Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
4th December 2019

TITLE	**Council of Governors – Effectiveness Survey Evaluation**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The report provides a summary of the findings of an effectiveness survey undertaken during October 2019. It is good practice to undertake an annual evaluation of meeting effectiveness. The scope of this survey was extended to encompass an evaluation of how well supported and enabled the Governors feel to undertake their duties. Every Governor completed the survey, which was anonymous. Overall the feedback was positive across the five domains. The survey and detailed feedback for each question is included at appendix 1 and 2.
The Council is asked to:	Note the report
Submitted by:	Anu Sehdev, Membership and Engagement Manager
Date:	December 2019
Decision	For assurance

1. Introduction

This report is intended to summarise the results of a survey undertaken by the Council of Governors to evaluate their own effectiveness in performing their duties and that of the Council of Governor meetings.

It is the first survey of its kind to be undertaken by the Council and a recommendation will be made to undertake the survey on an annual basis going forward which is considered good governance.

2. Methodology

The survey was undertaken electronically and all responses were anonymous.

The questions were divided into five sections:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. Council of Governors meetings
3. Effectiveness of Council of Governors
4. Working with the Trust
5. Skills, knowledge and development of Governors

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statement with:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know

The full list of questions can be found at appendix 1.

In total, there were 25 responses although not all respondents answered every question (detailed breakdown at Appendix 2)

3. Summary of results by section

Section 1: Roles and responsibilities

There was overall agreement that Governors understood their role with regard to the Health and Social Care Act, and in holding the Non-Executive Directors of the Trust to account. There was also good agreement that the Council adopts a rigorous appointment process of Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) and of appraisal of the Chair and NEDs.

Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings

There was good agreement that Governors were able to contribute to agenda topics for Council meetings and strong agreement that that papers were circulated in good time and were of good quality so as to enable full participation in the meeting. There was also agreement that meeting was chaired effectively, was held frequently enough and that overall, meetings were productive. One comment reflected that the meeting was bureaucratic and was constrained by Department of Health and Social ‘rules’ around the Council of Governors’ purpose; however the respondent recognised that the Trust created other creative ways of working with and engaging Governors outside of this formal structure.

Section 3: Effectiveness of Council of Governors

Whilst there was general agreement that Governors communicate and engage with and represent members' views, one respondent disagreed and two were neutral. One comment reflected that it was difficult to engage with constituents unless they had a personal experience of coming to the hospital. There was good agreement, however, that the Council held Non-Executive Directors to account; that relationships within the Council were effective and the Council was of an appropriate size. Whilst there was general agreement that the Council felt able to influence Trust strategy, three responses were neutral and one person disagreed. All considered they had an active role in developing the membership strategy.

Section 4: Working with the Trust

There was very strong agreement that Governors could approach the Chair with a query or issue (100% agreed of which 92% strongly agreed). There was also good agreement that the Board of Directors was supportive of the Council of Governors and that there was sufficient contact with NEDs although one respondent disagreed with this statement. Positive comments reflected an openness and readiness by the Board to listen to and respond to Governors' queries.

Section 5: Skills, knowledge and development of Governors

Whilst there was good agreement that Governors are provided with sufficient information to perform their roles, 18% provided a neutral response to whether the new Governor induction programme meets their initial familiarisation needs, 82% responded in agreement.

Comments:

The following are the free text comments provided at the end of the survey:

- *I can say that within the Trust there is an open relationship between the Board and the Governors which makes the role of Governors to be both constructive and efficient.*
- *Over the past 9 years the Trust and its Gosvenors [sic] have developed a good working relationship and understanding, The role of new Gosvenor [sic] seems to be daunting for some ....but with the staggering of new comers this has eased as buddying is encouraged.*
- *Happy to discuss, I retire in November after 3 terms, but plan to stay involved in patient experience work where my focus has been, using working relationships already developed. I have been a governor through two CEOs, a failed merger and a major redevelopment in progress, so know the issues and have pushed the envelope that NHS bureaucrats designed to make CoG a governance compliance exercise with no real impact - that we overcame with the help of a pro active board.*
- *I believe that the board is very supportive of the governor's and wants us to ask about any issues we may have, and that we have access to anyone we feel we need to talk to about concerns if we have them. If we as governors do our jobs properly we can support the board/trust with meeting their goals and objectives, which is a good feeling and makes our contribution worthwhile.*
- *Critical role of Membership Secretary cannot be overstated. We are as Governors very lucky to have Anu Sehdev perform this role so exceptionally!*
- *It depends upon individual Governor to get involve using his/her passion and purpose for the community service he/she is representing. Furthermore Health & Social Care Act 2012, Clinical, Staffing and Administrative issues are always challenging the NHS Trusts. Therefore, Governor's foresight and proactive approach is far more valuable and necessary to sustain productivity and develop the strategic transformation to stay ahead of forthcoming challenges. BE a Positive and Proactive Governor.*

- *Admin and Council support has been first class. I have been very fortunate and have been very well looked after by Staff who have been approachable and inclusive. Especially the Leadership Team. It has been an honour to serve as a Governor.*

4. Conclusion

The survey provides good assurance that the Council of Governors feel able to effectively carry out their duties, also that the process of recruitment and appraisals of Non-Executive Directors are robust. Overall the Council meetings are considered to be well managed and chaired and that there are positive working relationships with the Non-Executive Directors and Executive Directors. A relatively high number of Governors provided a neutral response regarding the effectiveness of induction, however this could be reflective of a number of Governors having completed three terms in post and therefore feeling unable to comment.

5. Recommendations

The Council are asked to note the contents in order to consider the following recommendations;

- To undertake this survey on an annual basis
- To carry out a separate evaluation of the induction day for new Governors on each occasion this is provided

Appendix 1

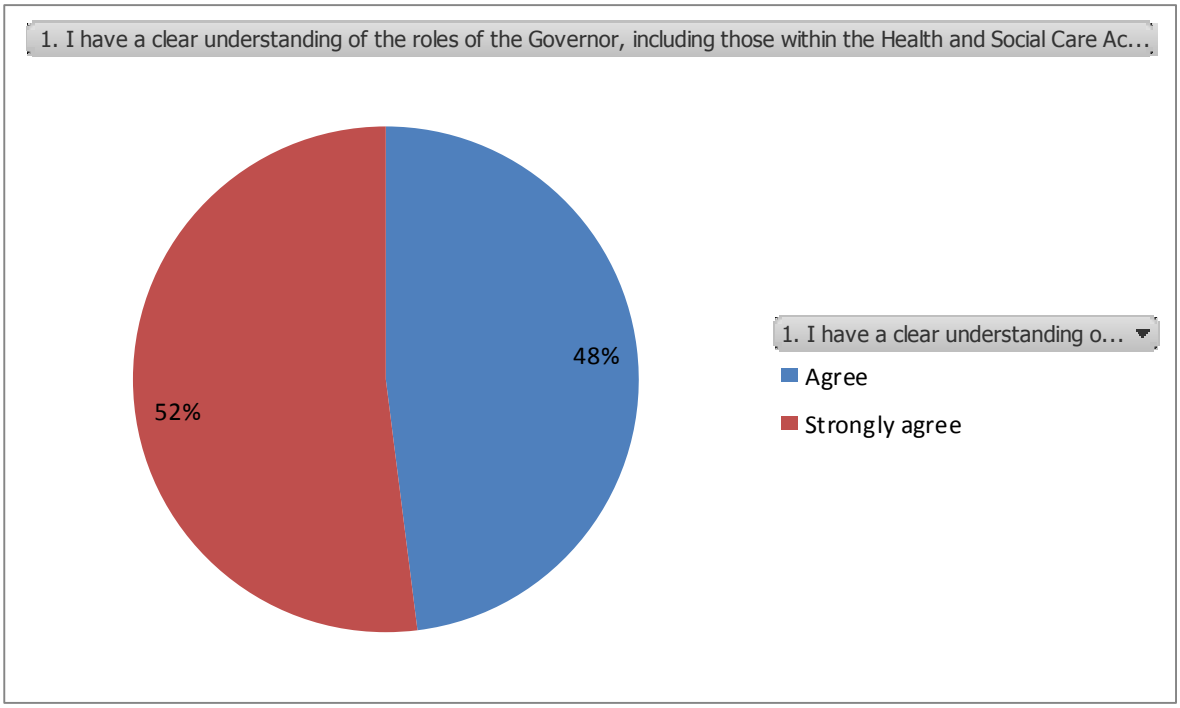
COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY	
Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities	
No.	Statement
1	I have a clear understanding of the roles of the Governor, including those within the Health and Social Care Act 2012
2	I have a clear understanding of what it means to hold the Trust's Non-Executive Directors to account.
3	The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appointment of new Non-Executive Directors.
4	The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.
Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings	
No.	Statement
5	Governors have sufficient opportunity to identify 'topics of interest' to add to the Council of Governors programme/meeting planner.
6	Agendas and supporting documents are circulated in sufficient time for each meeting.
7	Meeting papers contain sufficient information to allow me to participate in discussions.
8	The Council of Governors' meeting is chaired effectively to time with adequate opportunity for all to contribute to the discussion
9	The Council of Governors meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties.
10	Overall, Council of Governor meetings are productive.
Section 3: Effectiveness of the Council of Governors	
No.	Statement
11	Governors effectively communicate and engage with and represent the views of the Trust membership.
12	The Council of Governors effectively discharges its role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board.
13	The Council of Governors is able to influence the direction of the Trust's future strategy.
14	The Council of Governors is the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties.
15	Relationships within the Council are constructive and work effectively.
16	The Council of Governors plays an active role in developing the Trust's membership strategy (recruitment and engagement).
Section 4: Working with the Trust	
No.	Statement
17	Governors can readily approach the Chair with a query or issue.
18	The Board of Directors is supportive of the Council of Governors.
19	Governors have sufficient contact with the Trust's Non-Executive Directors.
Section 5: Skills/knowledge development for Governors	
No.	Statement
20	The induction programme for new Governors sufficiently meets their initial familiarisation needs.
21	The Trust provides Governors with sufficient information to enable them to perform their roles.

