



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

Date: Monday, 10 June 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair), Ryan Hope, Clare Sutton and Gill Taylor

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

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

For easy access to all the council's committee agendas and minutes download the free public app called Modern.Gov for use on any iPad, Android, and Windows tablet. Once downloaded select Dorset Council.

Agenda

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES	
To receive any apologies for absence.	
2. MINUTES	5 - 8
To note the minutes of the previous meeting.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
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 by 8.30am on Wednesday 5 June 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 chris.harrod@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 8.30am on Wednesday 5 June 2024

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

- | | | |
|------------|--|---------|
| 6. | TERMS OF REFERENCE | 9 - 12 |
| | To note the terms of reference. | |
| 7. | DORSET COUNCIL COMMISSIONING REPORT | 13 - 18 |
| | To consider the report. | |
| 8. | DCOE - REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 19 - 24 |
| | To consider the report. | |
| 9. | FORWARD PLAN | 25 - 28 |
| | To consider the Forward Plan. | |
| 10. | URGENT ITEMS | |
| | 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. | |
| 11. | EXEMPT BUSINESS | |
| | 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. | |

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank



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

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024

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

Apologies: None

Also present: Cllr Stella Jones

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

Ian Comfort (Chair of the Dorset Centre of Excellence Board), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Andrew Holder (Managing Director), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive) and Claire Webb (Strategic Commissioner)

35. Minutes

Following a proposed action from the last meeting, the Chairman advised that the Remunerations Policy did not require committee approval. With that being noted, the minutes of 20 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

37. Public Participation

There were no public questions.

38. Councillor Questions

There were no councillor questions.

39. Forward Plan

The forward plan was received and noted.

40. Dorset Council Commissioning Report

The Corporate Director - Commissioning and Partnerships presented the report and gave a summary of the commissioning activity during the last

period. This included the progress made in recruitment and retention, Ofsted and key performance indicators, and pupil growth which was on track.

The Chairman welcomed the steady progress that was currently being made in line with the centre's Business Plan.

The progress made to date was received and noted.

41. **DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board**

The Chairman of the Board of Directors presented the report which provided an update on the current situation at the Dorset Centre of Excellence ("the Company") and the Coombe House School ("The School").

The Managing Director of the Company confirmed that the school continued to work well. Growth targets were on track and the school was approaching its biggest challenge in terms of numbers of staff and pupils in September. The Leadership structure was continuing to develop to ensure that all needs were met and that the school would be ready for the September increase in pupil number.

He continued that the school council was now well established, allowing pupil voice to be more effectively captured and acted upon. Some of this feedback was also set out in the report for members information.

In terms of commercial activity, the community swimming was going from strength to strength with further sessions added. Plans were underway for residential facilities, and this was set out in the exempt appendix "Business Plan".

The Chair of Finance, Audit and Risk Committee reported on the progress of the Business Plan including developing greater clarity over certain elements between cost and income base. Good progress had also been made of the lease and commissioning agreement and the Company was performing ahead of its budget and business plan.

The Managing Director also reported on engagement feedback and data. In summarising, the Chairman of the Board took this opportunity to thank officers for the support that they provided to the Company.

Members welcomed the parent and carer feedback and the progress that was being made by the Company.

The contents of the report was received and noted.

42. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items to report.

43. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower seconded by Cllr B Quayle

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item 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)

Reason for taking the item in private Paragraph 3 – Information of the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

44. DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board

The Managing Director of the Company set out the detail of the Business Plan and shared a short video of the school and some of its pupils. The committee asked questions of clarification and context.

Decision

That the 2024 Business Plan be agreed.

Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 10.56 am

Chairman

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

Dorset Centre of Excellence Shareholder Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Role/Terms of Reference and Membership

a. The Dorset Centre of Excellence Shareholder Committee shall be primarily responsible for the following delegated functions except where specific functions have been delegated to an Officer:

- monitoring the performance of the DCOE (including in relation to Business Plans and associated budgets);
- monitor the business affairs, finances, and accounts of the DCOE;
- overseeing the strategic direction of the DCOE or proposed and adopted business plans and budgets for future years to be presented in draft as they are developed or the review of future service developments and opportunities;
- considering the risks and opportunities faced by the DCOE and impact on the Council (including, for example, in relation to commercial factors, governance issues, and health and safety records);
- monitoring DCOE compliance with relevant legislation;
- assuring that DCOE status as a 'Teckal' company is maintained;
- taking decisions that relate to any matter identified as being reserved to be taken by the Shareholder ("Council Consent" matters) listed within Appendix 1, within the Articles of Associations and/or the Shareholder Agreement for the DCOE.

Provided that where a decision affects the Council budgetary framework the Shareholder Committee will consider the decision and provide a recommendation to Full Council.

- exercising the Shareholders reserve power by Special Resolution (in accordance with item 5 of the Articles of Association).
 - reporting and making recommendations to the Cabinet on areas outside of the Shareholder Committee's delegated authority.
 - reporting to Full Council annually on the performance of the trading activities of the DCOE.
 - reviewing these Terms of Reference annually and make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet.
- b. The Shareholder Committee will not have operational control over the DCOE. All decisions regarding the day to day operation and management of DCOE rests the DCOE board of directors, which must ensure that DCOE business is conducted in accordance with the terms of the Shareholders' Agreement entered into between the Council and DCOE (Shareholders' Agreement) and in accordance with DCOE articles of association.
- c. The Shareholder Committee shall comprise of 5 Members drawn from the Cabinet to be appointed by the Leader of the Council/Cabinet.
- d. The quorum of the Shareholder Committee shall be 3 Members.
- e. There shall be no power to appoint substitutes to the Shareholder Committee.

- f. The Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring officer and Executive Director People – Children (or their nominees) will be advisors to the Shareholder Committee. Additional advisors and DCOE officers and directors may be invited to attend the Shareholder Committee as required.

2. Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Leader of the Council/Cabinet will appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Shareholder Committee.

3. Meetings

- a. The number of ordinary meetings of the Shareholder Committee each year will normally be quarterly unless otherwise determined by the Leader of the Council.
- b. The Chairman of the Shareholder Committee shall have the power to call one or more special meeting(s) of the Shareholder Committee.
- c. The Chairman of the Shareholder Committee may determine that a meeting should be cancelled for insufficient business.

4. Delegated powers and powers of recommendation of the Shareholder Committee

- a. The Shareholder Committee shall have the powers as set out in Functions of the Council - Part 3(1) of the Constitution.
- b. For the avoidance of doubt the Shareholder Committee can delegate any of their powers to any Officer.

Appendix 1

Council Consent Matters (Shareholder Agreement Schedule 1)

- 1 No Company shall, unless it has Council Consent:
 - 1.1 vary in any respect its articles of association or the rights attaching to any of its shares/ members; or
 - 1.2 appoint any person as a director of the Company; or
 - 1.3 permit the registration of any person as a member/ shareholder of the Company; or
 - 1.4 issue any loan capital or enter into any commitment with any person with respect to the issue of any loan capital; or
 - 1.5 make any borrowing; or
 - 1.6 propose that its members pass any resolution for its winding up or present any petition for its administration (unless the Company has become insolvent); or
 - 1.7 engage in any business other than as set out in the Company's Business Plan or defraying any monies other than in good faith for the purposes of or in connection with the carrying on of such business; or
 - 1.8 form any Subsidiary or acquire shares in any other company or participate in any partnership or joint venture (incorporated or not); or
 - 1.9 amalgamate or merge with any other company or business undertaking; or
 - 1.10 alter its name or registered office; or
 - 1.11 enter into any transaction or arrangement of any nature whatsoever with any of the Company's members or directors or any person who is connected (within the meaning of sections 1122 and 1123 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010) to any of its members or directors whether or not any other person shall be party to such transaction or arrangement; or
 - 1.12 enter into any arrangement, contract, or transaction outside the normal course of the Company's Business or otherwise than on arm's length terms; or
 - 1.13 create or permit to be created any mortgage, charge, encumbrance, or other security interest whatsoever on any asset or its business in whole or in part; or
 - 1.14 adopt or amend its annual Business Plan save in accordance with clause 2.4 of the Shareholder Agreement, or enter into any contract or commitment not provided for in the Business Plan under which it may incur costs in excess of £100,000; or
 - 1.15 change its financial year end; or
 - 1.16 make any loan (otherwise than by way of deposit with a bank or other institution the normal business of which includes the acceptance of deposits) or grant any credit (other than in the normal course of trading); or
 - 1.17 give any guarantee, suretyship, or indemnity to secure the liability of any person or assume the obligations of any person; or
 - 1.18 factor or assign any of the book debts of the Company; or

