Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

OPEN MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS
2nd March 2022 via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT:	Mark Adams	Appointed Governor – Runnymede Borough Council	**MA**
	Edwin Addis	Public Governor – Hounslow, Kingston-upon-Thames and Richmond-upon-Thames	**EA**
	Frances Ansell	Public Governor – Elmbridge	**FA**
	Derek Barnes	Public Governor – Spelthorne	**DB**
	Sue Bell	Public Governor – Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Windsor and Maidenhead	**SB**
	Tracey Bradshaw	Staff Governor – Nursing and Midwifery	**TB**
	Andy Brown	Staff Governor – Volunteers	**AB**
	Melaine Coward	Appointed Governor – University of Surrey	**MC**
	Lilly Evans	Public Governor – Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Windsor and Maidenhead	**LE**
	Andy Field	Chairman	**AF**
	Shirley Holmes	Public Governor – Woking and Guildford	**SH**
	Colin Hood	Public Governor – Spelthorne	**CHo**
	Chris Howorth	Appointed Governor – Royal Holloway University	**CH**
	Mohamed Imam	Staff Governor – Medical and Dental	**MI**
	Hina Malik	Public Governor - Hounslow, Kingston-upon-Thames and Richmond-upon-Thames	**HM**
	Michael Smith	Public Governor – Woking and Guildford	**MS**
	Matt Stevenson	Staff Governor – Allied Health Professionals	**MS**
	Sylvia Whyte	Public Governor - Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Windsor and Maidenhead	**SW**
APOLOGIES:	Miranda Alcock	Public Governor – Woking and Guildford	**MA**
	David Carpenter	Public Governor – Elmbridge	**DC**
	Fran Davies	Non-Executive Director	**FD**
	Emma Gilmore	Public Governor – Spelthorne	**EG**
	Deborah Hughes	Appointed Governor – Woking Borough Council	**DH**
	Shashi Irukulla	Interim Medical Director	**SI**
	Chris Kane	Non-Executive Director	**CKa**
	Chris Ketley	Non-Executive Director	**CK**
	Aidan Parsons	Staff Governor - Staff Governor – Ancillary, Admin, Clerical and Managerial	**AP**
	Helen Pernelet	Public Governor – Elmbridge	**HP**
	Denise Saliagopoulos	Appointed Governor – Spelthorne Borough Council	**DS**
	Arun Thiyagarajan	Non-Executive Director	**AT**
	James Thomas	Chief Operating Officer	**JT**
	Marcine Waterman	Non-Executive Director	**MW**
IN ATTENDANCE			
	Jane Dale	Non-Executive Director	**JD**
	David Fluck	Interim Chief Executive	**DF**
Item 10/22	Susan Holton	General Manager for Outpatients	**SH**
	Andrea Lewis	Chief Nurse	**AL**
	John Machin	Associate Non-Executive Director	**JM**
	Simon Marshall	Director of Finance and Information	**SM**

	Sal Maughan	Associate Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance	**SMa**
	Louise McKenzie	Director of Workforce Transformation	**LMcK**
Item 09/22	Julian Ruse	Associate Director of Performance	**JR**
	Tom Smerdon	Director of Strategy and Sustainability	**TS**
	Meyrick Vevers	Non-Executive Director	**MV**
SECRETARY:	Anu Sehdev	Membership and Engagement Manager	**AS**