Appendix 2

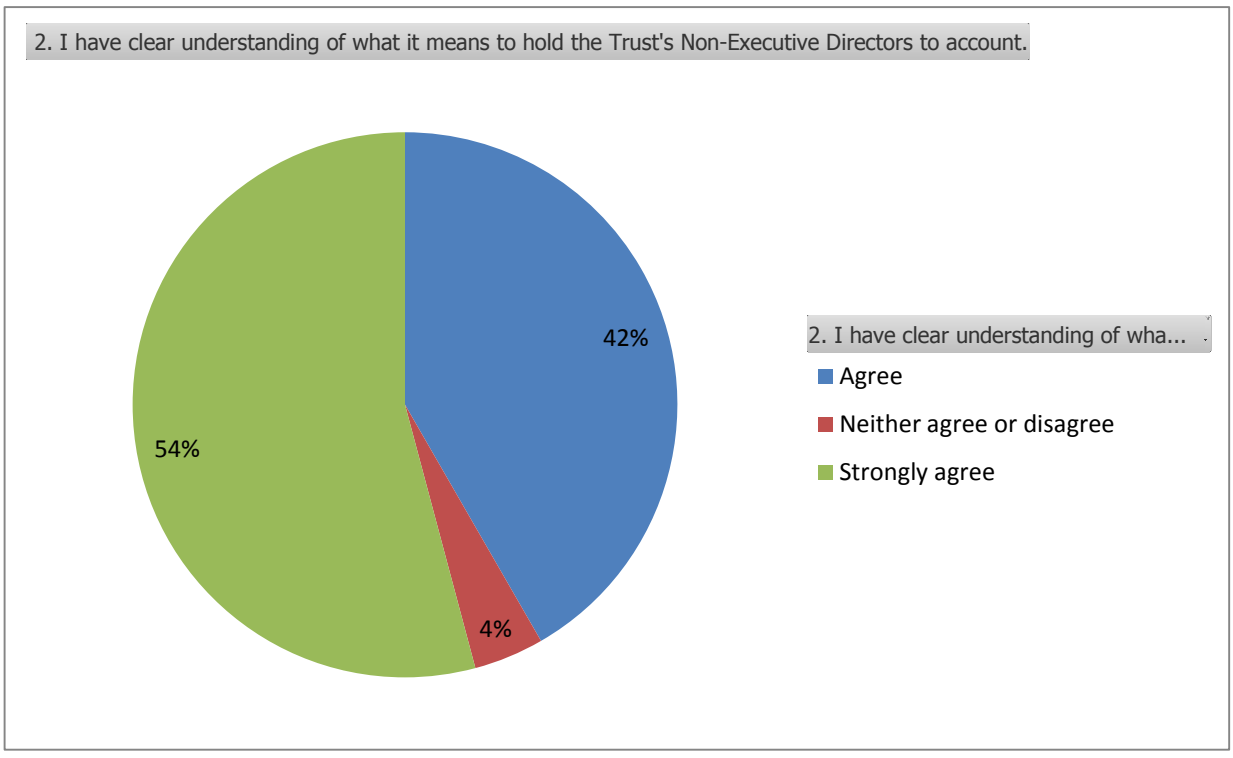
Council of Governors – Effectiveness Survey Evaluation

Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities

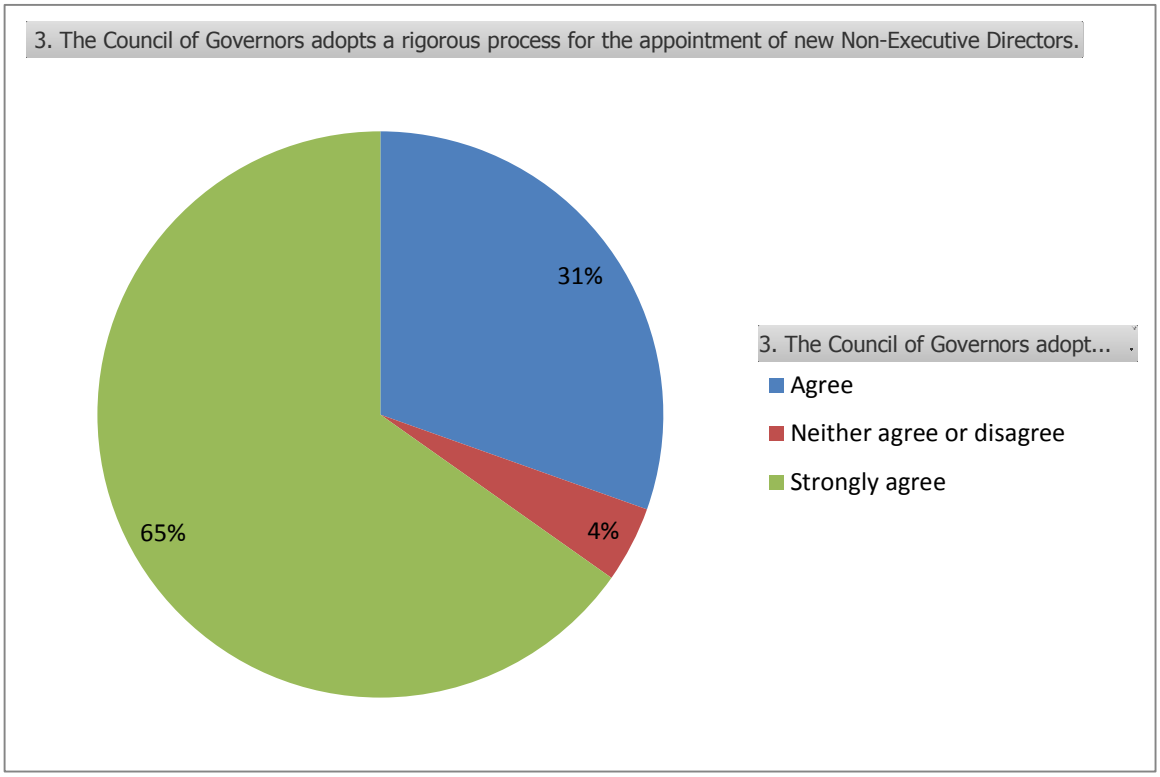
1. I have a clear understanding of the roles of the Governor, including those within the Health and Social Care Act 2012



