COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS			
Date of meeting	2 July 2025	**Agenda Item**	10.2
Author(s)	Sal Maughan, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance	**Confidential**	NO
Exec Sponsor	n/a	**Date submitted**	25 June 2025
Title of paper	Council of Governors – Effectiveness Survey Evaluation		
Presented by	Sal Maughan, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance		

Committee(s) where paper has been discussed previously and outcome of discussion:
N/a

Strategic Objective(s)									
Quality of Care		**People**		**Modern Healthcare**		**Digital**		**Collaborate**	

Executive Summary
The report provides a summary of the findings of an effectiveness survey undertaken during May 2025. In total 22 out of 23 Governors completed the anonymous survey. Overall the feedback was positive although there were some areas highlighted which may benefit from further review or support and these have informed the recommended actions. The survey questions are included at Appendix 1 and a detailed breakdown of responses can be found at Appendix 2.

Recommendation	For: Decision ☒ Discussion ☐ Information ☐

Key issues: State impact/implications and mitigation	
Quality, safety & patient impact	Areas for improvement were identified in aligning Governors' roles more clearly with scrutiny of quality and patient experience. Enhancing their role in holding Non-Executive Directors to account will support improved oversight of patient care and service delivery.
Employee	There is an identified need for ongoing development and support for Governors, including improved access to information, structured learning, and regular opportunities for meaningful engagement with Non-Executive Directors
Other stakeholder(s)	Strengthening feedback mechanisms will support more productive relationships between Governors, NEDs, staff, and stakeholders
Equality, diversity & inclusion	Governors point to the opportunity to ensure Trust governance arrangements fully support the diverse voice of its membership, making sure that Governors can effectively represent a range of communities and interests
Finance	Improving transparency and understanding of financial planning and decision-making will aid more effective Governor scrutiny and contribution
Legal	Attention is required to ensure that Governors' statutory duties are fully translated into practice.

Risk(s) Identified (include link to Corporate Risk Register / Strategic (Board Assurance Framework) Risks:
N/a

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 fourth annual survey of its kind to be undertaken by the Council.

2. Methodology

The survey was undertaken electronically, using a combination of Likert scale response and free text. All responses were anonymous. The full list of questions can be found at Appendix 1.

In total, there were 22 out of 23 responses received and all the questions were responded to. Furthermore, six of 23 Governors provided feedback in the free text box at the end. A detailed breakdown of responses can be found at Appendix 2.

3. Summary of results by section

The 2025 evaluation reflects a mixed but overall positive view of the Council's performance, with high confidence in statutory role clarity and meeting management. However, perceptions of Governor influence, Non-Executive Director (NED) visibility, and feedback mechanisms require strengthening — particularly in the context of ongoing leadership change and the transition to a group model.

4. Thematic insights:

4.1. Role Clarity and Purpose

- Most Governors understand their statutory duties (95%)
- A significant minority was unclear on how to hold NEDs to account with roughly 30–40% of Governors expressing uncertainty or disagreement with their role in holding NEDs to account.

This may suggest that understanding statutory duties may not translate into confident execution, especially around scrutiny/appraisal.

4.2. Visibility and Relationships with NEDs

- Only seven of 22 felt the amount of NED contact was sufficient and qualitative comments describe a disconnection in this regard.
- Trust in appraisal processes for Chair/NEDs is lower.

There is a perceived distance which may stem from reduced informal engagement and limited structured feedback loops.

4.3. Governor Influence and Impact

- Just eight of 22 agreed they influence strategy; roughly 40–50% remained neutral or disagreed about their ability to influence Trust strategy.
- Free text shows a sense of marginalisation ("tick box exercise").

There is a gap between statutory expectations and the lived experience of being listened to and/or actual influence.

4.4. Meeting Effectiveness and Governance Flow

- Paper circulation and meeting chairing were largely praised.

- While meetings were generally well-chaired, neutral and disagreeing responses (40–50%) highlight that more can be done to enable full and confident participation.
- Nine of 22 were neutral on meeting productivity and six thought meeting frequency was insufficient.

Results suggest the process is working, but there may be a lack of focus on impact and follow-through.

4.5. Information and Development Support

- Although initial induction was generally well-received with most new Governors considering the induction programme sufficiently met their initial familiarisation needs, roughly 30–40% expressed neutral or disagreeing responses about ongoing support and access to relevant information.
- Comments suggest a need for ongoing learning, not just onboarding.

