



# The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)

**Date:** Monday, 11 March 2024  
**Time:** 10.30 am  
**Venue:** Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

**Members (Quorum: 3)**

Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Byron Quayle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Jane Somper and Gary Suttle

**Chief Executive:** Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact [kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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## Agenda

Item	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES</b>	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
<b>2. MINUTES</b>	5 - 8
To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.	
<b>3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.	
If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.	

#### 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.**

Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to [Kate.Critchel@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.Critchel@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by 8.30am on Wednesday 6 March 2024

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

#### 5. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to [Kate.Critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Kate.Critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) 8.30am on Wednesday 6 March 2024

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) – Procedure Rule 13

- |            |   |         |
|------------|---|---------|
| <b>6.</b>  | <b>FORWARD PLAN</b>   | 9 - 14  |
|            | To consider the Forward Plan.   |         |
| <b>7.</b>  | <b>DORSET COUNCIL COMMISSIONING REPORT</b>  | 15 - 20 |
|            | To consider the report.   |         |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>DCOE - REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD</b>  | 21 - 26 |
|            | To consider the report.   |         |
|            | There is a confidential Appendix A associated with this report which is set out below at item 11 in the agenda.   |         |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>URGENT ITEMS</b>   |         |
|            | To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.  |         |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>EXEMPT BUSINESS</b>  |         |
|            | To consider passing the following recommendation:   |         |
|            | <b>Recommendation</b>   |         |
|            | That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in the item(s) below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public. |         |
|            | The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.  |         |
|            | (Any live streaming will end at this juncture).   |         |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board</b>  | 27 - 62 |
|            | <i>Para 3</i>   |         |
|            | Exempt Appendix associated with item 8 above “DcoE – Report of the Chair of the Board”.   |         |





## THE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE FOR THE DORSET CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (DCOE)

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2023

**Present:** Cllrs Byron Quayle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow and Jane Somper

**Apologies:** Cllrs Spencer Flower and Gary Suttle

**Also present:** Cllr Stella Jones

**Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):**

Ian Comfort (Chairman of the Independent Board – DCoE)

Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151)

Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Andy Holder (Managing Director - DCoE)

Theresa Leavy (Executive Director - People - Children)

Stuart Jones (Board Member - DCoE)

Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer)

Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning & Partnerships)

Claire Webb (Strategic Commissioner)

#### 24. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Spencer Flower and Gary Suttle.

#### 25. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September were confirmed.

#### Matters Arising

The Chairman queried if there was an update relating to the usage of the on-site Walled Garden and it was explained that the school was continuing to develop the way the garden was being used and that its key usage centred around horticultural lessons. The school was also working with pupils to understand how they would like to utilise the space to further enrich their curriculum.

#### 26. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 27. **Public Participation**

No participation requests had been received.

28. **Councillor Questions**

No councillor questions had been submitted.

29. **Forward Plan**

The forward plan was noted.

30. **Dorset Council Commissioning Report**

The Corporate Director – Commissioning and Partnerships introduced her report which gave a summary of the period's commissioning activity.

Officers responded to Members' comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- There was no longer a need for the Council's officers to maintain a presence on-site following a significant improvement programme at the school.
- The school was on target to reach 72 pupils by the end of the term and the council was working with the families of pupils with additional needs and their schools to establish if Coombe House School would be an appropriate placement for them.
- Cllr Jones would be informed of the costs for placements outside of the meeting due to the commercial sensitivity of the figures.

The Chairman was pleased to note the improvements made at the school and the good reputation that it had acquired over a relatively short period, particularly within the local community. He added his thanks to the Corporate Director for the work that she'd done assisting the school with its improvement programme and wished her well in her new job role.

**NOTED**

31. **DCoE - Report of Chair of the Board of Directors**

The Chairman of the Board of Directors introduced the report which set out the progress made by the company since the previous meeting.