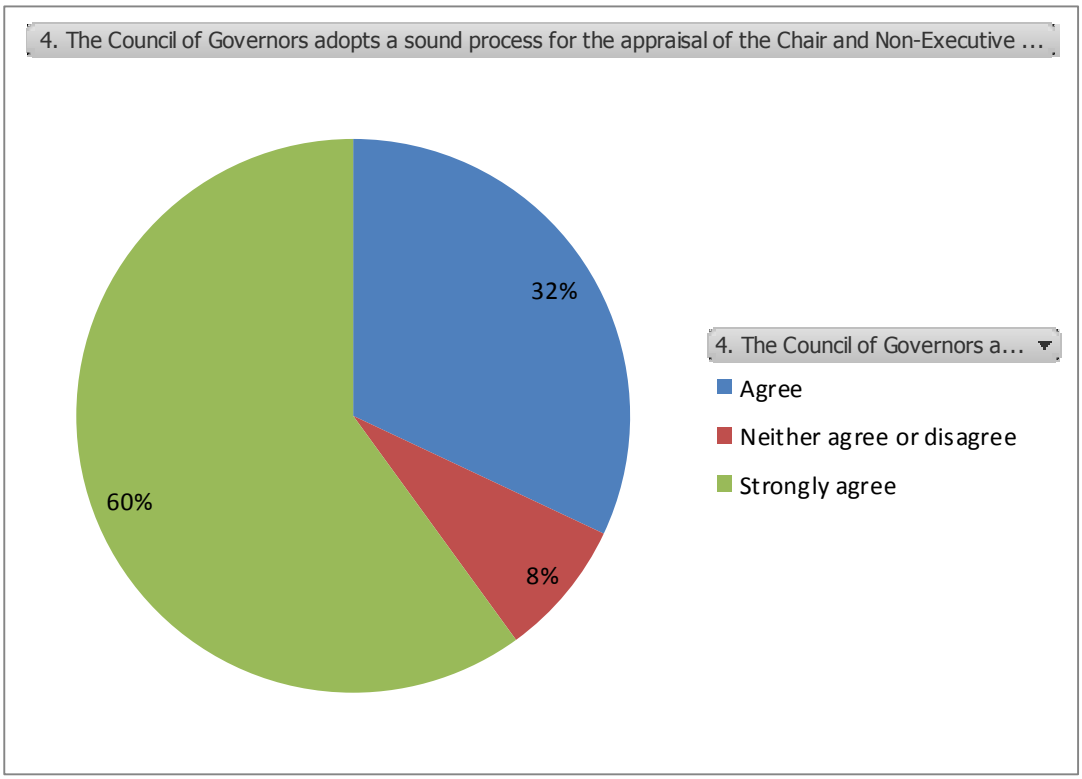
2. I have a clear understanding of what it means to hold the Trust's Non-Executive Directors to account.