5. Conclusion

The findings show a resilient and committed Council of Governors with a clear sense of statutory responsibility. Strengthening mechanisms for visibility, influence, and feedback will be essential going forward.

In the context of significant leadership changes and a new Group Model, this review provides a critical lens through which the Council of Governors can redefine its role. By acting upon these recommendations, the Trust can foster increased focus, influence, and legitimacy within the Council of Governors, aligning it closely with the Trust's evolving governance landscape.

6. Recommendations

Issue	Impact	Proposed Action	Owner	Timeline
Low confidence in holding NEDs to account	Reduced scrutiny effectiveness	Tailor induction training Review NED appraisal process ensuring Governor input	Membership and Engagement Manager Associate Director of Corporate Affairs and Governance (ADCAG)	Q3 2025 Complete
Low perceived influence over Trust strategy	Reduced legitimacy of the Council	Develop formal mechanism for input into Trust strategy and planning	Chair / Director of Strategy	Q3 2025
Variable quality of information and engagement	Reduced contribution quality	Streamline CoG papers and enable pre-briefing sessions	ADCAG	Q3 2025
Limited visibility of NEDs	Reduced trust and understanding	Explore ways of reintroducing NED–Governor briefing and/or Q&A programme	Chair / ADCAG	Q3 2025
Variable understanding of Trust business	Reduced scrutiny and contribution	Enhance ongoing Governor development programme potentially through use of seminars	Membership and Engagement Manager/ ADCAG	Q3 2025

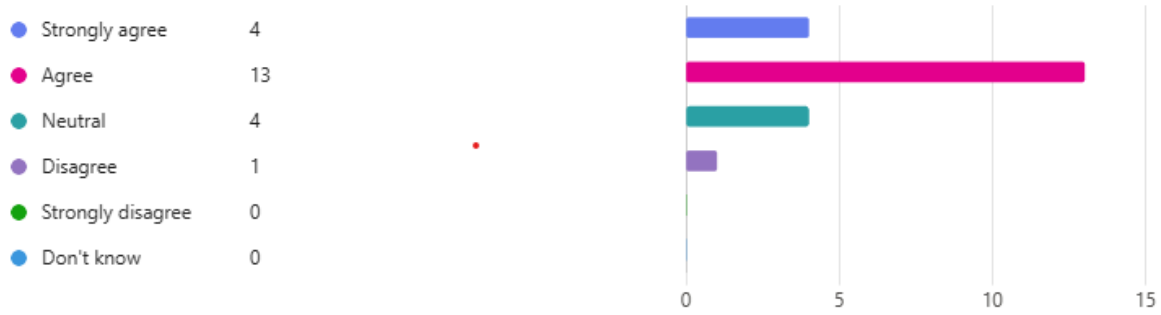
Appendix 1

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 opportunities to support my understanding of the business of the Trust are sufficient: i.e. Council of Governor meetings, informal meetings with Chair/CEO, NED-Governor meetings, one to one meetings with the Chair, public Trust Board attendance, board paper publication etc.
21	The induction programme for new Governors sufficiently meets their initial familiarisation needs.
22	The Trust provides Governors with sufficient information to enable them to perform their roles.
	Further free text feedback
23	Please include below any further comments you wish to make.

