



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

**Date:** Monday, 18 September 2023  
**Time:** 10.00 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 [chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:chris.harrod@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 [chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by 8.30am on

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  
[chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) 8.30am on

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

- |            |  |         |
|------------|--|---------|
| <b>6.</b>  | <b>FORWARD PLAN</b>  | 9 - 12  |
|            | To consider the Forward Plan.  |         |
| <b>7.</b>  | <b>DORSET COUNCIL COMMISSIONING REPORT</b>   | 13 - 18 |
|            | To consider the report.  |         |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>   | 19 - 24 |
|            | To consider the report.  |         |
| <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 move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following items in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within meaning of paragraph x of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)              |         |
|            | The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.   |         |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Remuneration Policy</b><br><i>Para 3</i>  | 25 - 54 |
|            | To consider the report.  |         |

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

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 5 JUNE 2023

**Present:** Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Laura Beddow, Byron Quayle, Jane Somper and Gary Suttle

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

Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Diane Grannell (Chair of Finance - DCoE), Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Andrew Holder (Managing Director - DCoE), Stuart Jones (Chair of Commercial & Community Sub-Committee - DCoE), Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive) and Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships)

**Officers present (remotely)**

James Boxer (Programme Director – Children’s Social Care Review)

**1. Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

The Chairman advised that in his capacity of Leader of the Council, he had appointed Cllr Byron Quayle to be Vice-Chairman of the Shareholder Committee.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**4. Public Participation**

No public participation requests had been received.

**5. Councillor Questions**

No councillor questions had been received.

6. **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference were noted.

7. **Dorset Council Commissioning Report**

The Corporate Director for Commissioning, Quality and Partnerships introduced the report which set out an updated position for the school since the previous update in March.

In the absence of any questions from Committee Members for the Corporate Director, the Chairman thanked her for the report and commended all involved for the work that had been undertaken by commissioners and the school.

**Noted**

8. **DCOE - Report of Independent Chair of Board of Directors**

The Chairman of the Board for Dorset Centre of Excellence introduced the report, which set out the operational progress made and the successes of the school since the previous update in March 2023.

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

- There was huge promise for the leisure offering and many approaches were now being made to the school, particularly from two of the local swimming schools, both of whom were looking to commence using the swimming pool on-site from June onwards.
- The open day recruitment event that had recently been held was focussed towards recruiting a range of staff members across the board, which had proved to be very successful and had resulted in several teaching assistants, as well as teachers, being recruited. As this event had been successful, it would be repeated together with looking at additional marketing opportunities for recruitment.

The Chairman thanked the DCoE team for their comprehensive report which drew out the issues and set out the progress that had been made.

**Noted**

9. **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was noted.

10. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items

## 11. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr B Quayle and seconded by Cllr L Beddow:

### **Decision**

That the press and the public be excluded for the following 2 items in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

## 12. **Business Plan**

The Managing Director for Dorset Centre of Excellence introduced a report which set out the need to adopt the Business Plan that was appended. A brief slideshow was displayed to highlight the key themes to be included within the plan, which were as follows:

- Vision
- A Strong Investment
- Security from Uncertainty
- Recovery and Growth
- Prudence vs. Ambition
- Strength and Depth
- Core/Additional

The plan was designed to be quality-led and robust to ensure that Coombe House School was both stable and successful in terms of its offering to its pupils and assisting the Council in delivering its objectives.

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

- Flexibility was a key part of the business plan as it would allow the school to grow and develop to meet its pupils needs, together with those commissioning needs of the Council as and when they evolved.
- The Board had been balanced in setting its required leadership structure within the school, which was designed to be efficient and fit for purpose.
- The Board remained committed to developing a training centre for teaching staff as the business grew.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Shareholder Committee approves the proposed business plan and continues its support for the Company, particularly with regard to the priority of provision of pupil places for September 2024, and further approval is subject to further reassurance as set out below:

The business plan is based on a number of assumptions for other areas of delivery beyond the September 2024 pupil places, which as the plan states are finely balanced and need careful monitoring and mitigation. The business plan states that the Company intends to test and explore these in further

detail to firm up the assumptions over time. The Shareholder Panel looks forward to receiving further the outcomes of this work, for its approval, including the master planning, survey information, cost and market information that is planned.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 10.41 am

**Chairman**

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## **Cabinet Forward Plan - November 2023 - February 2024 For the period 1 OCTOBER 2023 to 29 FEBRUARY 2024 (publication date - TBC)**

### **Explanatory Note:**

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. 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 of the Cabinet 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.