3. The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appointment of new Non-Executive Directors.

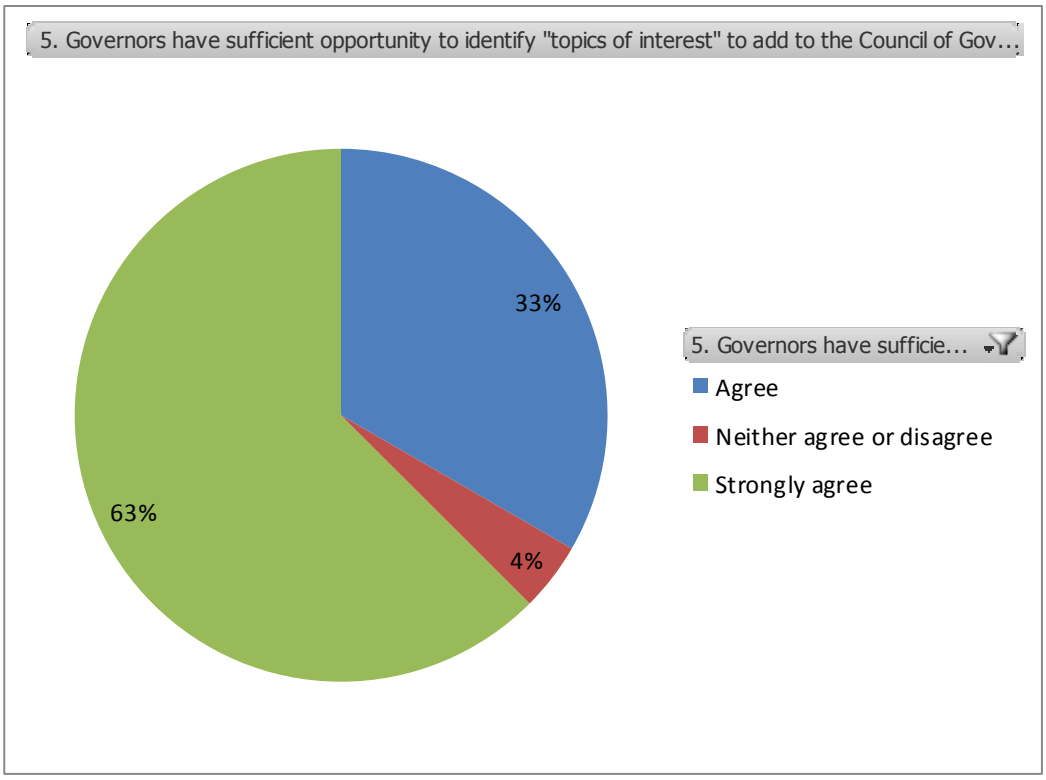


4. The Council of Governors adopt a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.

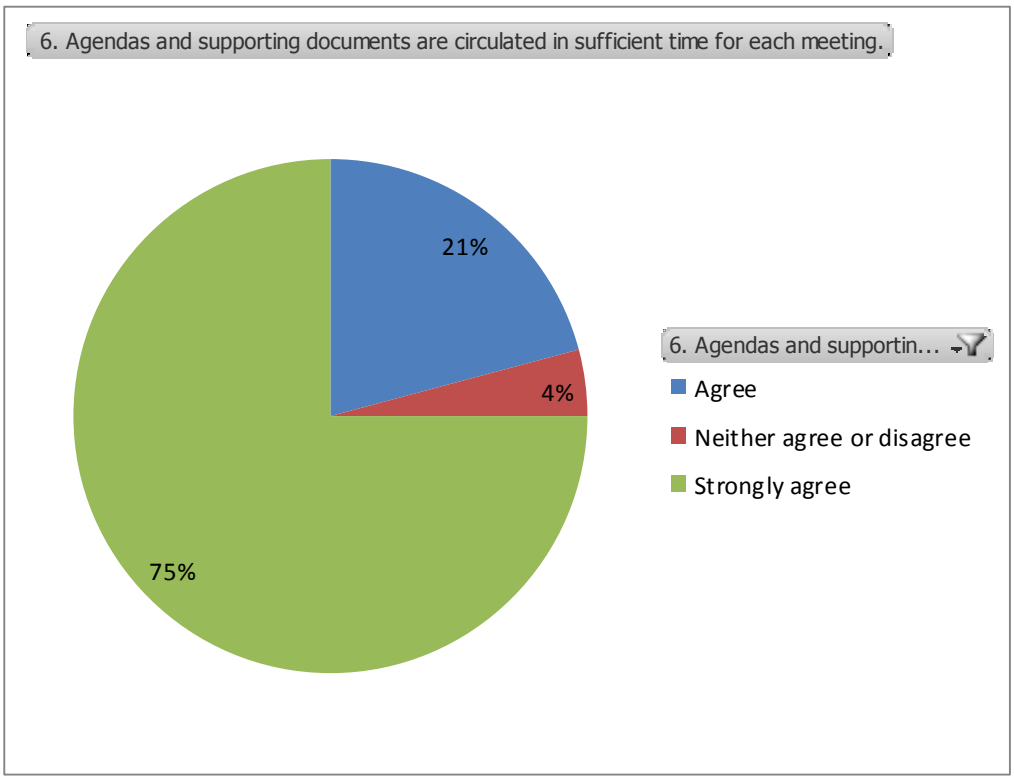


Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings

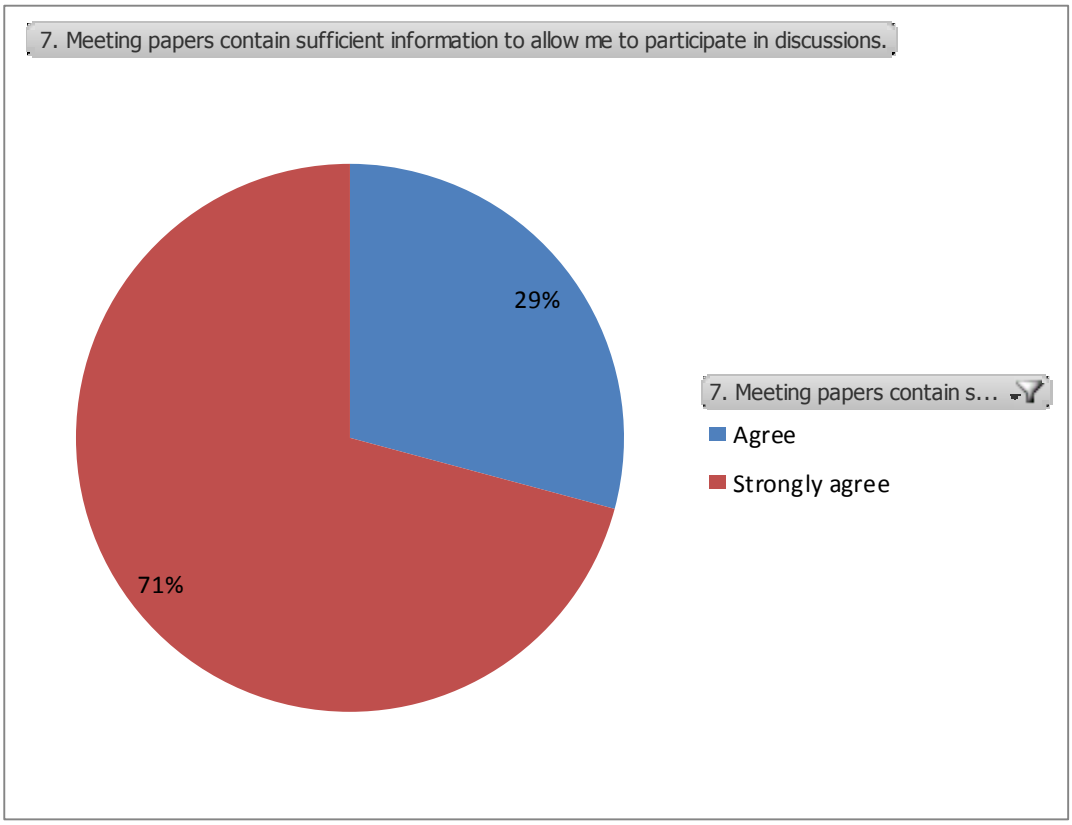
5. Governors have sufficient opportunity to identify 'topics of interest' to add to the Council of Governors programme/meeting planner.



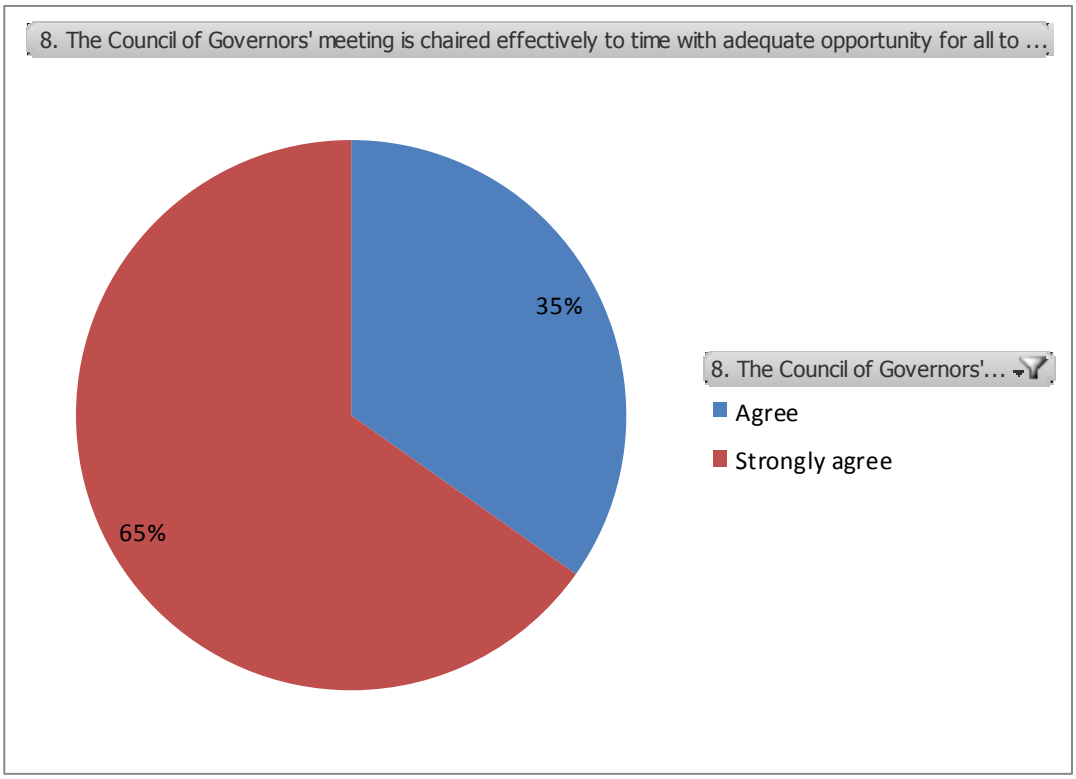
6. Agendas and supporting documents are circulated in sufficient time for each meeting.



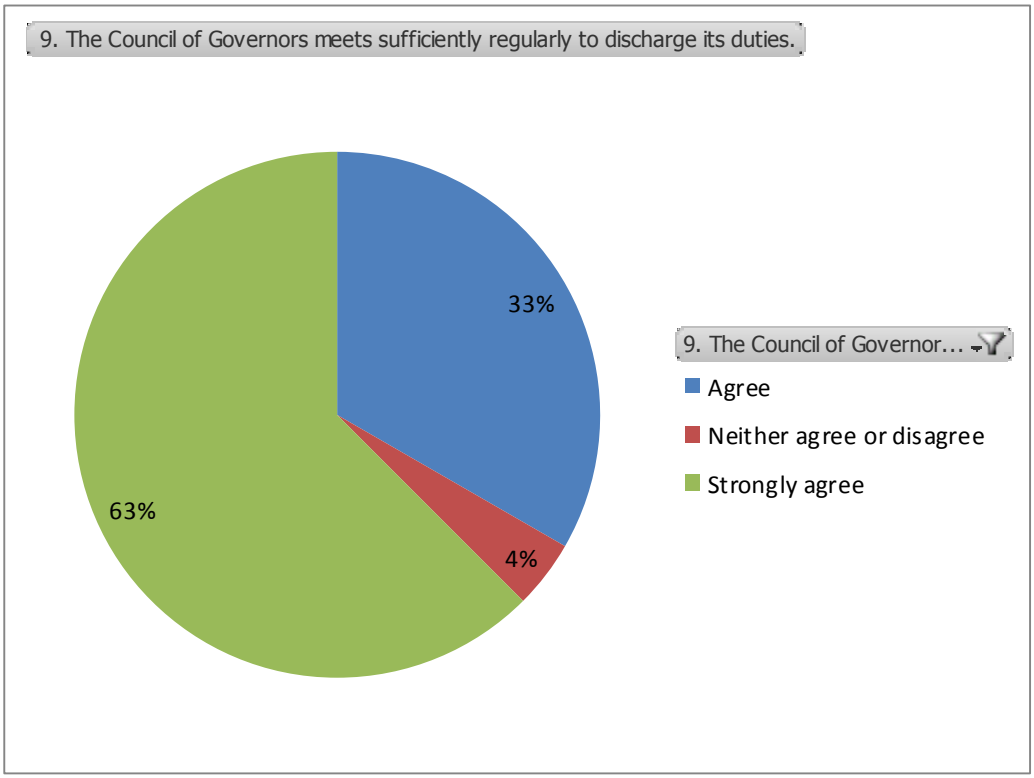
7. Meeting papers contain sufficient information to allow me to participate in discussions.



