

**To: Council of Governors**

**From: Norbert Lieckfeldt, Corporate Governance Manager**

**Date: 8 July 2021**

**Subject: Council of Governor Reflection and Review of Effectiveness**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This paper provides a summary of the feedback provided following the discussion in breakout rooms at the recent Council of Governors on the Council's development review.
- 1.2. The Council was split into a number of breakout rooms and asked to consider the following questions:
  - 1.2.1. What has been going well?
  - 1.2.2. What would you need to be more impactful?
- 1.3. Non-executive and Executive Directors took part in these breakout rooms.
- 1.4. The Council used online polling to seek answers to three questions (see Appendix 2).
- 1.5. The Nominations and Conduct Committee has discussed this report at its most recent meeting; the results will be taken forward in the Governors' Development Plan.

## **2. Summary**

### **2.1. What has been going well?**

- In general, Governors felt that communication during the pandemic between them and the Trust has been very effective. They have received high-quality and useful information, either through direct contact (email), or offers such as attendance at Trust Webinars, Governors Development sessions etc.
- Support from the Governors and Members Office has been appreciated and made Governors feel valued
- Feedback from Board members appears to underline that the Board values the positive challenge from Governors ('some of the richest and most pertinent questions')
- Governors feel very positively about the Trust's response to Covid-19
- They valued the fact that where possible meetings continued to be scheduled (e.g. Council, Borough/Service Director Meetings) and the support that was available to change to a virtual meeting format and the opportunities this brought. In these meetings, they also felt that NEDs had increased visibility (eg Public Board meetings)

- They felt that despite the pandemic there were still many opportunities to hear about and get involved with the Trust's activities.
- Some felt it was easier to raise issues during the pandemic while other Governors felt it was more of a struggle.

## 2.2. What would you need to be more impactful?

- Governors are struggling with the limitations imposed by the pandemic – they miss meeting (and discussing) face to face; bouncing ideas off each other, and opportunities for involvement with staff (eg through site visits)
- Striking the right balance between strategic focus and data/narrative on Trust performance. Distilling the story into a narrative is deemed essential as it allows for discussion and debate.
- How can we strengthen the role of Governors, for example when looking at strategy, policy, wider NHS issues such as new legislation or social care reform
- There's a perceived gap between the Trust's self-perception and how the SUs/carers perceive the Trust. How can Governors address this better?
- More opportunities for Governors to represent/hear from/interact with their constituencies.
- Striking a balance between the macro picture and the local situation – use BDMs/SDMs to look at local performance
- “I want to know what the Board is worrying about” – balance what is going well with where concerns are
- Increase the visibility of NEDs in Governor discussions
- Take into account Governors' personal interests (eg learning disability services), perhaps through presentations, site visits, development sessions
- Develop QI project based on Governor priorities
- Strong split in one group between view of Council as having 'oversight function' with need to review data vs focus on generally agreed topics and looking at outcomes more broadly.

3. The Council is asked to **NOTE** this report.

## Appendix1 Breakout Room Feedback

What has been going well?	What would you need to be more impactful?
Lots of useful info during pandemic inc webinars etc; quality of info has improved	Strengthen role of governors: eg influence policy making; wider discussion about future of NHS (new legislation, risk of privatisation etc) Looking ahead to wider issues, including social care.
Felt it was easier to get things raised during pandemic and can get issues addressed	Strengthen/understand link to constituency
Staff governors felt they can reflect staff views in meetings	Themes for discussion to reflect wider role
Gov and Mem Office 'most important element in governor experience' eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting new Gov's up to speed</li> <li>• Helpful and supportive</li> <li>• Quick replies</li> <li>• Making sense of complex trust business/data;/structure</li> <li>• Making governors feel valued and supported</li> <li>• Translate gov queries and pass them on for responses</li> <li>• Addressing assumptions about gov level of understanding and familiarity with Trust</li> </ul>	Gaps between policy and experience of SUs – can be difficult to bring these up for discussion, takes long time to get a response
GMO addressing Gov concerns through development sessions	Want the story/progress distilled though, not just data/statistics. Felt importance was for a narrative which allows debate and discussion.
Board members felt some of richest and most pertinent questions raised by Governors	Highlighted a need for balance between macro picture and local communities – want to know what the Board is worrying about
Response to Covid good, flexible and creative	Struggling with limitations imposed by pandemic esp for new Governors
Communication has been good, valued sharing staff Covid update	Seb: COG to have oversight function, systematic performance info, objective markers of performances JohnB: don't want reams of performance reports, focus on topics we collectively agreed through forward plan and looking at outcomes we are achieving
Adaptation to online meetings, meetings well run	Meet face to face again soon!
Examples of Governors having impact eg bank staff	Need to be in same room, bounce ideas of each other
CoG offers lots of opportunity to get involved and hear about Trust services	More focus on governors' specific interest eg learning disabilities (find out more, presentation on this area?)
Getting info and data on specific services	Develop QI project to focus on one area of improvement (brainstorm ideas as a group,

	vote on shortlist based on strategic priorities)
Continuity of meetings despite pandemic	More opportunity for involvement of Governors with staff
Keeping governors updated and informed	More in-depth info at SDMs/BDMs
Continuing meetings eg BDMs where possible	More local opportunities for Governors
Governor Development Sessions	Trust's own perception vs SU/Carer perception at odds
Visibility of NEDs in online meetings	Virtual induction of new governors difficult
	Increase NED visibility in Gov areas of concern

## Appendix 2 – Polling at Council

Question	%	Nos
In terms of information to carry out your role, do you feel you receive	Too much information: 26% The right amount of info: 68% Too little information: 6%	8 21 2 Total voting 31
Again, in terms of information do you feel you receive	the right type of information: 93% not the right type of information: 7%	26 2 Total voting 28
Are you satisfied with the Council's impact on the Trust?	Very satisfied: 21% Satisfied: 43% Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied: 29% Dissatisfied or v dissatisfied: 7%	6 12 8 2 Total voting 28