### **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

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
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- (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.

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
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**Standing items for consideration**

**November**

<p><b>Dorset Council Delegated Decisions</b></p> <p>Key Decision - <b>Yes</b> Public Access - <b>Open</b></p>	<p>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</p>	<p>20 Nov 2023</p>	<p><u>Consultees:</u></p> <p><u>Means of Consultation:</u></p>		<p>Lead member - Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p> <p><i>Lead officer - Claire Shiels, Corporate Director - Commissioning &amp; Partnerships claire.shiels@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i></p>
<p><b>Dorset Council Commissioning Report</b></p> <p>Key Decision - <b>Yes</b> Public Access - <b>Part exempt</b></p>	<p>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</p>	<p>20 Nov 2023</p>	<p><u>Consultees:</u></p> <p><u>Means of Consultation:</u></p>		<p>Lead member - Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p> <p><i>Lead officer - Claire Shiels, Corporate Director - Commissioning &amp; Partnerships claire.shiels@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i></p>
<p><b>DCoE - Report of Chair of the Board of Directors</b></p> <p>Key Decision - <b>Yes</b> Public Access - <b>Part exempt</b></p>	<p>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</p>	<p>20 Nov 2023</p>	<p><u>Consultees:</u></p> <p><u>Means of Consultation:</u></p>		<p>Lead member - Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p> <p><i>Lead officer -</i></p>

Page 1

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Decision Due Date	Consultation	Background documents	Member / Officer Contact
<p><b>Performance of the Trading Activities of the Company</b></p> <p>Key Decision - <b>Yes</b> Public Access - <b>Part exempt</b></p>	<p>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)</p>	<p>20 Nov 2023</p>	<p><u>Consultees:</u></p> <p><u>Means of Consultation:</u></p>		<p>Lead member - Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p> <p><i>Lead officer -</i></p>
<p><b>Annual Reports</b></p>					

## **The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence**

**18 September 2023**

## **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:** Claire Shiels

**Job Title:** Corporate Director Commissioning and Partnerships

**Tel:** 01305224682

**Email:** c.shiels@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

### **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 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 welcoming more children to the school and delivering the business plan.

## 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 priority action plan, stability and operation of the school and learning from 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:
  - **Governance:** Regular Board meetings and sub-committees are in place, meeting regularly and providing assurance, support and challenge to the executive leadership team. Dorset Council Commissioners attend in an advisory capacity.
  - **Recruitment and retention:** Recruitment activity continues to be a high priority for the school, with all teaching and teaching assistant vacancies for September filled and plans underway for further recruitment to support the planned growth in pupil numbers for January 2024.
  - **Ofsted and key performance indicators:** The school was inspected by Ofsted in the Summer Term, areas of strength and areas for development, particularly related to the development of curriculum. Commissioners have been in discussion with DCOE regarding how the enhanced co-operation agreement can be used to provide any support required. A fuller update will be provided to the Shareholder Committee, alongside analysis of delivery against key performance indicators in 2022/23 academic year.

- **Pupil growth:** The school reached the expected target of 56 pupils agreed at the end of term and identification of additional pupils is now underway for a trajectory of 72 by the end of this Autumn Term.
- **Pupil experience:** Capturing pupil voice is a priority for the coming year and commissioners look forward to receiving information about this in ongoing reporting.
- **Enrichment and broadening of the learning offer:** The school is proactively planning to enhance its preparation for adulthood (PfA) offer, proposals include making use of the walled garden. The schools end of term newsletter demonstrates how the site is being well used to benefit the learning and broader experiences of pupils.
- **Community engagement:** Arrangements for use of the swimming pool by local community groups and schools are progressing well. The Dorset Centre of Excellence hosted a Holiday Activity and Food Programme over 2 weeks during the summer holidays culminating in a Family Fun Day open to the wider community. This was well attended with almost 500 families having booked to attend. We were able to take advantage of the grounds and facilities utilising the tennis courts, grass area and swimming pool. We offered a variety of sporting, music and arts activities, a walkabout performer, and activities with outdoor education. Hot food was provided for our families eligible for free school meals. Members of the Board of Directors and representative from the Dorset Parent Carer Forum were on hand to chat to families who have children with a special educational need or a disability. Feedback included:

*“I have a 10-year-old with ADHD and a 2 ½ year old on the pathway for autism assessment and they both loved the whole day thank you so much for all your hard work for all the children.”*

*“I thought this was amazing, it’s the first time my children have been able to have a bit more freedom to explore, it was safe and secure!”*

*“All the time and effort involved to give families a free day out is very much appreciated. We loved being able to use the pool. It was*

*our first time in this pool. Are there plans for local families to be able to use this lovely facility again in the future please?"*

1.4 As in the last commissioners report, 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 has significantly reduced. A summary of the position against each is provided below:

- Fortnightly contract reviews have been replaced by monthly reviews recognising the progress made. Updates to the block contracting arrangements have been agreed and a variation to the service specification is being made to reflect this.
- Regular operational meetings continue but are not required to be on a weekly basis
- 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
- 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 is primarily focused now 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 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 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 2024 and the DCOE Commissioning Group is overseeing these plans. An external company has been procured to work alongside the Managing Director of the school and the council to explore options and to procure the capital works required. This includes bringing into use existing buildings on the site that have been vacant.



- 2.3 Lease arrangements for the site are being reviewed to ensure that they fully reflect the use of the site and associated activities and clarifying roles and responsibilities and the block contract agreement is being updated to reflect updated pupil number projections.

3. **Financial Implications**

Following the agreement of the Business Plan at the previous shareholder committee, commissioners have worked with the company to agree new block numbers for the academic year 23/24 supporting a continued increase in pupil numbers over the year. Fee price has been maintained at the previously agreed rates.

As described above, work has begun to further develop the site to meet the growth trajectory required in the business plan. Faithful and Gould, have been commissioned to work on this and have undertaken benchmarking, using the National Schools Delivery Cost Benchmark database to assess value for money of the proposed scheme. The projected per pupil place costs indicate that the scheme, when adjusted for location and inflation sit under the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile and at the low end of the end of the range of costs per pupil at around £42,111 per pupil compared to a benchmark average of £86,000 per pupil. This will be reviewed as the capital works continue.

The funding for 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

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

**18 September 2023**

### **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.

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

The Board, with the support of colleagues from Dorset Council, continues to make progress towards its objectives. The Board is mindful that the ongoing support through enhanced cooperation with the Council is ensuring the viability of the Company.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Shareholder is aware of the background to the opening of the School in May 2022 and of the improvement trajectory since.

## **2. Coombe House School**

- 2.1 Coombe House School (the “School”) continues to make strong progress in all areas.
- 2.2 From 20-23 June 2023, Ofsted visited to undertake a three-day unannounced joint inspection, combining the first standard inspection with a monitoring inspection.
- 2.3 Inspectors were complimentary about the progress that had been made since their last visit and gave positive verbal feedback to the leadership and governance teams. Inspection activities included consultation with colleagues from the Council.
- 2.4 There was significant scrutiny of the progress that had been made to ensure that the Independent School Standards that had been found to be unmet during their visit October 2022 were now met.
- 2.5 A detailed account of the verbal feedback provided by inspectors has been shared with the Council and the report shall be published imminently. It is hoped that by the time of the Shareholder Committee, the report will be finalised and therefore can be discussed. Inspectors advised caution about sharing the inspection outcome publicly prior to it being published.
- 2.6 Growth has been a priority, and the school has met its targets for both pupil and staff numbers that it set out for the new academic year in its recent business plan.
- 2.7 As part of the recent growth, the School has started to use additional buildings that were completed within the initial phases of development, which had been left unused until this time.
- 2.8 School leadership continues to be a strength. Since the last committee meeting, a new Deputy Head, who was appointed in December 2022 has taken up their post.
- 2.9 Governance and oversight of the School continues to develop, with new processes in place for the new academic year.

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

- 3.1 Since the approval of the new business plan in June 2023, the Company has made significant progress with the development of its ‘non-School’ commercial and community activities.