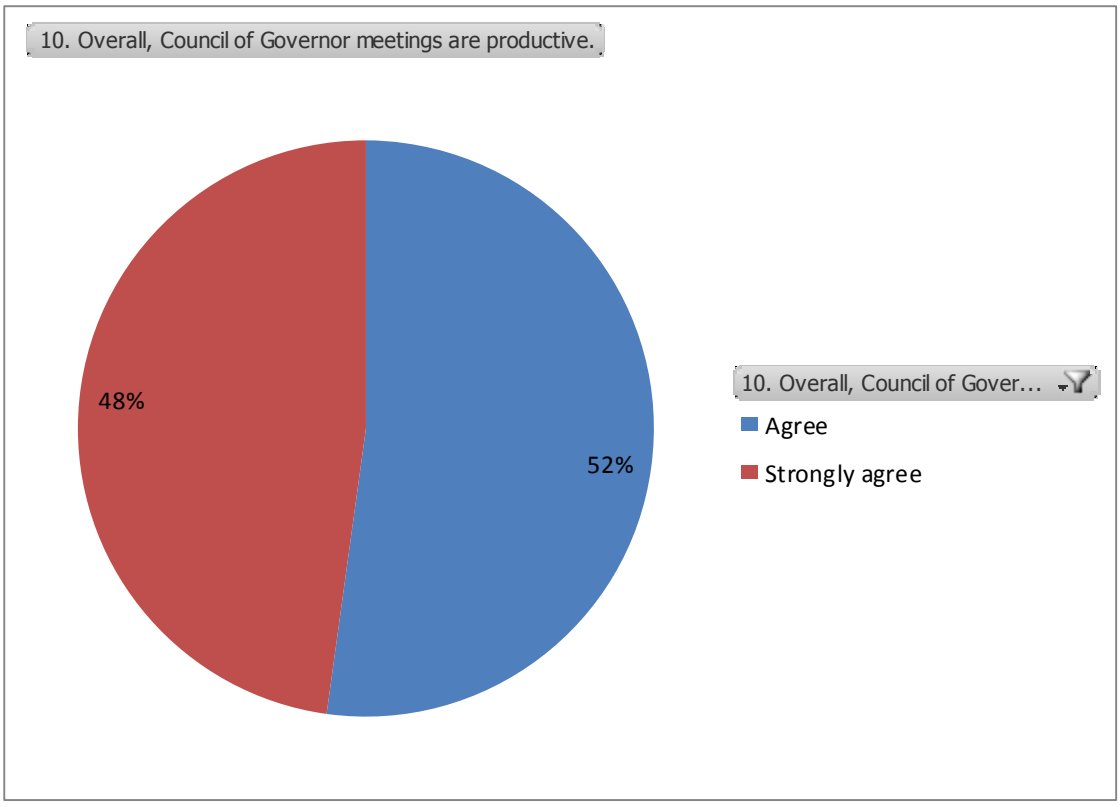
8. The Council of Governors' meeting is chaired effectively to time with adequate opportunity for all to contribute to the discussion