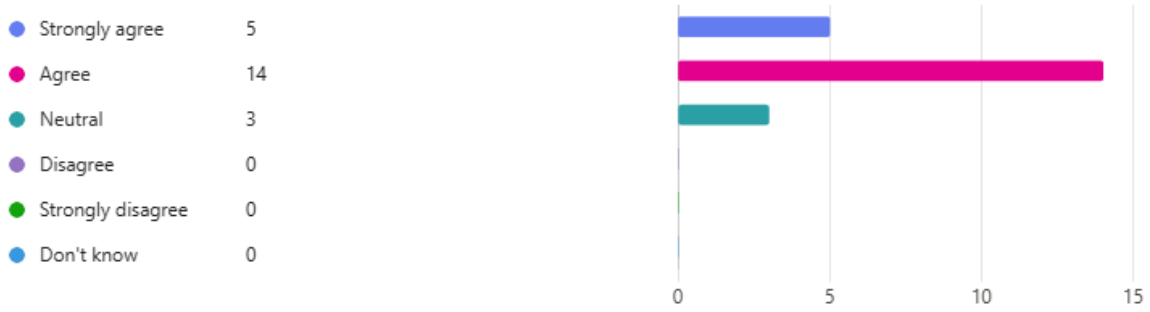
Appendix 2

Section 1: Roles and Responsibilities

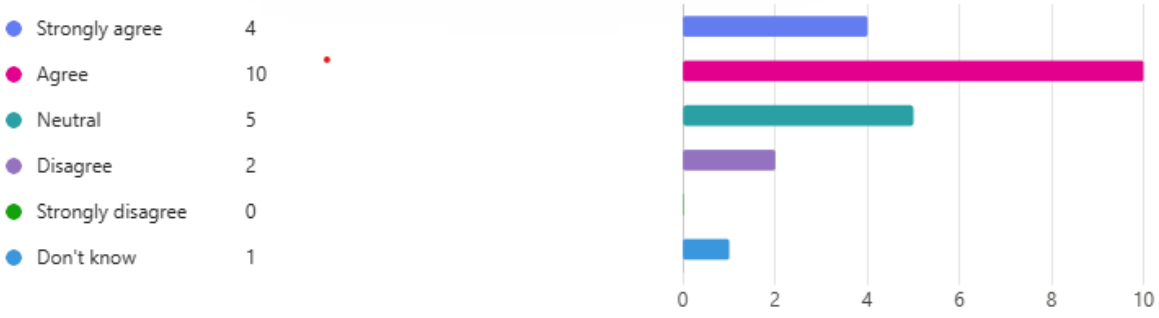
1. I have a clear understanding of the roles of the Governor, including those within the Health and Social Care Act 2012.



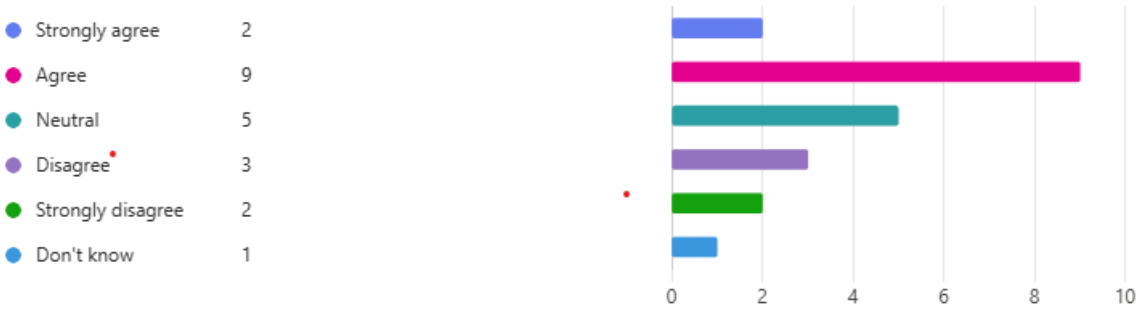
2. I have a clear understanding of what it means to hold the Trust's Non-Executive Directors to account.



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

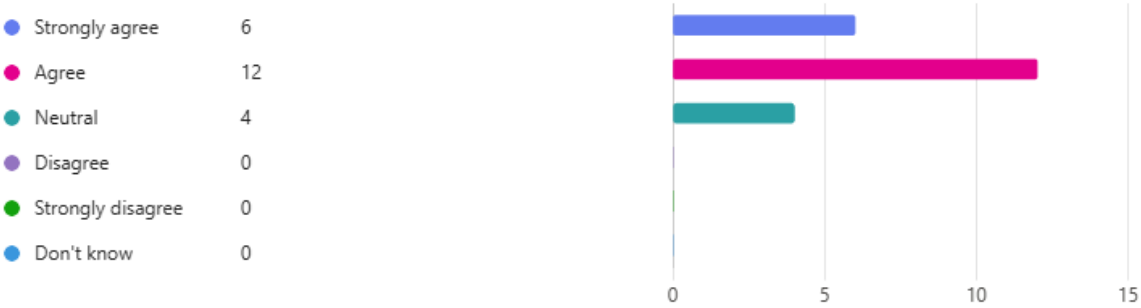


4. The Council of Governors adopts a rigorous process for the appraisal of the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.