- 1.19 establish or amend any profit-sharing, share option, bonus, or other incentive scheme of any nature for directors, officers, or employees; or
- 1.20 establish or amend any pension scheme or grant any pension rights to any director, officer, employee, former director, officer or employee, or any member of any such person's family other than in accordance with the Remuneration Policy; or
- 1.21 dismiss any director, officer, or employee in circumstances in which it incurs or agrees to bear redundancy or other costs in excess of £10,000; or
- 1.22 agree to remunerate (by payment of fees, the provision of benefits-in-kind or otherwise) any director, employee or consultant to the Company save in accordance with the Remuneration Policy; or
- 1.23 make any agreement with any revenue or tax authorities or make any claim, disclaimer, election, or consent exceeding £25,000 for tax purposes in relation to the Company or its business; or
- 1.24 breach the terms of the Company's Code of Conduct; or
- 1.25 issue or allot any share capital; or
- 1.26 amend, in any material respect, the terms and conditions on which any employee of the Company is employed, save in accordance with the Remuneration Policy; or
- 1.27 change the nature of the Business or commence any new business by any Group Member which is not ancillary or incidental to the Business; or
- 1.28 make or permit to be made any change in the accounting policies and principles adopted in the preparation of its audited or management accounts except as may be required to ensure compliance with relevant accounting standards under the Companies Act 2006 or any other generally accepted accounting principles in the United Kingdom; or
- 1.29 appoint or remove the Chair; or
- 1.30 institute, settle or compromise any material legal proceedings instituted or threatened against it or submitting any dispute to arbitration or alternative dispute resolution, save in relation to any legal proceedings, arbitration or alternative dispute resolution between the Company and the Council; or
- 1.31 make any acquisition, disposal, or structural modifications of any material asset(s), leases, or land interests; or
- 1.32 allow any of its employees, agents, or officers to reside within the premises unless specified within the service contract between the Council and the Parent Company; or
- 1.33 give notice of termination of any arrangements, contracts, or transactions in excess of £50,000 in value, or materially vary any such arrangements, contracts, or transactions; or
- 1.34 consent to proceed with capital development of any material asset(s) such as on the land it operates; or
- 1.35 enter into an agreement to do any of the above.

The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence

10 June 2024

Dorset Council Commissioner's Report

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr C Sutton, Children's Services, Education and Skills

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

Report Author: Claire Webb
Job Title: Strategic Commissioner Education
Tel: 01305 221766
Email: Claire.Webb@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 delivery by the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) against the commissioning agreement, and the enhanced co-operation between Dorset Council and DCOE.

Recommendation:

Shareholders are asked to note the progress made and support the continued co-operation 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, growing school places, the breadth/quality of the offer and preparing for further growth.

1. Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current position in relation to delivery by the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) against the commissioning agreement, and the enhanced cooperation between Dorset Council and 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 between the Managing Director of DCOE and the Strategic Commissioner for Education, focused on the performance of the school. 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 continue to attend the DCOE Board.
- 1.4 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 next year. The learning and development offer continues to expand ensuring suitably trained staff.
- **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. A child level review of all pupils at the school was also undertaken by commissioners and the headteacher. 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.

