

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 MARCH 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Andrew Parry (Vice-Chairman),  
Laura Beddow, Gary Suttle and Peter Wharf

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

Ian Comfort (Chair of the Dorset Centre of Excellence Board),  
Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer),  
Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer),  
Andrew Holder (Managing Director of the Dorset Centre for Excellence),  
Theresa Levy (Executive Director of People - Children) Via MS Teams,  
Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer),  
John Miles (Democratic Services Apprentice),  
Matt Prosser (Chief Executive),  
Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships)

**35. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

**36. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 5 December 2022, were signed and confirmed as a correct record.

**37. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**38. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**39. Councillor Questions**

No questions were received from councillors.

**40. Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan was noted.

#### 41. **Report of the Independent Chair of the Board of Directors**

The Chairman of the Board introduced his report, which set out the activity that had taken place since his previous update in December.

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

- The Terms of Reference for the Board's Finance Sub-Committee had recently been reviewed and had a considerable amount of work to be undertake, which meant that it was meeting approximately every six weeks.
- The Chairman of the Sub-Committee was a chartered accountant, with significant experience in education and the rest of the sub-committee's membership were well-experienced with matters of a financial nature. The Sub-Committee was currently charged with reviewing the budget, development of the business plan and ongoing financial projections.
- Day to day financial reporting was now easily accessible, including management accounts, which had proved to be exceptionally useful. An audit was to be undertaken at year end, and so strong desire from the Board to ensure accounts were up to date.
- Since the Head Teacher had been appointed and had been in post since January, the Managing Director could focus on the strategic aims of the school, which had not been possible beforehand as he had been overseeing the day-to-day operation of the school.
- The feedback from the staff and pupil surveys was being collated to be fed back to the Board of Directors, although initial feedback indicated that parents/carers were more engaged and that the situation at school is improving. In terms of staff results, feedback had been positive and triangulated with other data available.
- A committee had been established by the Board of Directors to explore opportunities for community outreach and perform the kind of 'deep dive' exercise that wasn't possible in standard board meetings, which was proving to be positive in terms of engagement and developing a long-term leisure strategy that would maximise community use.
- Data surrounding the usage and financial profile would be available at the next shareholder committee and would form part of the business plan to be put forward at the next meeting of the Shareholder Committee.
- The Board was putting a huge amount of time and resource into ensuring that the school is in an inspection ready situation based on the action plan that it had submitted. The Managing Director was Confident that OFSTED would find a greatly improved school and governance structure. It was in the hands of OFSTED to determine whether standards had been consistently met, and how it was going to measure this i.e. from launch of the school, or from submission of the action plan.

**Noted**

#### 42. **Dorset Council Commissioning Report**

The Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships introduced her report, which provided an overview of the current position relating to the enhanced cooperation between Dorset Council and the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE), and the progress made in the recovery plan.

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

- It was anticipated that there would be some growth in terms of pupils after Easter for the summer term. The School was inclusive and worked exceptionally hard to ensure that all needs were met by the school and that they could remain in this provision
- The Business Plan was being revised which had impacted the pace of delivery, however, this was being closely monitored and was not expected to impact the council's capital strategy, as information continued to be shared as appropriate.
- There had been an intensive period of support for the school and Monitoring visits were frequent to ensure that the school is delivering on its aims and was well supported during its establishment phase and fully complying, once this had been achieved, it was agreed that monitoring would be done half-termly.
- Contrary to some comments that had been made in the media and speculation on social media, there was indeed a need for Dorset Council to increase SEND capacity in both North and East Dorset.

**Noted**

#### 43. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items

#### 44. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business

**Duration of meeting:** 10.30 - 10.55 am

**Chairman**

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