9. The Council of Governors meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties.

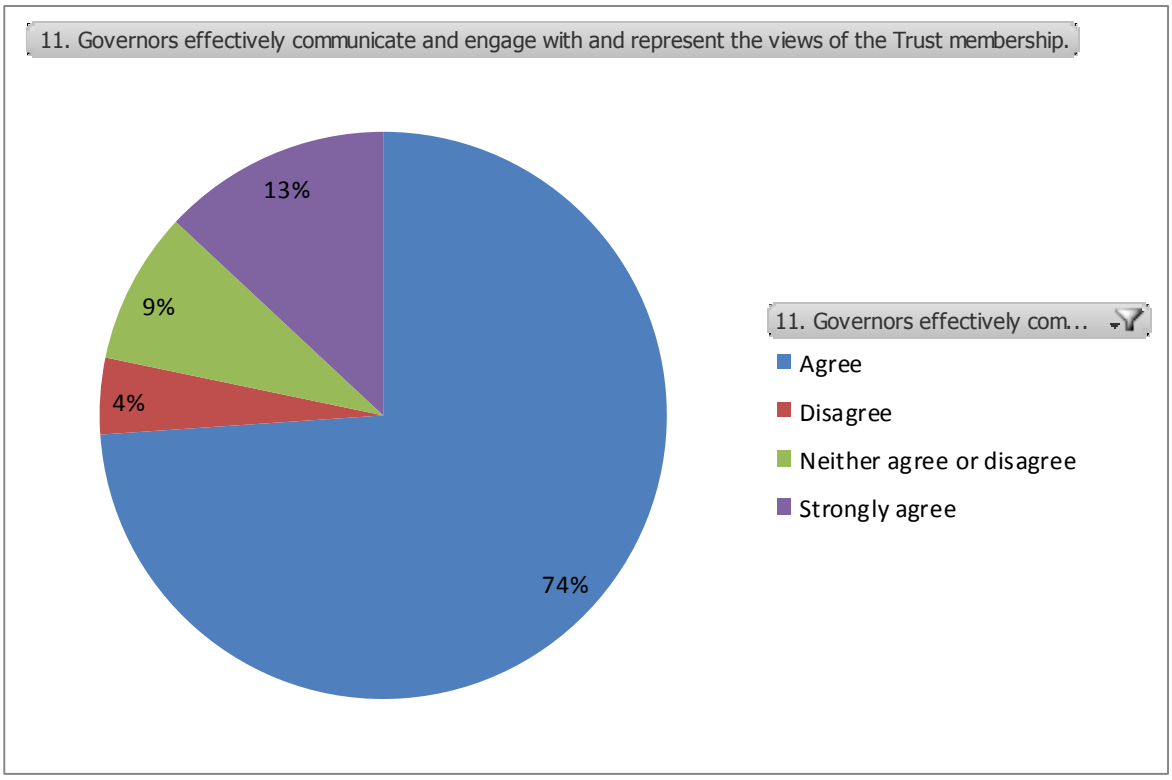


10. Overall, Council of Governor meetings are productive.

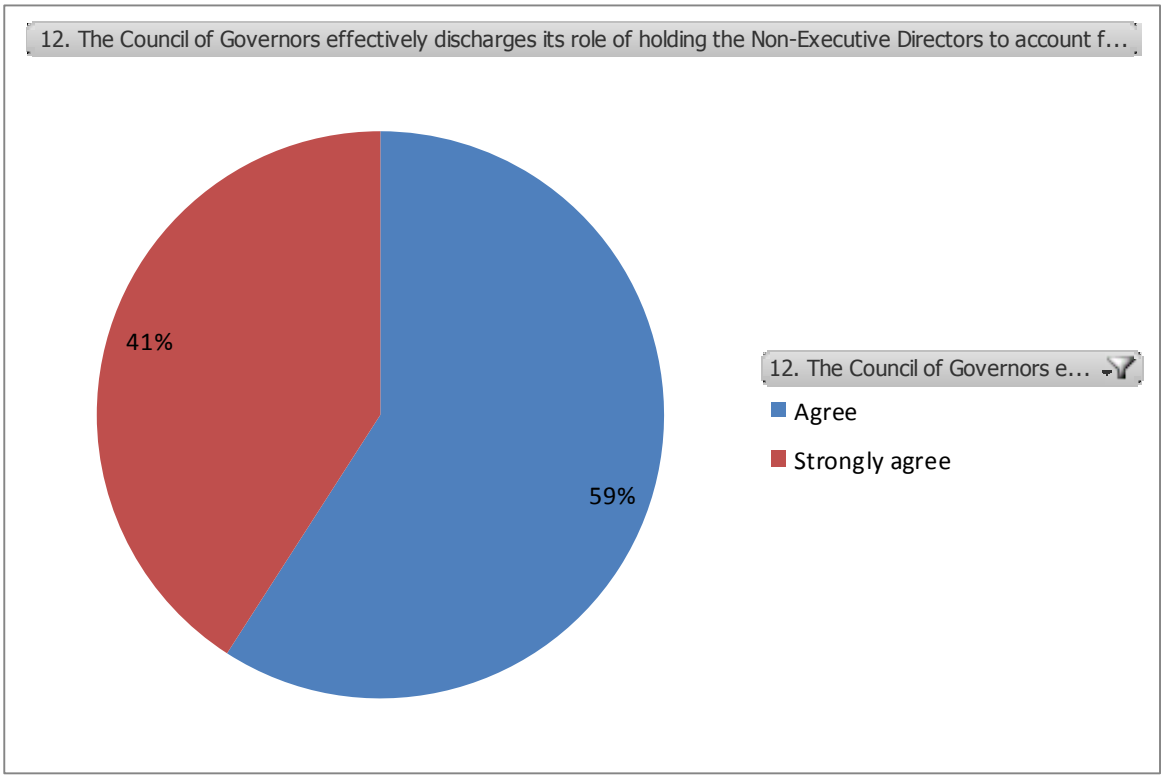


Section 3: Effectiveness of the Council of Governors

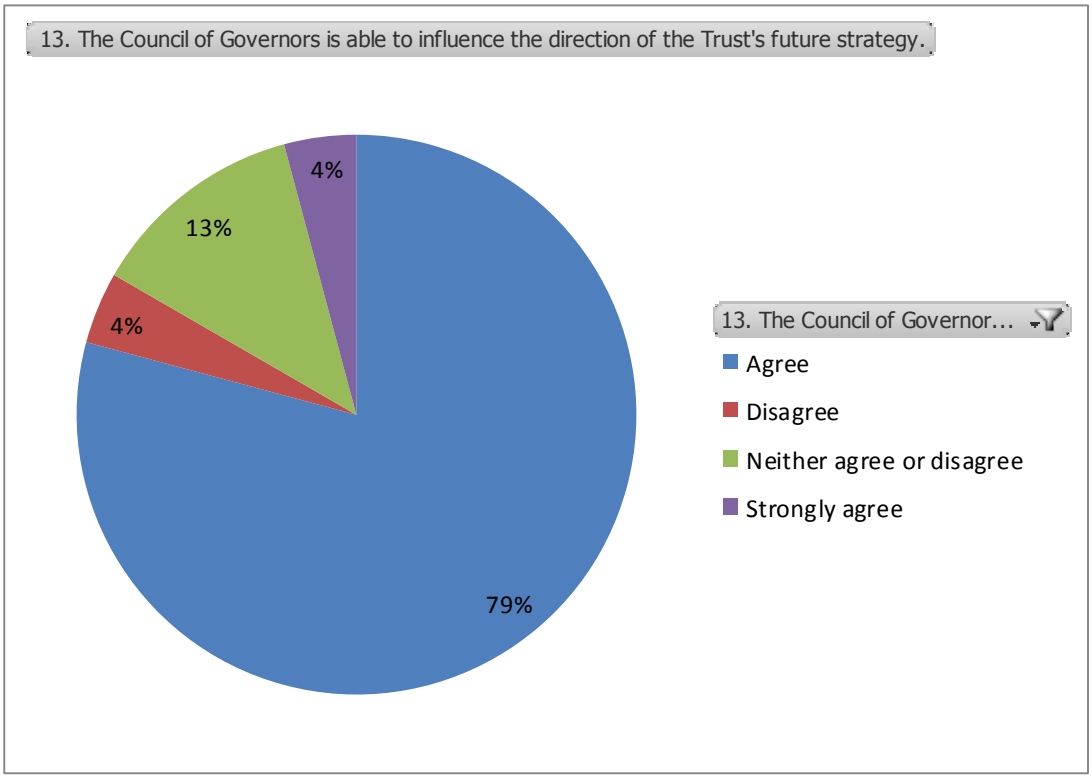
11. Governors effectively communicate and engage with and represent the views of the Trust membership.



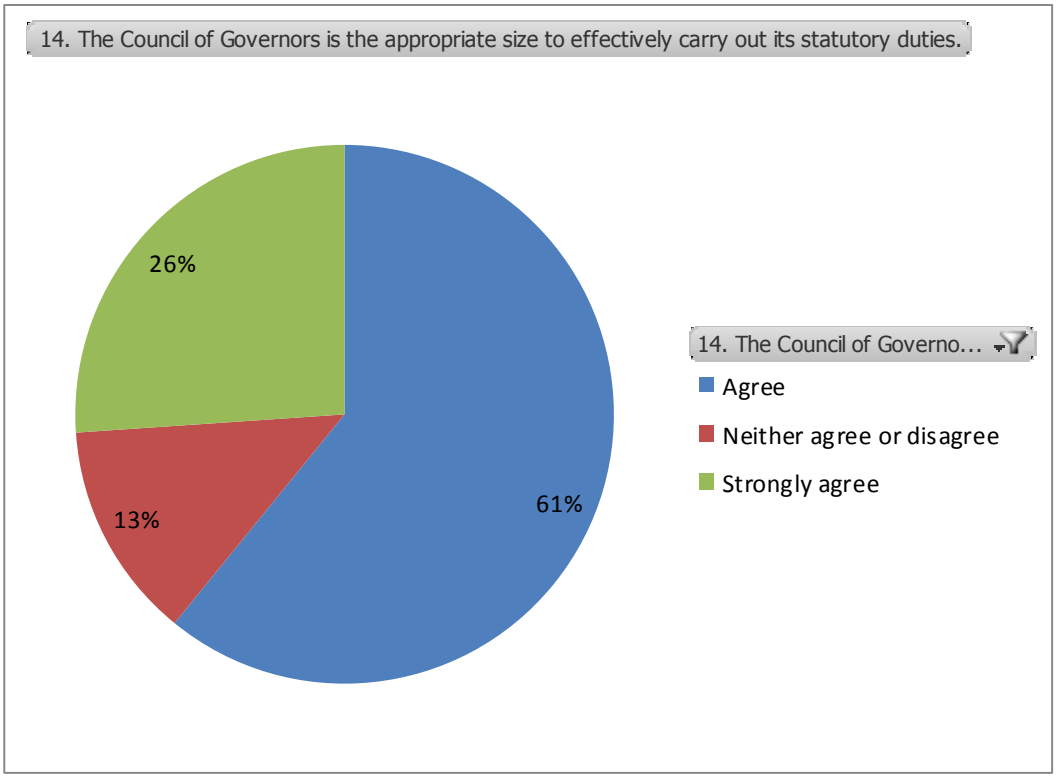
12. The Council of Governors effectively discharges its role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the performance of the Board.



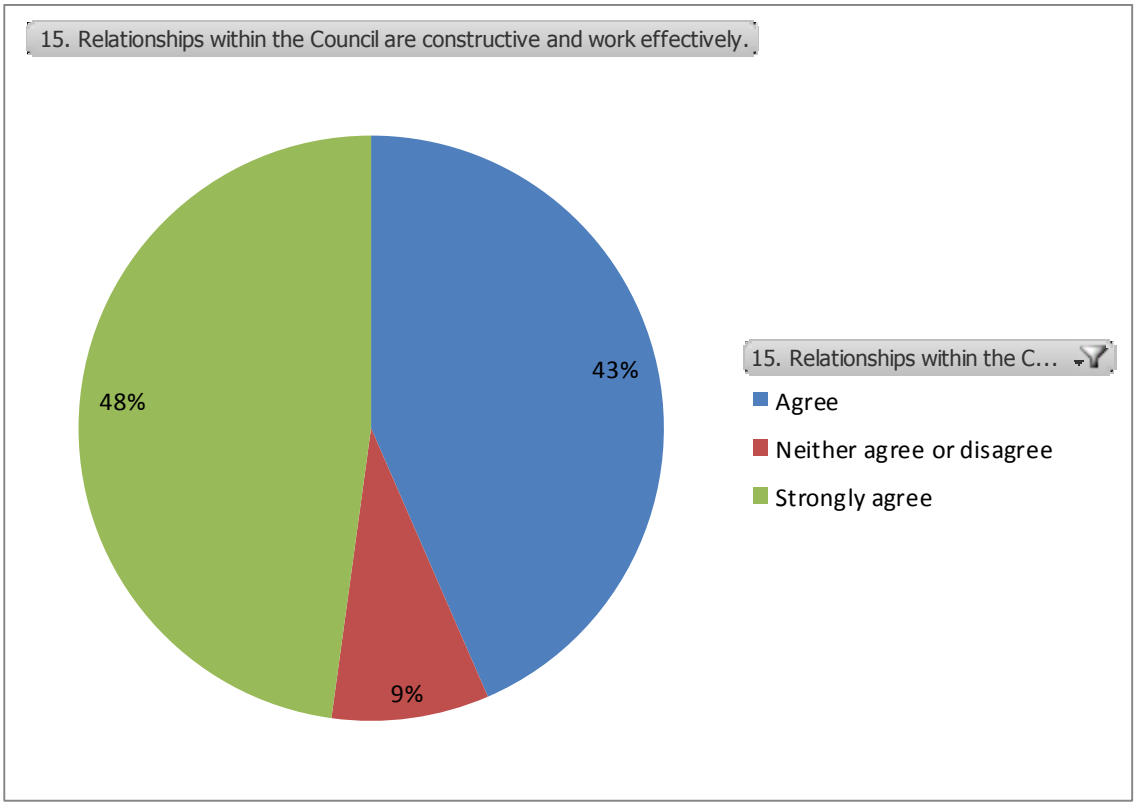
13. The Council of Governors is able to influence the direction of the Trust's future strategy.



