CEOs report.

The Board noted the report and thanked CTJ.

General Purposes Group (GPG) report

28. SF introduced the report which includes the draft budget for the coming year, the accounts to the end of February and the risk register.
29. AG commented that it had been good that JS was able to attend the GPG meeting earlier in the month and she thanked JMc, CTJ and JJ for standing in and covering the CEO position in the meantime.
30. The anticipated deficit is better than expected and she commented that it is difficult to gain lottery funding so this work and what has been achieved is of note and the reserves figure shows that we are in a healthy position. The money set aside for the Investors in Volunteering is important as we will be seen to be good employers of volunteers.
31. SF reminded the Board that he would be asking them to approve the budget as this is what we will be working to in 24/25. He referred to cash being generated which could be used to increase reserves or invest in our services. This is a balance sheet issue and he recommends that the Board waits until the audit is complete and there is a correct balance sheet.
32. There were no further points or questions in relation to the budget, SF thanked JJ and CR for their work on preparing this and commented that the salaries had properly been added as full staffing cost although we know that this is not the case. He commented that he thinks the Board will want JS to have some flexibility when she is looking at the operation so some caution has been written in.
33. The risk register was refreshed and updated by JJ and CR, he commented that it is a review of what the risks are, how we score them and a review of the mitigation measures. He added that although the lines that CP had requested had been added he had been unable to complete the context of them in his absence.
34. SF thanked JJ and CR for taking the first step in reviewing this ongoing register, he asked the Board how frequently they wished to review the risk register. JJ commented that it should be brought to every Board meeting as a live and dynamic document. JS added that this should also be discussed at the managers meetings. FD asked that the risk register remains for strategic risk and that project risks are not included.

Action: JJ to meet CP re the risk register to quantify the additional risks added.

Action: CEO to bring the risk register to each meeting and ensure timely updating.

The Board approved the Budget for 24/25.

The Board agreed to bring the Risk Register to every meeting.

Chair's report

35. SF introduced his report (attached) which he took as read and he added that he would be arranging the NED one to one meetings very soon, any themes and outcomes of these to be shared anonymously at the next development session in May.
36. No points or questions were raised in relation to the Chairs report.

Action: CR to arrange all one to one meetings for the Chair and NEDs

The Board noted the Chair's report.

Governance Report

37. This report has been updated by SF and CR because of changes to NED terms of office which were agreed by the Board at the last meeting in January.
38. SF advised that he has sought advice from Azets regarding the best place to record these changes which do not appear in the articles so the existing Governance document is deemed the best place.
39. The document was out of date so this has been updated to remove the mention of Guarantors as we no longer have them on the Board with agreement by our commissioners. SF drew attention to sections of change for the Board to note.
40. In principle the changes were agreed although a couple of points still mentioned Guarantors and the number of members of panels to be amended.

Action: SF to review the full document and return to the Board meeting in July.

Action: CR to ensure the website document is replaced by the new version.

The Board noted the Governance Document.

Forward Plan

41. SF introduced this document which records all future meetings for the Board through 24/25. SF proposed a change to a development session in April to move it to May 15th instead so that JS can attend.
42. SF proposed that we invite members of the ICB to give an update to the Board at the Development session.

Action: CR to update and resend to Board

The Board agreed the changes and noted the plan.

Any other business

43. SF confirmed that no questions had been submitted by the public in advance of the meeting.
44. SF advised that he has been in discussions with Philippa Brice (PB) who was a NED previously and is interested in returning. She had left in order to pursue her career with the ICB, they have since agreed that there is no conflict of interest and she will sign a form with them as well as make a declaration of interest. SF asked the Board if they are willing to re-appoint PB.

Action: CR to send NED term dates to the Board for their awareness.

Action: CR to initiate onboarding process for PB and send invites to all meetings

The Board agreed the reappointment of PB.

SF thanked everyone for attending and reminded them that the next meeting will be on 3rd July.

Meeting closed at 18:45 hrs.