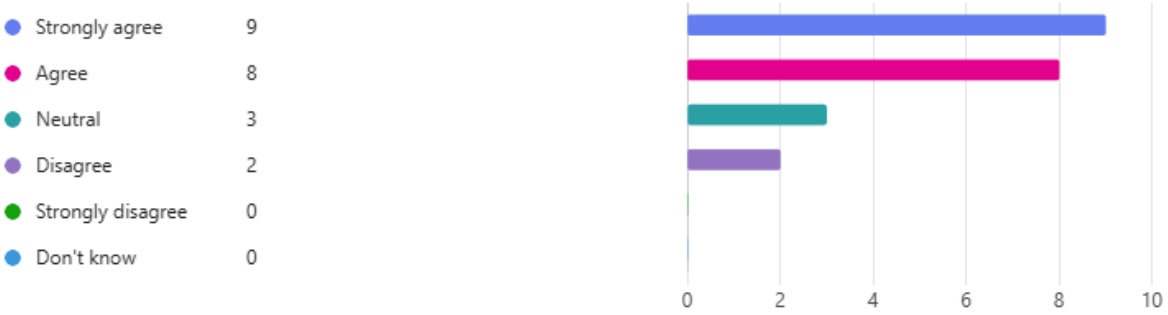


Section 2: Council of Governor Meetings

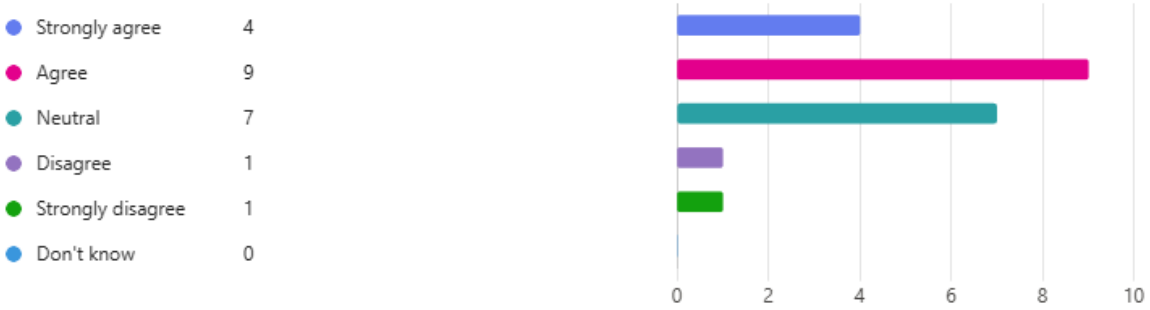
5. Governors have sufficient opportunity to identify 'topics of interest' to add to the Council of Governors programme/meeting planner.



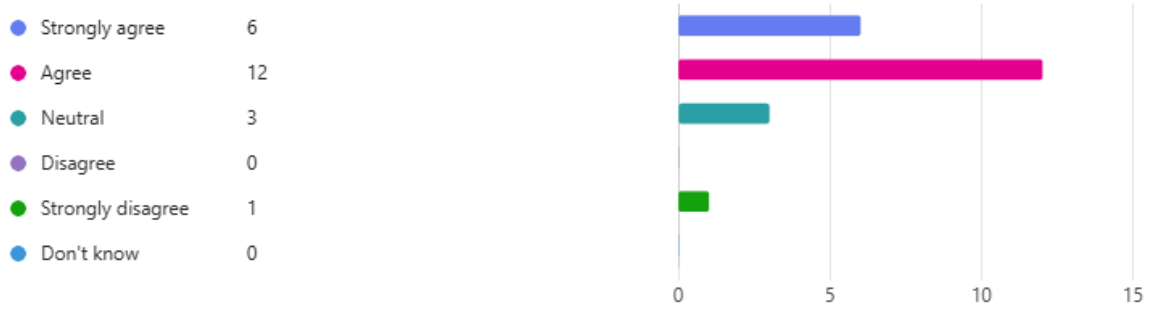
6. Agendas and supporting documents are circulated in sufficient time for each meeting.