The Chairman thanked Mr Comfort and the team for their report and welcomed the Chair of the Board's comment relating to the inclusion of comments from students and their parents at the next committee meeting. He added that he regularly received positive feedback on the work done by the school in terms of outcomes and experiences of pupils, but also in relation to the provision of the swimming pool and the positive effect that it was having on the community.

For the sake of transparency, Cllr J Somper declared that her husband was a user of the on-site swimming pool.

Board Members in attendance and Officers responded to Members' comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- Staff turnover had reduced over the past 12 months and the school was focussed on securing the best people for the school and ensuring that they remain there, feeling part of something special. Looking after the wellbeing of employees was a strong focus. The school had also recently undertaken a very successful recruitment drive, during which it appointed 13 members of staff, all of which were performing well.
- The school was continuing to review its recruitment strategy to ensure that it was seen to be an attractive employer. Significant growth was expected with the school over the next few years, particularly in September 2024, and so a timeline was being strategized.
- The school was looking at developing a strategy to attract staff from outside the local area, if required including relocation packages if required and how it could market to and attract applicants from further afield than Dorset as the school grew and popularity. Training was a huge priority, particularly in terms of induction of new staff – the recent cohort of new starters had given good feedback on the quality of the induction programme that they had received. Further to this, the school had a comprehensive training plan to ensure that all staff had the ability to progress their development.
- The company was not ready to discuss the timeline in relation to the proposed residential care home provision at this point, as there were still a number of matters to address, but there was a strong desire to ensure that such provision could be offered and it was hoped that update could be given at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman commended the work that had been undertaken by the company in terms of the progress made and its future ambitions, before highlighting his continued support.

## **DECISION**

1. That the report be noted
2. That the company be allowed to file abridged reports to companies house, as per the request in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report

### **32. Report to Full Council on performance of the trading activities of the company**

The Chairman of the Board of Directors introduced the report which set out the performance of the trading activities of the company, that was due to be submitted to Council.

Members were pleased to note the inclusion of feedback quotes from parents and students within the performance report and explained that it gave a user's perspective as to the success of the company, which therefore added an additional layer of information that wasn't always included in such reports.

The Monitoring Officer advised that this report would now be submitted to Cabinet instead of the Council, following a change to the constitution, which he had reported to the Audit and Governance Committee since the publication of the agenda.

**NOTED**

**33. Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

**34. Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.01 - 10.50 am

**Chairman**

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## The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) Forward Plan For the period 1 MARCH 2024 to 30 JUNE 2024

### Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

### Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

### Committee Membership 2023/24

<b>Spencer Flower</b>	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications
<b>Gary Suttle</b>	Deputy Leader / Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
<b>Jane Somper</b>	Adult Social Care, Health and Housing
<b>Laura Beddow</b>	Culture and Communities
<b>Byron Quayle</b>	Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<b>Standing items for consideration</b>				
<b>March</b>				
<b>Dorset Council Delegated Decisions</b>  <b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>11 Mar 2024</b>	Councillor Byron Quayle	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>Dorset Council Commissioning Report</b>  <b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>11 Mar 2024</b>	Councillor Byron Quayle	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board</b>  <b>Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>11 Mar 2024</b>	Councillor Byron Quayle	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>June</b>				

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<b>Review of Terms of Reference</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Open	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>10 Jun 2024</b>	Leader of the Council	<i>Chris Harrod, Senior Democratic Services Officer  chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk  Director of Legal and Democratic Services - Monitoring Officer  (Jonathan Mair)</i>
<b>Dorset Council Delegated Decisions</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Part exempt	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>10 Jun 2024</b>	Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help	<i>Executive Director, People - Children  (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>Dorset Council Commissioning Report</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Part exempt	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>10 Jun 2024</b>	Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help	<i>Executive Director, People - Children  (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board</b>  <b>Key Decision</b> - No <b>Public Access</b> - Part exempt	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</b>	<b>Decision Date</b> <b>10 Jun 2024</b>	Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help	<i>Executive Director, People - Children  (Theresa Leavy)</i>
<b>Annual Reports</b>				
<b>Annual Performance Report to Council</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b> <b>The Shareholder</b>	<b>Decision Date</b>	Portfolio Holder for People - Children,	<i>Executive Director, People - Children</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Key Decision - No Public Access - Open	Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)		Education, Skills and Early Help	<i>(Theresa Leavy)</i>