- 3.2 During the summer holidays, its campus hosted two weeks of short break day provision for local children, including those with additional needs and those who were eligible for funding from the Holiday activities and Food programme (HAF) 2023.
- 3.3 The Company was also pleased to offer its campus for the Council's 'Family Fun Day', which was very well attended. Meals were provided to those who were eligible for free school meals and a range of activities were provided. The Company was able to open its swimming pool to the families who attended, which was greatly enjoyed. Two members of the DCOE Board were in attendance to engage with families and young people about the work of the Company and its future intentions.
- 3.4 The efforts to offer the leisure facilities for local community use have moved on considerably.
- 3.4.1 Through partnership with Shaftesbury Town Council and the Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming, regular community swimming sessions are now bookable to those who have joined our membership scheme. A new membership and booking portal has been developed by the Company to ensure this is efficiently managed.
  - 3.4.2 Arrangements with a high-quality, local swimming lesson provider, who will rent our pool facilities at commercial rates, are nearly finalised. This arrangement will offer a range of benefits to local children and other community groups.
  - 3.4.3 During the new academic year, a local primary school has also agreed to rent our pool facilities to help them deliver swimming lessons to their pupils.
  - 3.4.4 Plans are developing to further extend our efforts to ensure that the all-weather pitch and sports hall are also fully utilised.
- 3.5 The Company has begun the development of its conferencing and training offer. Since the last committee meeting, it has hosted a conference for Dorset Council's Educational Psychologist's and a group of local Youth Workers. In the future, we have bookings to host a 'Children's Services Strategy Day' and are hosting a 'Mental Health First Aid' course. These activities are bringing in nominal commercial benefits so far, but it is anticipated that this will change as this arm of our work grows.

- 3.6 The Company has made progress with its plans to register the proposed residential social care settings. The Managing Director has engaged with Ofsted to get preliminary feedback about the proposed operating model, with feedback being encouraging. In addition, there have been reciprocal visits with the Council's social care teams to ensure our respective provisions work in a helpful, symbiotic way.
- 3.7 The Company is grateful for the Council's commitment to fund a master planning exercise to fully explore the opportunities that exist. This exercise has not yet begun but the Company is liaising with the Council about the most effective way to do this.
4. **Business Plan Implementation**
- 4.1 Following the approval of the business plan in June 2023, the Council has undertaken to provide a loan facility to the Company to allow it to implement the plan. At present, the Company has not drawn any funds down from this facility but has gained significant security from the arrangement being in place.
- 4.2 Also implicit within the business plan was a need to review the commissioning agreement and lease agreement that are in place between the Council and Company. Work has begun to progress both, but neither are yet complete. The Council and Company will continue to work together to finalise these important documents as a priority in the coming weeks.
- 4.3 The Company has welcomed the opportunity to work with the Council to plan the development of further classrooms for the School. There has been significant activity. The Council has made a firm commitment to this investment and for the new accommodation to be ready for use for an intake in September 2024. All understand that this milestone is pivotal to the School's growth intentions.
- 4.4 The Company can report that it is performing ahead of its scheduled position stated within its business plan. Pupil enrolment targets have been met and the additional commercial activity, which was not forecast to have had a positive commercial impact in this financial year has been progressed. The Company is ahead of the financial projections stated within its plan.

## 5. **HR Update**

- 5.1 The Company has made strides with its recruitment and retention efforts and is fully staffed for the beginning of the new academic year. 13 new recruits joined the team at the beginning of September 2023 and are engaging in high quality induction programmes.
- 5.2 Work has already begun to ensure the recruitment that is required for our January 2024 pupil intake happens as successfully.
- 5.3 The Company continues to focus upon its People Strategy, where becoming a local employer of choice through an offer of competitive remuneration and benefits, innovative working patterns and a focus on wellbeing is the intended outcome.

## 6. **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 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.

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

- 7.1 There are no climate implications associated with this report.

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

- 8.1 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.

## 9. **Other Implications**

- 9.1 No other implications have been identified.

## 10. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low.

11. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

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

12. **Appendices**

12.1 There are no appendices to this report

13. **Background Papers**

13.1 There are no background papers included with this report.



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

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
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