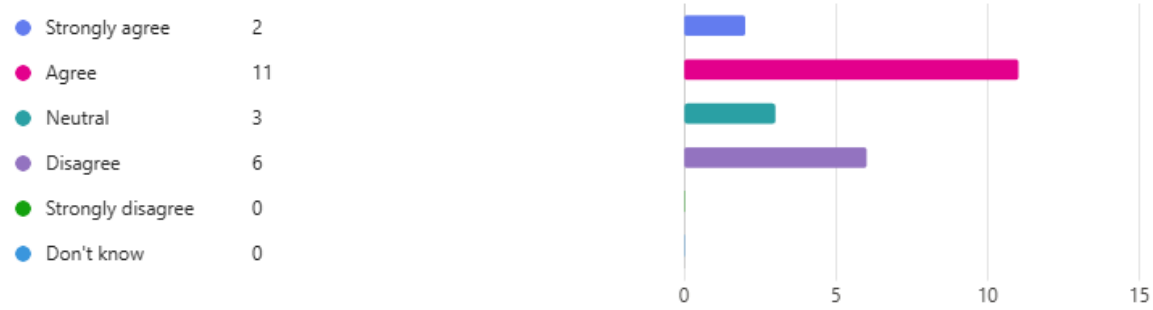
7. Meeting papers contain sufficient information to allow me to participate in discussions.



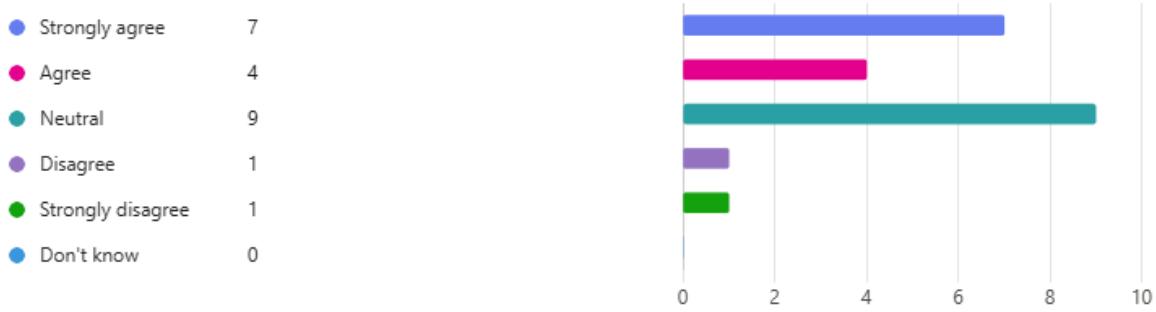
8. The Council of Governors' meeting is chaired effectively to time with adequate opportunity for all to contribute to the discussion.