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### **Private/Exempt Items for Decision**

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
  - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

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## The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence

11 March 2024

## Dorset Council Commissioner's Report

### For Decision

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

**Local Councillor(s):** Cllr

**Executive Director:** T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

**Report Author:** Elizabeth Saunders  
**Job Title:** Corporate Director for Commissioning and  
Partnerships (Interim)

**Tel:** 01305 224676

**Email:** [Elizabeth.Saunders@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Elizabeth.Saunders@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

**Report Status:** Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

### Brief Summary:

This report provides an overview of the current position in relation to the enhanced cooperation between Dorset Council and the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) and the progress made in the recovery plan (now amalgamated into the School Development Plan) previously described in earlier meetings.

### Recommendation:

Shareholders are asked to note the progress made and support the continued cooperation between the Council and the Dorset Centre of Excellence.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

Progress continues to be sustained enabling the company to focus on delivering the business plan and preparing for further growth.

**1. Report**

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current position in relation to the enhanced cooperation between Dorset Council and the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) and an update on Dorset Council activity required to realise the delivery of the Dorset Centre of Excellence Business Plan.
- 1.2 Regular contract review meetings continue focused on the performance of the school, with continued engagement between the Managing Director of DCOE and the Strategic Commissioner for SEND. Regular operational meetings are in place to support conversations about individual children and to plan admissions. Contract management focuses on assessing progress on the School Development Plan, operation of the school, stability through growth and progress since the Ofsted Inspection.
- 1.3 Commissioners can report that the Executive Leadership team of the Dorset Centre of Excellence and the Board of Directors are continuing to make good progress in the following areas:
  - **Recruitment and retention:** Recruitment activity continues to be a high priority for the school, with continued activity on recruitment to support the planned growth in pupil numbers for the remainder of this academic year and next year.
  - **Ofsted and key performance indicators:** There are no issues arising; performance reports continue to be received and are reviewed alongside post Ofsted improvements, through contract management. Commissioners are assured of the steps taken to support attendance including the EBSA project for those pupils with emotional based school avoidance and the multi agency work being undertaken.
  - **Pupil growth:** Progress continues to identify additional pupils, working towards a trajectory of 84 by the end of this Spring Term, with a focus on ensuring that transfer arrangements deliver a strong start. This continues to be overseen through the weekly tracking system.



- **The learning offer:** Enrichment and broadening of the learning offer continues.
- 1.4 In addition, the Company is taking steps to appoint a suitable independent financial auditor to oversee the 2023/24 accounts.
- 1.5 As reported in the previous commissioner's reports, the enhanced co-operation agreement remains in place. However, the executive leadership team and the Board of Directors continue to be in a place where the support from Dorset Council officers continues to reduce and is now focussed largely on assurance (including enhanced contract management) and managing growth.
- 1.6 The position will be assessed again in the Summer term, and if the following are in place it is proposed that the enhanced co-operation agreement is ceased, with joint working on admissions continuing:
- a) Assurance that teacher recruitment and plans for the new academic year will enable to company to successfully manage the next growth in pupil numbers
  - b) Evidence that improvements made following the Ofsted have been embedded
- 1.7 A summary of the position against each is provided below (this remains unchanged from the last report):
- Monthly contract reviews are in place
  - Regular operational meetings continue
  - Admissions process – joint working continues to identify new pupils to attend this term and beyond will continue for the foreseeable future until the school is a maximum capacity
  - On-site presence of DC officers – this continues to be at the expected levels with no requirement for on-site presence identified
  - Commissioner attendance at the board continues
  - Joint approach to complaints and communications – DCOE are fully leading this, with no input from Dorset Council required
  - Recruitment activity – continues to be successfully led by DCOE
  - Support Offer – all DC support offered continues to be accepted and action taken as a result. This continues to be focused on planning for growth including ensuring the delivery of appropriate classroom space.