Minute		**Action**
COG-01/22	**Apologies and Welcome**	
	Apologies as listed on the previous page. The Chairman welcomed John Machin, Associate Non-Executive Director, to his first Council of Governors meeting. The Chairman also welcomed Julian Ruse and Susan Holton to the meeting since they would be covering the Performance Report in James Thomas' absence.	
COG-02/22	**Declarations of Interests in the Proceedings**	
	None	
COG-03/22	**Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th December 2021**	
	The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2021 were AGREED as a correct record.	
COG-04/22	**Matters Arising**	
	The updated Action Log was noted. Further clarification was received for the following actions: *People – Staff Survey, EDI and Wellbeing Update - Provide further detail on the work being undertaken with the South Regional NHS Improvement Team, retention and workforce requirements to a future Council meeting.* The Director of Workforce Transformation advised that the agenda had moved on since she had indicated her interest to undertake some data analysis. However, workforce retention was now an area of focus. This included working towards ensuring the Trust was a good place to work for and focusing on teamwork and improving the culture. The Trust was part of a national programme and had been selected as one of the exemplar sites. Progress on this initiative would be reported back via the People Committee. *Membership and Community Engagement Group Report – Lilly Evans to liaise with the Director of Strategy and Sustainability and Edwin Addis re linking in with the strategy and becoming a community hub.* The Director of Strategy and Sustainability advised that this meeting had not yet taken place but would ensure a meeting was set up before the next Council of Governors meeting.	**TS**
	Collaborate – Draft Trust Strategy Refresh – Deborah Hughes to share feedback from Woking BC with Director of Strategy and Sustainability.	

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability advised that he and colleagues had attended a meeting at Woking Borough Council of 5th January 2022 to go through the Trust's Strategy.

Collaborate – Draft Trust Strategy Refresh - Once Governors have had time to digest the presentation to forward any questions to the Director of Strategy and Sustainability via the Membership and Engagement Manager.

The Membership and Engagement Manager confirmed that no comments/questions had been shared with her.

FEEDBACK FROM GOVERNORS

COG-05/22 **Governor Activities**

Shirley Holmes, Lead Governor, advised that it had been a very busy few months with several extra meetings taking place to appoint and approve a new Chief Executive, a new Associate Non-Executive Director and new external auditors. Governors had also taken part in the Well-Led Review. Shirley thanked the Chairman for his time in meeting with each Governor individually.

The Chairman thanked the Governors especially since they undertook so much without being paid for their time. He particularly valued their time during the recruitment processes.

The Council NOTED the report.

COG-06/22 **Patient Experience Group (PEG) Report**

Chris Howorth took the report as being read and was happy to advise that the Group had a new cohort of members which meant the Group's membership was up to complement. Chris advised that Elinor Morgan, Quality Improvement Lead, had attended to update the Group on Viewpoint, the patient feedback system used by the Trust. The current response rate was 5% and the plan was to increase this to 20% by September. Jacqui Rees, Associate Director of Quality, had kindly attended in the absence of the Chief Nurse to cover the Quality Report.

The Chairman was pleased to learn of the work Derek Barnes had undertaken on Dickens Ward to assist with the response rate. Anyone else interested in volunteering could state their interest via the Membership and Engagement Manager who would then pass their details to the Chief Nurse.

Jane Dale provided assurance that patient experience was reviewed at each Quality of Care Committee meeting. More patient feedback was needed to ensure meaningful data was obtained and this was not just through Viewpoint. Chris added that it had been made clear what steps were being taken to achieve a 20% response rate.

John Machin considered a patient feedback response rate of 5% signified that only those that were unhappy were providing feedback. Chris indicated that it was not his understanding that only those that were dissatisfied with their treatment and care were providing feedback. The Chief Nurse confirmed that the feedback was mixed and that a lot of compliments were also received. The Chief Nurse confirmed there was a real focus on improving patient feedback response rates.

Chris referred to his conversation with the Chairman about how it was not possible for each area to be covered by a non-executive director but was now assured that the Quality of Care Committee, with Jane Dale, as Chair, looked at all patient experience areas. The Chairman confirmed that NHS guidance stipulated it was not required to have a non-executive director covering a specific area.

COG-07/22 **Membership and Community Engagement Group Report**

Lilly Evans presented the minutes from the meeting which took place on 17th February 2022 and advised that the Group now had two new members. However, the Elmbridge constituency was not represented and Lilly invited one of the Elmbridge Governors to join the Group.