Commissioners are also assured that the school has a strong focus and understanding of all their pupils, and that this is reflected in the reporting to and oversight/challenge of the DCOE Board and associated committees.

- **Pupil growth:** Progress continues to identify additional pupils, working towards 116 by the end of this Summer 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, with good use being made of forest school approaches, the walled garden, and the established focus on cultural capital and community engagement for pupils, so they begin to be prepared to be part of their local community, providing valuable life skills
- 1.5 **Community engagement:** Arrangements for use of the swimming pool by local community groups and schools are in place, have expanded and are well received.
- 1.6 The company has appointed a suitable independent financial auditor to oversee the 2023/24 accounts.
- 1.7 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 is reducing and is now focussed largely on assurance (including enhanced contract management) and managing growth.
- 1.8 The position will be assessed again in the summer term (the current position is highlighted in bold, a full update will be provided in the September report). If the following are in place, it is proposed that the enhanced co-operation agreement is ceased, with regular contract management meetings and joint working to manage growth and admissions continuing:
- a) Assurance that teacher recruitment and plans for the new academic year will enable DCOE to successfully manage the next growth in pupil numbers – **this continues to be reviewed at contract management meetings. Full confirmation of appointments made during the most recent recruitment round is due shortly (in line with teacher resignation timescales of 31 May 2024)**
 - b) Evidence that improvements made following the Ofsted inspection have been embedded – **a site visit is taking place 14 June 2024,**

**carried out by Principal Lead - Best Education for All,
Education Challenge Lead and Strategic Commissioner
Education**

1.9 A summary of the position against the enhanced co-operation agreement is provided below (this remains unchanged from previous reports):

- 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 focus 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, Legal Services, Assets and Regeneration and Children's Services.

2.2 As described in 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 for the Phase 2 works, with work underway on site and progress being managed by Assets and Regeneration.

2.3 Assets & Regeneration 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 a revised lease by Legal Services. 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. The funding for Phase 2 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)

Dorset Centre of Excellence Shareholder Committee

10 June 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 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, 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 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 and has further developed its transition arrangements since the last meeting, meaning that pupils receive a more personalised experience that is improving their ability to settle successfully into their new school, as seen by their strong attendance, their engagement in learning and the feedback that they and their parents and careers have provided.

- 2.2 Planning for the September 2024 intake of pupils is going well, with most spaces now allocated. Communication with families to confirm these places is being planned and will be dependent on the handover arrangements for the new classroom block that is currently being built. Work to ensure staff recruitment for this intake is detailed in section 5.3.
- 2.3 Pupils and staff are excited to see the development of the new classroom block and are watching with interest the various stages of its build. There is confidence that it will provide an excellent environment in which to learn.
- 2.4 September 2024 will see the school with its first significant cohort of sixth form pupils, who are going to receive a curriculum offer specific to their needs. Work to plan the redesign of a space that can be specifically theirs will aid them in feeling a greater sense of independence and maturity.
- 2.5 Work on our behaviour and curriculum policy review continues, with working parties reviewing best practice and the latest research to ensure our offer is high quality, ambitious, and meets the needs of our pupils.
- 2.6 The school welcomed a highly experienced specialist consultant to review the safety of our behavioural approaches. Initial feedback has been positive, with a more complete full written and verbal report being given to the Company's Board meeting in late June 2024.
- 2.7 Work to develop innovative, research based therapeutic classrooms has been very successful. Pupils have found them to be calming and they have aided them in their self-regulation. Social interaction between peers has also significantly improved. Further plans to roll out this new model further within the School are being made. Dorset Council have expressed interest in understanding the potential impact of these therapeutic classrooms on other local schools within the wider local education system.
- 2.8 A similar design approach has had a strong positive impact upon pupils' dining experience, where the new furniture and layout has meant pupils feel safer and happier to enjoy their lunch in a calm, positive space. One pupil said, "It's so nice to be able to sit and let my food go down on a sofa" and, after perusing the fake greenery, said "it's like bringing the outside inside". This is a young man who, when he started at the School, was unable to express himself in any other way than repeating what had just been said to him.
- 2.9 Leadership and quality continue to be stable and engagement from pupils is typically very strong. Occasional dysregulated behaviour, 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.