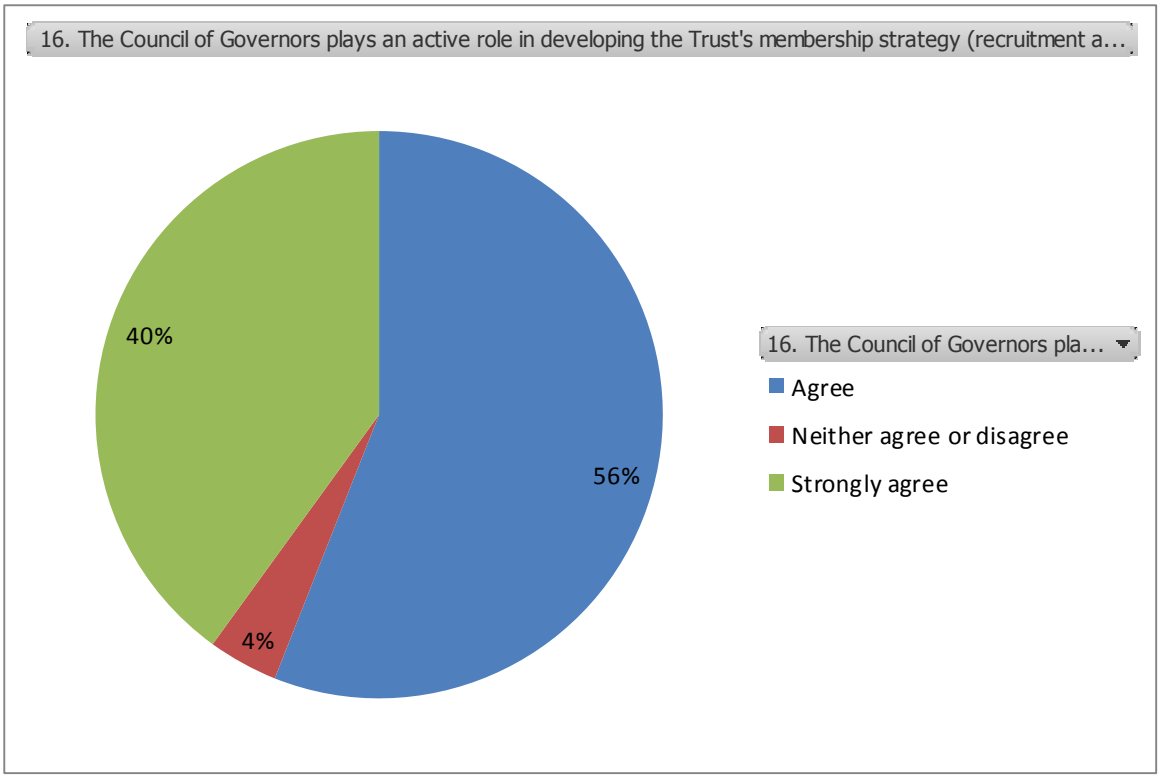
14. The Council of Governors is the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties.



15. Relationships within the Council are constructive and work effectively.



16. The Council of Governors plays an active role in developing the Trust's membership strategy (recruitment and engagement).



Section 4: Working with the Trust

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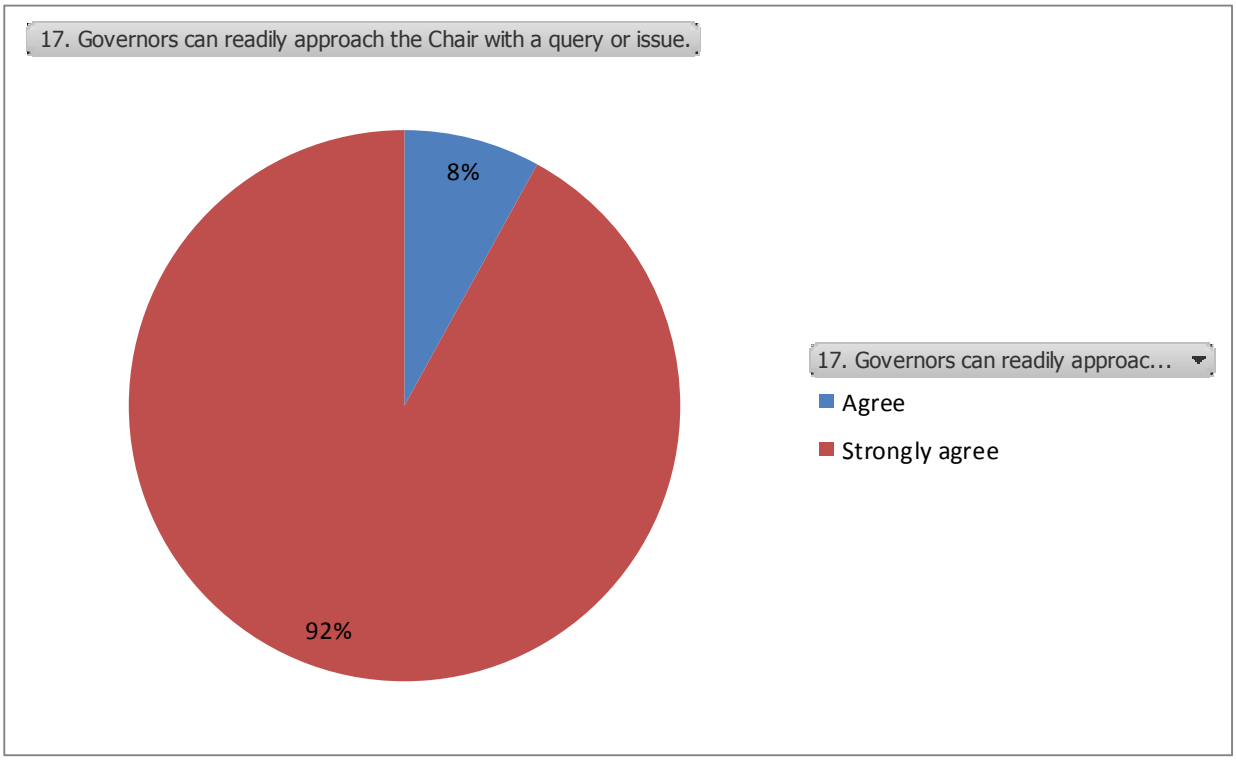
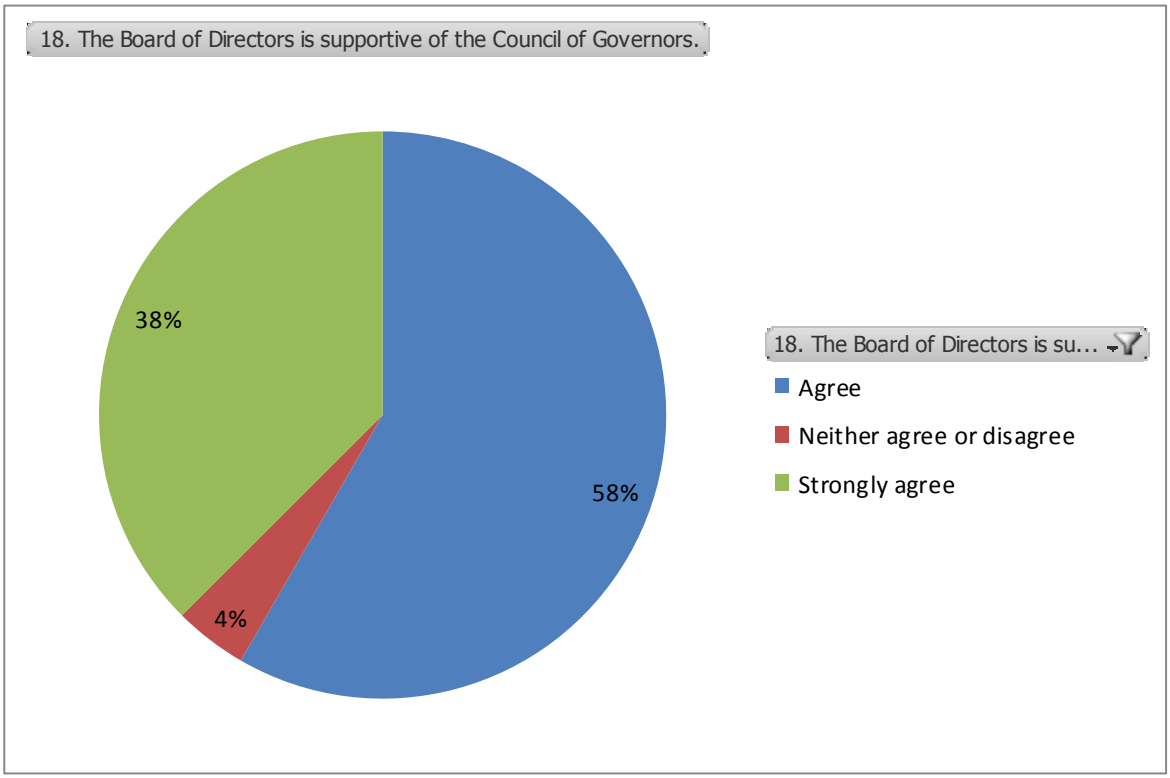
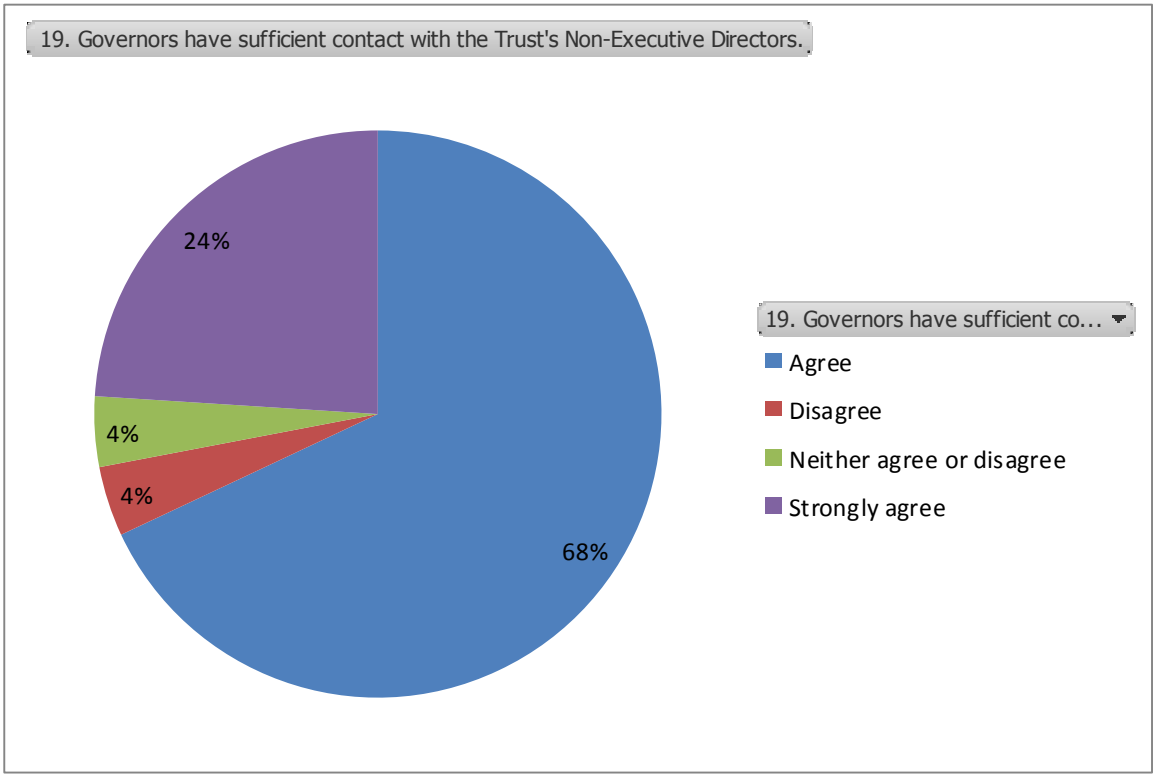