Lilly advised that the Deputy Head of Communications had attended to update on the work the Communications team was undertaking. Lilly also explained that although 49 members had been lost over a period of three months the Trust had around 7,200 public members. The Director of Strategy and Sustainability added that there were an additional 4,500 staff and volunteer members.

Frances Ansell advised that she would consider joining the Group.

Edwin Addis reiterated his point during the Group meeting about what the benefit of membership was and how it considered that stating membership on CVs was of benefit to school aged children. The Chairman advised that he and the Director of Strategy and Sustainability were due to visit Bourne Academy and would utilise the visit to publicise membership. Frances touched upon inviting deaf people but realised there would be a need for interpreters. The Chairman advised that he and the Director of Strategy and Sustainability would endeavour to improve access for all.

PERFORMANCE

COG-08/22 **Assurance Report**

The Interim Chief Executive presented the Assurance Report which had been seen at Board.

The Interim Chief Executive wanted to thank staff for their continuous hard work whilst there were currently around 80 patients in the Trust with Covid-19. Transmission had increased in the Trust and this delayed patient discharges. A&E was under a great deal of pressure but the Interim Chief Executive as pleased to advise that elective surgery had restarted at Ashford Hospital.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that the CQC had been impressed with the working practices at the Trust. However, there had been some unhappiness expressed from clinicians in Theatres. The Chief Nurse, Director of Workforce Transformation and himself were putting together a response to the CQC. Any feedback from the staff governors was welcomed.

Providing further clarification to Lilly Evans, the Interim Chief Executive advised that the Covid-19 variant Omicron was not as lethal as previous variants and together with the vaccination take-up had better outcomes. However, it still posed a risk, for example reducing the ability to transfer patients out of hospital and the additional risks during surgery. Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures remained very important. The

Chief Nurse added that the national direction was to relax controls but since the Omicron variant was more transmissible it was difficult to ease restrictions within the Trust. It was hoped that case numbers would reduce in March. The Chairman advised that self-isolation still applied to staff and visiting was still restricted, although this remained under review.

John Machin requested further details on the CQC's assessment around Theatres and whether the Trust had been aware of issues prior to the visit. The Interim Chief Executive advised that the team had been aware of whistle-blowing and much work had already been undertaken prior to the CQC visit. The Director of Workforce Transformation added that together with Freedom to Speak Up and Whistle-blowing, data from the staff survey provided further insight. There was a better understanding of where the concerns were and a combination of actions were needed to resolve issues. A newsletter had been produced to recognise the work of staff and a charter for theatres had been co-produced. The Anaesthetists were the largest group of clinicians amounting to around 30. Fortunately, two anaesthetists had offered to become champions to assist with resolving issues in-house and they would be supported in this work. Whistle-blowing had been anonymous so it was difficult to feedback on any investigations. The Trust was fortunate to still be able to get the pick of trainees when it was time to recruit.

The Chairman added that although the whistle-blowers had highlighted safety at Ashford Hospital, the most recent visit by the CQC had indicated Ashford Hospital was a safe environment and that domain had been upgraded by them.

Chris Howorth referred to the increase in the number of Covid-19 patients and queried whether these were primarily Covid-19 cases or other conditions. He also queried whether the staff vaccination mandate removal was a positive move and how staff absence rates were being managed. Chris also queried whether volunteers for assisting with patient feedback were on hold at the moment. The Chairman advised that further detail on the vaccination mandate would be provided later in the meeting. The Interim Chief Executive advised that more than 50% of patients came in with Covid-19 and discharges were delayed due to Covid-19. The Director of Workforce Transformation advised that the Trust had experienced a 3% increase in absence at work during the peak of the pandemic. Other trusts had experienced much high absence rates. There were many members of staff who had worked from home with Covid-19. The Interim Chief Executive advised it was not the right time to encourage additional volunteers on the wards.