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

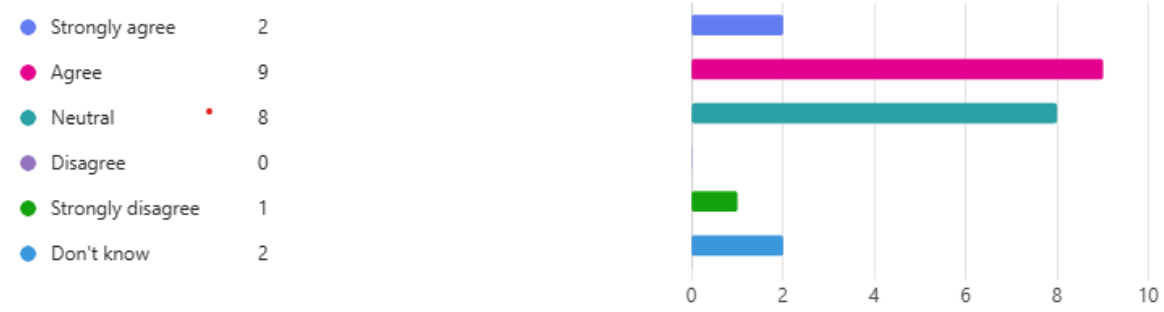


10. Overall, Council of Governor meetings are productive and strategic in focus.

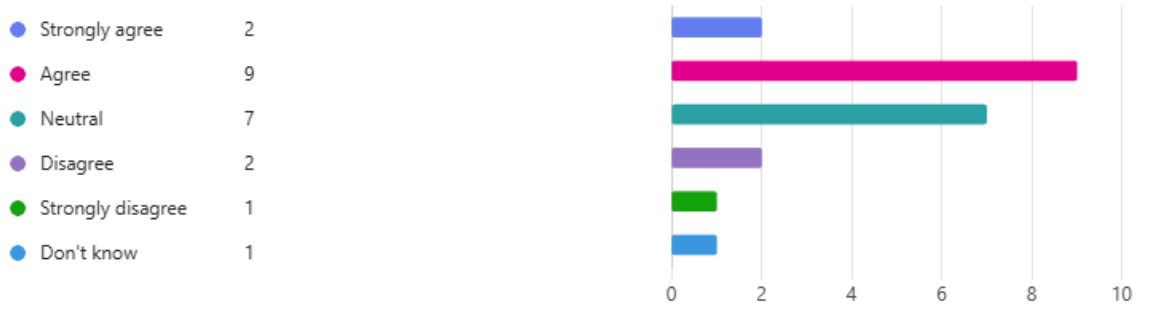


Section 3: Effectiveness of the Council of Governors

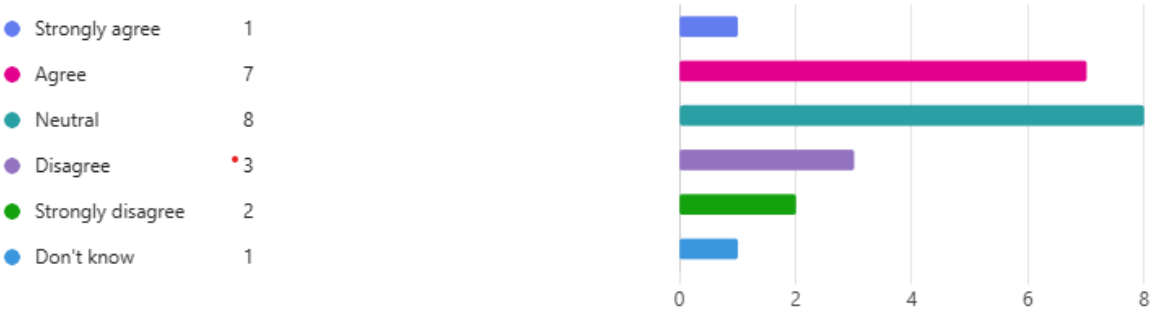
11. Governors effectively communicate and engage with and represent the views of the Trust membership.



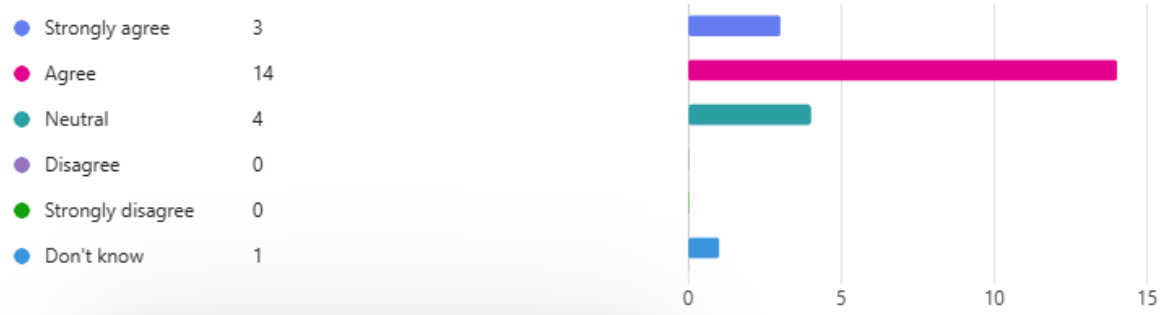
12. The Council of Governors effectively discharges its role of holding the Non-Executive Directors to account for the per formance of the Board.



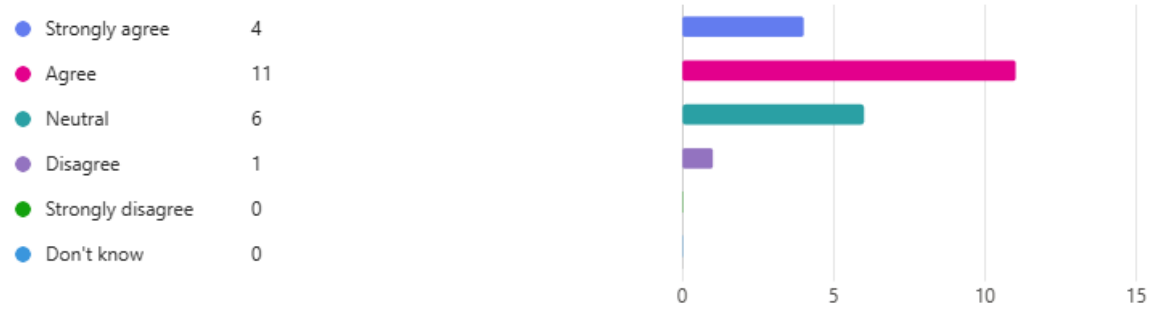
13. The Council of Governors is able to influence the direction of the Trust's future strategy.