2.10 External quality assurance and governance is strong. School Quality Committee meetings are increasingly occurring in-person and on-site and are impactful.

2.11 Examples of feedback from parents and carers have included:

“Since starting at CHS we have seen huge reductions in anxiety. This has impacted at home – he sleeps now! Previously he was unable to sleep and then he was unable to go to school” March 2024

“There is a good team around her. Her needs are being recognised and she is seen as an individual. Things feel more positive.” March 2024

“She is so excited about the opportunities available to her. She tells us that when she was a primary school, the things that were classed as ‘extras’ are done daily at CHS – like going for walks and cooking” March 2024.

“I just wanted to pass on our sincere thanks for yesterday’s brilliant Annual Review. It was the first one in 11 years where I haven’t felt raging anxiety! Your support, wisdom, positivity and proactive advice was incredibly helpful, and all info was delivered with such warmth and clarity. She’s a lucky girl tucked up in your lovely, safe setting with all of you looking out for her. She is so happy at Coome House. What more could we ask for?” April 2024

“He is very happy and had so much to tell me! I just mentioned it and he said oh could I just write down ideas, he often doesn’t like speaking out with new people around. He is currently saying he would like all 5 days next week. That was his first whole day at school since 18 months ago roughly so we are super proud and happy for him! Thank you for making him feel so settled so quickly!” May 2024

“Just wanted to say that X loved his time in this morning! Went in so anxious but came out so happy with how the day went! So glad he’s finally found his place!” May 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 The Commercial and Community Use Committee is considering options for providing residential social care provision and the Council fed back positively about the latest iteration of options.

3.3 The Company has received an update about its business rates liability, which it is reviewing as part of its plans to develop other non-School commercial activities.

4. Business Plan Implementation

4.1 Growth of pupil numbers is in line with the approved business plan and the associated commissioning agreement. September 2024 marks the most significant increase in both pupil numbers and staff.

4.2 The Company is grateful to Council colleagues who have assisted in progressing the amendment to the commissioning agreement. The Company has signed and returned this agreement and is expecting a countersigned version back imminently.

4.3 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.

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 the Company's full attention. The HR team have been doing, and continue to do, extensive recruitment drives to fill the teaching and support roles.

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.

6.2 Phase Two classrooms are currently being built and the Phase Three plans continue to develop well.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The Company ended the 2023/24 financial year ahead of budget and business plan. It has sound financial security following the arrangement of a loan facility with the Council.

7.2 The selected auditors for the 2023/24 accounts have now been appointed and the main body of work involved with the audit is due to be undertaken in June 2024. Feedback from this audit will be shared with the Council in line with the requirements of the Shareholder Agreement when the report is available.

8. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

8.1 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.

9. **Well-being and Health Implications**

9.1 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.

10. **Other Implications**

10.1 No other implications have been identified.

11. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Low.

12. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

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

13. **Appendices**

13.1 None

14. **Background Papers**

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

This page is intentionally left blank



The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) Forward Plan For the period 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 to 31 DECEMBER 2024 (Publication date - TBC)

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 2024/25

Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Governance, Performance, Communications, Environment, Climate Change and Safeguarding

Cllr Richard Biggs – Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up

Cllr Ryan Hope - Portfolio Holder for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Cllr Clare Sutton - Children's Services, Education & Skills

Cllr Gill Taylor - Portfolio Holder for Public Health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Service

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Standing items for consideration				
September				
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions Key Decision - No Public Access - Open	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 16 Sep 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
Dorset Council Commissioning Report Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 16 Sep 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 16 Sep 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
December				

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Dec 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
Dorset Council Commissioning Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Dec 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Dec 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
Performance of the Traded Activities of the Company Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Dec 2024	Councillor Clare Sutton	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i>
Annual Reports				

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.