Tracey Bradshaw queried whether staff would continue to be able access free lateral flow test kits. The Interim Chief Executive advised that he understood that the kits ceased being free to the public from 1 April 2022. However, it was not considered that staff would need to pay for kits after this time but further confirmation regarding this was awaited.

Colin Hood referred to anonymous complaints and whether they would still be investigated. The Interim Chief Executive advised that anonymous complaints could be investigated but it was not possible to feedback to the complainant. The details were more sketchy and it was difficult to seek clarification. However, it was stressed that even anonymous concerns are and should be taken seriously.

The Interim Chief Executive referred to the second part of his report and advised that the Staff Wellbeing Hub was well utilised. After a case of Ashford Hospital needing blood urgently, a new motorbike had been bought to transport blood products. The

Veterans Award was highlighted and how the Trust benefitted from learning from veterans.

The Interim Chief Executive touched upon the visit from Ian Smith, Chairman for Surrey Heartlands ICS and how impressed he had been with the Trust. He also highlighted the visit by Anne Eden, Regional Director (South East) at NHS England and NHS Improvement, together with colleagues from Royal Surrey County Hospital and Surrey Heartlands, who attended to learn more about how the providers are working together and future opportunities for collaboration. During her visit, Anne also met with colleagues working on the Surrey Safe Care programme for a demonstration of the brand-new electronic patient record.

The Interim Chief Executive was pleased to advise that Ashford Hospital was in the next stage of being selected as one of three regional diagnostic and elective hubs.

The Director of Finance and Information that the Trust was on target to meet its financial plan for the current year. The capital programme was moving ahead. It was added that there were significant financial challenges expected in the future. It was added that the Business Planning session with Governors had been postponed to 28th March 2022.

The Council NOTED the report.

COG-09/22 **Performance Report**

The Associate Director of Performance presented highlights from the report advising that the Trust had seen a high number of patients with Covid-19 during the months of January and February. There had also been many last minute cancellations by patients due to them contracting Covid-19 as well as staff contracting Covid-19 and having to cancel patients. Winter periods were always difficult but additional protocols due to the pandemic had exacerbated cancellations.

The Associate Director of Performance advised that a surge rota had been introduced whereby planned procedures had been cancelled whilst urgent trauma and elective work continued. Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures led to wards being quarantined.

The Associate Director of Performance advised that the Trust had a strong Referral to Treat performance when compared to the national average and there were no patients waiting over 90 weeks.

It was advised that demand was exceeding outpatient capacity. It was anticipated that there would be around 8,000 overdue follow-ups in Ophthalmology, Dermatology, Gastroenterology and Neurology and a number of initiatives had been introduced to tackle the backlog.

The Associate Director of Performance turned to A&E performance advising that January 2022 had seen a small improvement from December 2021. Patient flow and problems with discharging patients were the main issues facing the Trust. For the most part, the Trust was faring much better than other trusts and during January was 30th nationally out of 112 trusts. Initial data indicated a further improvement in February.

The Associate Director of Performance advised that there had been a marginal improvement in diagnostics during January 2022. Diagnostic services had also been affected by staff sickness and requiring staff to isolate due to Covid-19. The Trust was

creating additional capacity to meet the demand and recovery of the position, including additional weekend / evening lists, additional radiologist sessions and both internal and outsourcing solutions.

The Associate Director of Performance advised that demand for Endoscopy remained very high and issues with performance were around staff sickness and patient choice delays. February data showed an improvement in performance. It was also advised that Cancer targets were faring much better in February but the challenges remained.

The Chairman advised that the non-executive directors had provided challenge to the Chief Operating Officer on the report and reassured Governors that performance was taken very seriously by the non-executive directors and a lot of detail was requested at committee meetings. The Chairman was reassured the Trust had a resilient team and, when compared to other trusts, was performing well.