18. The Board of Directors is supportive of the Council of Governors.



19. Governors have sufficient contact with the Trust's Non-Executive Directors.



Section 5: Skills/knowledge development for Governors

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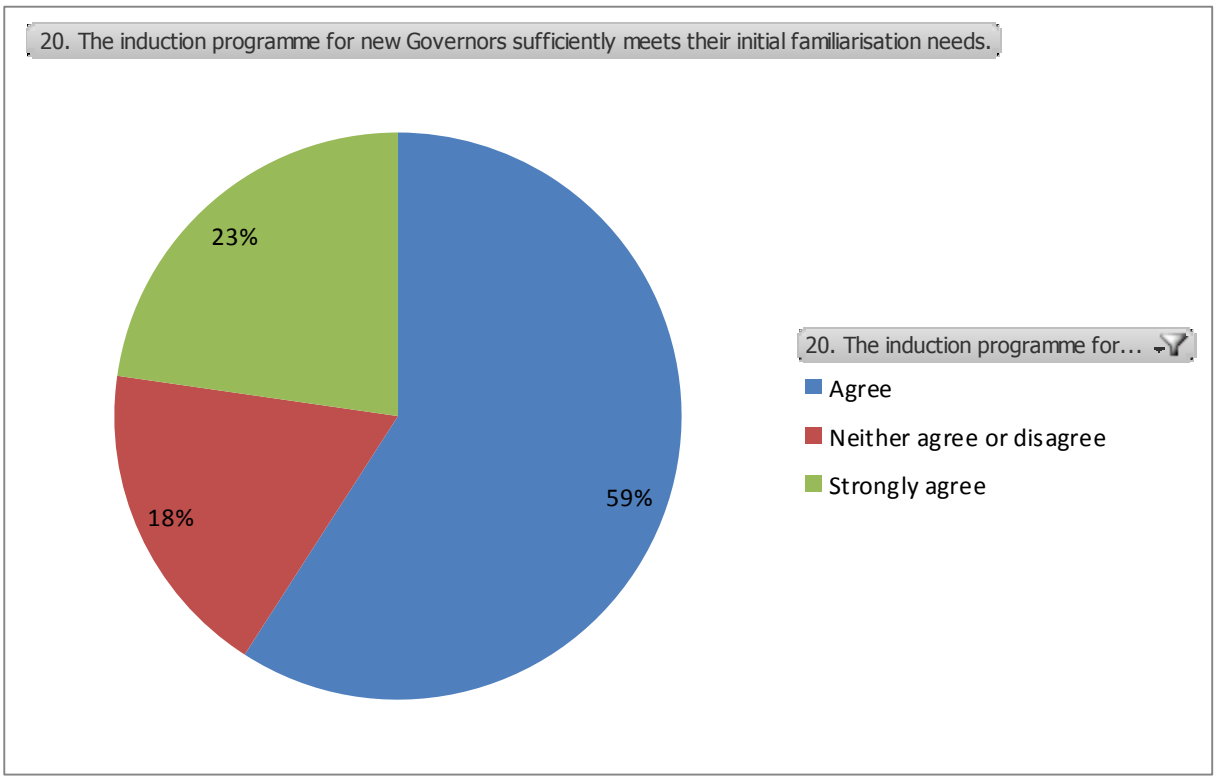
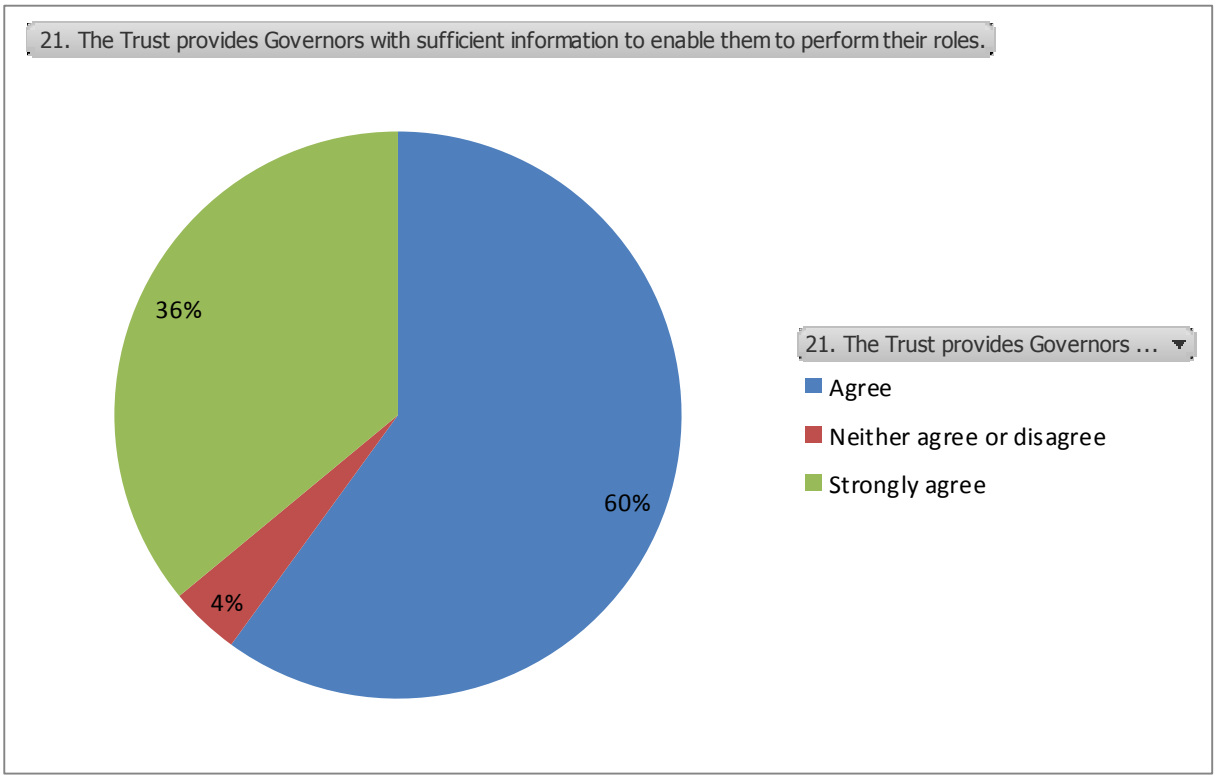
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