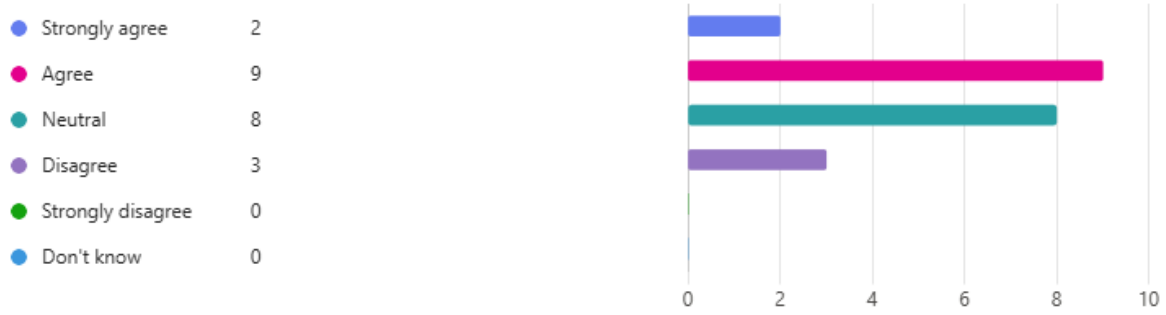
14. The Council of Governors is the appropriate size to effectively carry out its statutory duties.



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



16. The Council of Governors plays an active role in engaging with and recruiting new members.



Section 4: Working with the Trust

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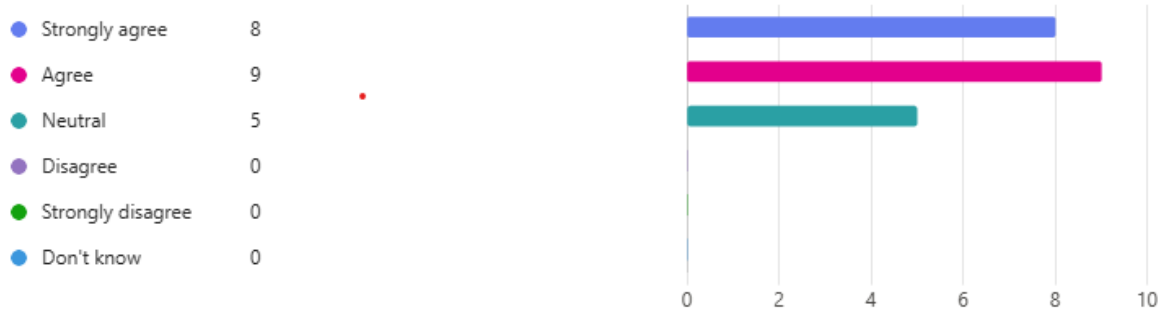
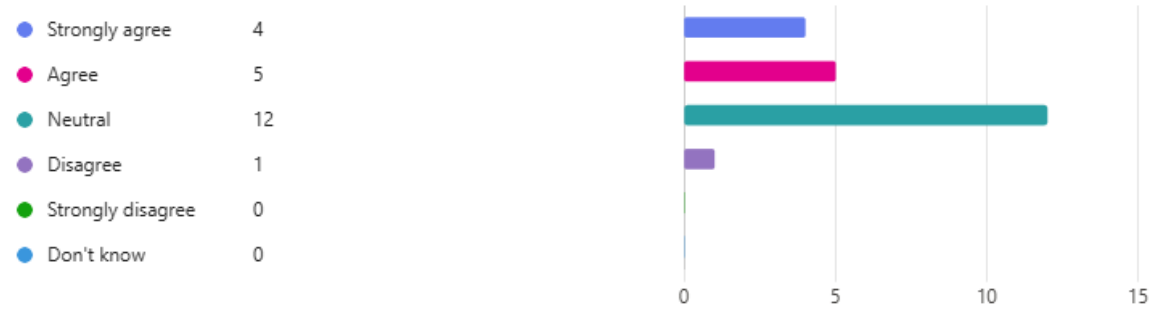
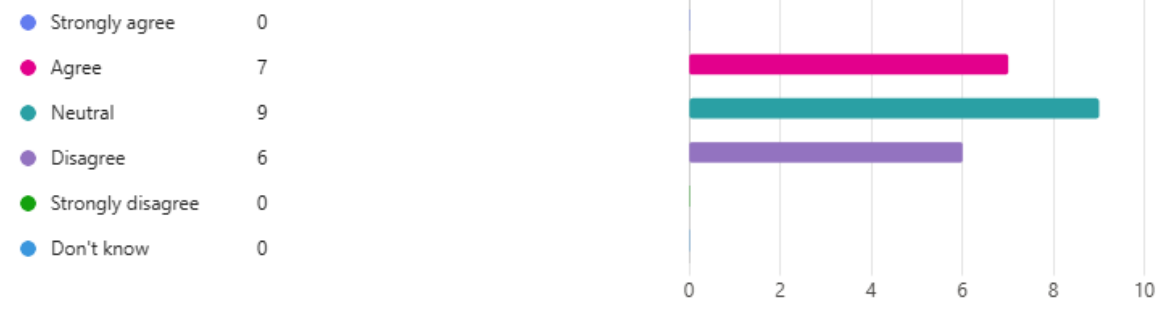