Jane Dale confirmed that performance was reviewed at the Quality of Care Committee, especially in relation to any potential harms caused due to delays in being seen. There was a process in place where medical notes were reviewed and patients were seen by clinical priority. Reducing wait times in A&E and the reducing the number of times a patient was moved was an area of focus.

The Council NOTED the report.

COG-10/22 **Outpatient Letter Review Update**

The Chairman welcomed Susan Holton, General Manager for Outpatients, to the meeting. He appreciated outpatients was of particular interest to the Governors.

Susan advised that the revision of letters was now complete and any outdated leaflets had now been removed. New letter templates had been developed and these were currently being configured on Synertech. Ten of the twelve templates had been approved and gone live, with two left to do.

Susan touched upon the text messaging service and how this had helped to reduce the number of Did Not Attends (DNAs).

Susan advised that Surrey Safe Care would be going live in May and new letter formats would be utilised aligning with the Royal Surrey.

Susan advised that the next focus was to work on the website and was happy that Shirley Holmes and Chris Howorth had joined the working group. The site would be led by what patients wanted information on. A patient portal – Zesty – would be going live 12 months after Surrey Safe Care and this would allow patients to book their appointments.

Susan advised that her team was looking at different ways of communicating with patients whilst meeting their needs.

In response to the Chairman, Susan advised that the working group would include representation from patient groups and carers.

Susan indicated that not all patient groups were able to access the patient portal, either due to not having the internet or difficulty in navigating. Upon listening to Derek Barnes' personal experience, it was agreed that communications needed to be much better.

Minute **Action**

Jane Dale highlighted the patient story segment at Board where a mother with children with special needs had shared her experience. It was agreed the Chief Nurse would provide her details to Susan so she could be invited to join the working group. **AL**

In response to Michael Smith, Susan advised that electronic copies of letters after appointments would be available on the patient portal.

STRATEGY

COG-10/22 ***People*** **– NHS Instruction on the Covid Vaccination**

The Director of Workforce Transformation advised that the Trust had been working towards every member of staff who had direct contact with patients being fully vaccinated by the deadline of 1st April 2022. As the Council of Governors was aware, the Government had taken the decision to review its decision and NHS Improvement was now advising trusts not to proceed with terminations.

The Director of Workforce Transformation advised she was pleased that the Trust had not been faced with a number of vacancies. The team had a much more accurate record of staff that were and were not vaccinated since a significant amount of resource had gone into this exercise. It was considered that the legislation would be revoked and this would be extended to staff in care homes. The Trust awaited the outcome of the Government review.

The Director of Workforce Transformation believed vaccination was the right thing to do and her team continued to encourage staff to take this up.

COG-11/22 ***Modern Healthcare*** **– Hospital Building Programme**

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability advised that his presentation would be made available on Admincontrol after the meeting.

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability referred to the completed projects which included:

- West Site Land sale at St Peter's Hospital
- Estates Workshops and Transport
- Yard Ashford Hospital
- New Decked Cark Park
- New Two Floor Ward Modular Block
- Staff Wellbeing Centre St Peter's Hospital
- Ramp demolished
- New Willow Ward created

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability referred to the Trust's focus on recovery, meeting the North Star objective, clinical safety compliance, integration and partnership working, staff wellbeing, the greening agenda and healing arts.

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability highlighted the Trust's priorities which included:

- Ashford Hospital Redevelopment (Elective Hub) 2022-2025

- A&E reconfiguration and Refurbishment 2022-2025
- Maternity Theatre and Ward Upgrade 2022-2025
- St Peters theatres layout, improving IPC
- Backlog Maintenance Planned on-going programme
- New Store Facility 2022-2024
- Catering Facilities and Well Being Centre Ashford Hospital 2022
- Eternal Garden 2022

The Chairman appreciated that a lot of information had been shared and encouraged Governors to field any queries through the Membership and Engagement Manager. The Chairman queried whether solar panels would be incorporated into new builds and the Director of Strategy and Sustainability confirmed that the decarbonisation programme included elements of renewable energy, for example a steam based heating system and bike stations.