## 2. **Support required to deliver the Company Business Case**

- 2.1 The Dorset Centre of Excellence Commissioning Group, chaired by the Chief Executive of Dorset Council continues to meet to oversee the next phases of growth required to deliver the business plan. Attendance includes officers from Finance, Assets and Regeneration and Children's Services.
- 2.2 As described in the previous commissioner's report, increasing the number of additional classrooms available to the school and suitable for the delivery of a high quality Special Educational Needs curriculum is essential by September 2024 to support the delivery of the Business Plan. Contractors have been appointed and progress is being managed by Assets and Regeneration, Dorset Council.
- 2.3 Assets & Property have now agreed the overall site rental costs associated with progressive handover of the buildings in use by DCOE. These will now be incorporated into the re-worked lease by Legal. The aim is to ensure the commercial content of the lease is consistent with DCOE business plan.

## 3. **Financial Implications**

Fee price continues to be maintained at the previously agreed rates.

Work continues to develop the site to meet the growth trajectory required in the business plan. Funding for phase one and two of this work is contained within the Capital Budget which was approved by Cabinet in March 2023.

## 4. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

None identified at this stage – further work will be required as the programme develops.

## 5. **Well-being and Health Implications**

The health, safety and wellbeing of children and employees is of paramount importance so close collaboration between Dorset Council and the Dorset Centre of Excellence will continue.

6. **Other Implications**

None identified

7. **Risk Assessment**

7.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Not required for this report

9. **Appendices**

None

10. **Background Papers**

None

11. **Report Sign Off**

11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

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## **Dorset Centre of Excellence Shareholder Committee**

**11 March 2024**

### **Report from Chair of Board**

#### **For Decision**

Report Author: Ian Comfort

Title: Director and Chair, Dorset Centre of Excellence Ltd

**Report Status:** Public

#### **Brief Summary:**

This report provides an update on the current situation at the Dorset Centre of Excellence (“the Company”) and the Coombe House School (“the School”). It considers progress made in relation to governance, leadership, staffing, estate, community use and finance.

The Shareholder is asked to note the content of this report and to continue its support for the Company.

The Shareholder is also asked to agree to the 2024 business plan as set out in paragraph 7 of the report.

#### **Reason for Recommendation:**

The Board, in collaboration with colleagues from Dorset Council, continues to make progress towards its objectives. The Board is mindful that the ongoing support of Dorset Council to deliver the next phases of growth required to deliver the business plan through enhanced cooperation with the Council is ensuring the viability of the Company.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Company continues to perform well against its business plan, growing the pupil roll of Coombe House School, improving its quality and developing its wider commercial and community offer.

## 2. **Coombe House School**

- 2.1 Coombe House School continues to grow in line with the approved business plan. The biggest single point in time increase in pupil roll is due to be in September 2024 and identification of pupils, and planning for their transition and enrolment is going well.
- 2.2 Leadership and quality continue to be stable and engagement from pupils is typically very strong. Occasional dysregulated behaviours, which are to be expected given the context of the School, is well-managed and does not unreasonably detract from the overall experience of the wider cohort of pupils.
- 2.3 Internal quality assurance processes continue to be developed with the annual cycle being continually developed to monitor quality matters weekly.
- 2.4 External quality assurance and governance is also strong. School Quality Committee meetings are increasingly occurring in-person and on-site and are impactful. Independent external perspectives are also being sought, for example, via the commissioning of a leading sector expert for safeguarding.
- 2.5 Work to review the 'core' policies on curriculum and behaviour are being reviewed to ensure that they are optimal and best reflect our current and future aspirations.
- 2.6 The School Council has been developed significantly since the last Shareholder Committee meeting, allowing pupil voice to be more effectively captured and acted upon.
- 2.7 Examples of feedback from parents and carers have included:

"She is enjoying it and settled in so well. Her teacher has phoned to say how brilliant she has been, joining in, working, asking great questions and just generally getting stuck right in with everything. She is engaged and learning and her teacher said she has been a pleasure. She's really happy, although rather tired! And so far the journey has been ok for her and she's managing well. Also so far I've been so impressed with Coombe House School, really happy with it and X loves it. It's a very caring and nurturing environment and I've been really impressed." November 2023

"X was very reassuring and able to answer our questions. We could see some of the children in class and were very pleased to learn more about the curriculum, the current use of the premises (the way that the more sensitive children are housed in a separate area) and the extra facilities and the specialist team in the future." January 2024

“Since starting at CHS we have seen huge reductions in anxiety. This has impacted at home – he sleeps now! Previously he couldn’t sleep and then was unable to attend school the next day.” January 2024

### **3. Commercial and Community Activities**

- 3.1 The commercial and community activities at the swimming pool continue to develop well. Community swimming, the partnership with a high-quality swim school and use by a local mainstream school are all running smoothly and receiving regular positive feedback.
- 3.2 Preparation for the opening of the residential social care provision continues and has the full attention of the Commercial and Community Committee. The Council is currently carefully identifying the commissioning priorities and arrangements that will ensure the Company will best meets their needs.
- 3.3 The Company is seeking advice regarding business rate liabilities before further progressing its non-School commercial activities to ensure that they are optimally planned. The Company is grateful to the Council for their support and advice with this matter.

### **4. Business Plan Implementation**

- 4.1 The Company is grateful to Council colleagues who have assisted in progressing the amendment to the Commissioning Agreement. The Company understands that this is now agreed in principle and is awaiting written confirmation of this after final legal checks have taken place.
- 4.2 The amendments to the Lease Agreement that were outlined within the June 2023 business plan have also progressed and further work is planned to ensure they reach a similar point of readiness.
- 4.3 The Company continues to operate strongly and as it reaches the end of its financial year, it is likely to close ahead of both budget and mid-year reforecast.

### **5. HR**

- 5.1 The Company is continuing to have success in recruiting qualified and experienced staff to allow them to meet their growth and quality aspirations.
- 5.2 Staff engagement surveys consistently provide more positive feedback than the national average comparator for ‘other schools.’ Where there are areas for improvement identified, they are worked upon promptly.
- 5.3 Recruitment plans for the coming months, particularly those which will support the September 2024 growth phase have begun strongly.

## 6. **Capital Investment**

- 6.1 The Company has had regular opportunities to contribute towards the planning processes that are in place to arrange the development of the campus.

## 7. **Business Plan**

- 7.1 The Company is submitting its annual business plan for consideration by the Shareholder.
- 7.2 Due to the relatively short amount of time that has passed since the approval of the June 2023 business plan, changes are relatively minor in terms of impact.
- 7.3 The Company is seeking approval for this plan, in line with the terms of the Shareholder Agreement.

## 8. **Financial Implications**

- 8.1 The Company is performing ahead of its budget and business plan and has enhanced financial security following the arrangement of a loan facility with the Council.
- 8.2 After an extensive selection process, the Company has appointed a financial auditor to review the 2023/24 accounts, in line with the requirements of the Shareholder Agreement.

## 9. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

- 9.1 There are no natural environment, climate and ecology implications associated with this report, although the Company is supportive of all efforts to consider environmental impact as it assists the Council in its development of the campus.

## 10. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 10.1 The Board has a duty to ensure the health, safety and well-being of its staff and the children attending the School. It has been mindful of this when considering the transition of children into the School; how it builds numbers; and how it provides community use of facilities.

## 11. **Other Implications**

- 11.1 No other implications have been identified.



12. **Risk Assessment**

12.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low.

13. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

13.1 The Board has not conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment for this report.

14. **Appendices**

14.1 Business Plan

15. **Background Papers**

15.1 There are no background papers to be included with this report.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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