18. The Board of Directors is supportive of the Council of Governors.



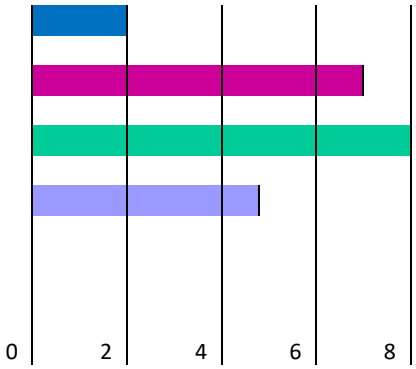
19. Governors have sufficient contact with the Trust's Non-Executive Directors.



Section 5: Skills/knowledge development for Governors

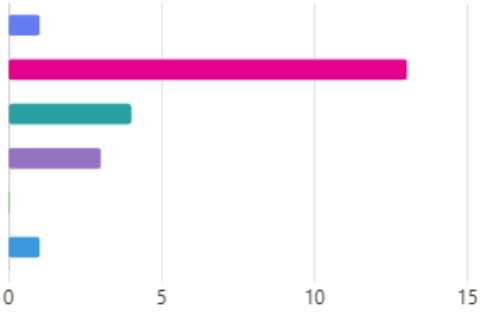
20. The opportunities to support my understanding of the business of the Trust are sufficient, i.e. Council of Governor meetings, informal meetings with Chair/CEO, NED-Governor meetings, one to one meetings with the Chair, public Trust Board attendance, board paper publication etc.

Strongly agree	2
Agree	7
Neutral	8
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



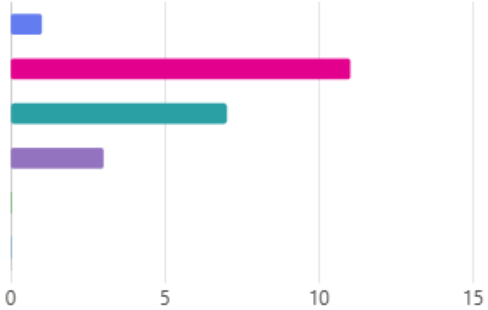
21. The induction programme for new Governors sufficiently meets their initial familiarisation needs.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	13
Neutral	4
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1



22. The Trust provides Governors with sufficient information to enable them to perform their roles.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	11
Neutral	7
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	0



23. Please include below any further comments you wish to make.

- Am a new governor so still understanding many of these working mechanisms.
- When observing Trust meetings it would be helpful for Governors to have access all presented papers in addition to the Agenda.
- It feels as though Governors have been very much side lined rather than seen as a body for supporting shared goals within the past couple of years.

- Though we have representation at subcommittee meetings, we have no process to feed back any observations to the other governors. We used to have informal governor catch up sessions which no longer occur.

- The interaction is variable and information provided is sometimes limited or restricted mutated. It is felt the board have their own agenda at times, between what is being said and what is being done.

- As a Governor I believe that we are regarded as a tick box exercise and that this is an opinion that is expressed by others.