Jane Dale was pleased to see the Maternity service featured in the plan. Jane recommended engaging with the staff as they were best placed to offer feedback and she was aware they had concerns on how the unit currently functioned. The Director of Strategy and Sustainability welcomed the suggestion and confirmed the team was working closely with staff and was aware of the access issue. The proposed lift would do much to improve the service.

Edwin Addis queried whether staff were able to take advantage of special deals on electric cars and it was advised that there was a car lease scheme which all staff could take part in. It was added that ensuring the Trust's own fleet of vehicles were greener was a priority.

COG-12/22 ***Modern Healthcare*** **– Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) Update**

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability advised that the UTC service was provided by North West Surrey Integrated Care Services (NICS) in partnership with the Trust. On 16th December 2021 the UTC moved from its previous location in the portacabin opposite the Emergency Department (ED) main entrance to the ground floor of the new building adjacent to AECU. It was important to make the move as soon as possible to avoid patients queuing in the cold. It was too early to see a demonstrable improvement in performance; however, actions were underway to support measurable improvements including changes to clinical pathways and workforce practices. It had been possible to see an improvement in staff wellbeing and the impacts of the environment on patients. There had been positive feedback received from staff as well as patients, with fewer complaints being received.

The adjacency of UTC to both AECU and ED has improved communication and team building.

There remained more work to do in this area, and clinical pathway benefits were still in development. Plans included:

- The implementation of clinical navigation to replace clinical streaming.
  - Senior nurse led navigation to identify where patients need to be to manage their presenting symptoms.
  - Streamlined referral to other services, for example AECU and ED and in future also out of hospital if clinically appropriate.

Minute **Action**

- Reducing duplication of workload between departments who triage and assess the same patient.
- Improving waiting times for patients who need to go to a different urgent service to complete their care.
- Pathways in development with a plan to go live on 9th March 2022.

- Capacity and demand modelling to establish the staffing needs by hour of day and how this can best be met within the current and future proposed workforce.
- Workforce modelling including development of ACP roles to support medical staff.

The Director of Strategy and Sustainability touched upon the next steps for the UTC.

Andy Brown referred to the inaccuracy of signage to the UTC and it was agreed that this would be resolved. **TS**

Michael Smith queried whether prescribed medications could be collected from the UTC instead of from the Pharmacy. The Director of Strategy and Sustainability advised that medications, for the most part, could be picked up from a local pharmacy but the distance to the Trust's Pharmacy was not that great. It was clarified that medications were paid for by the Trust if collected from the Trust Pharmacy.

COG-13/22 **Any Other Business**

Rosemary Moore, member of the public, raised her concerns with the service provision of Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust (SABP). The Chairman expressed his understanding of the situation and advised that this matter was for SABP not for the ASPH Council of Governors. The Chairman added that the Trust was working closely with SABP at a system level.

Rosemary was very grateful for the Trust for streaming Board and Council of Governor meetings and for putting these recordings on the website so they could be viewed at a later date.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 8th June 2022, 4-6pm

KEY	
✔	Complete
ND	Not due
---	On track

Meeting Date	Minute Ref	Topic	Action	Lead	Due Date	Update	Status
2.3.22	**COG-04/22**	**Matters Arising**	Membership and Community Engagement Group Report – Lilly Evans to liaise with the Director of Strategy and Sustainability and Edwin Addis re linking in with the strategy and becoming a community hub.	**LE/TS**	ASAP	Arranged for 4 April 2022	✔
2.3.22	**COG-10/22**	**Outpatient Letter Review Update**	Provide details to Susan Holton of perspective member of working group	**AL**	ASAP	The Head of Patient Experience and Involvement shared this information with Susan Holton.	✔
2.3.22	**COG-12/22**	***Modern Healthcare* – Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) Update**	Request signage to UTC is improved	**TS**	ASAP	Complete	✔