

HOOPLE BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS of HOOPLE LTD held in Training room 3, Nelson Building, Hereford on Friday, 27th January 2023 at 10.30am.

Board Members present:

Cllr David Hitchiner (DH)	Chairman and Non-Executive Director (Herefordshire Council)
Andrew Cottom (AC)	Non-Executive Director – Wye Valley NHS Trust (joined by video link)
Andrew Lovegrove (AL)	Non-Executive Director – Herefordshire Council
Andrew McLean (AM)	Non-Executive Director – Lincolnshire County Council (joined by video link)

Hoople Officers Supporting the Board:

Audrey Clements (AEC)	Chief Operating Officer
Stephen Weller (SW)	Head of Commercial Development
Mark Aldsworth (MA)	Head of Buildings Operations
Simon Mortimore (SM)	Head of IT
Tracey Sampson (TS)	Director of HR & OD
Daley Jones (DJ)	Head of Training & Education
Kerry Lawrence (KL)	Company Secretary Support / Minute Taker

Invited:

David Warden (DW)	Associate Director of IM&T- Wye Valley NHS Trust (via video link)
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1. Apologies

1.1 No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no new declaration of interest received.

3. Chair of Board

3.1 The current term of office concludes and it was agreed to appoint AC as Chairman for the next 12 months.

4. Minutes, Action Sheet and Matters Arising

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2022 were agreed as an accurate recording.

Actions

1/I – it was acknowledged that the business plan was still awaited to be able to look at next steps. It was agreed that Cllr Hitchiner would contact the Chair at WVT to escalate the matter.

Action DH

4/I – AEC advised some improvements had been made to the reporting of care services so that it provides a clearer position across the board and the right information is being shared with partner organisations. AEC added that Herefordshire Council's commissioning team are working on their service specifications, which is expected shortly and will inform the reporting going forward. AC reported that Jane Ives was pleased with the progress being made.

The board noted the remaining actions.

5. Finance and Business Update

5.1 The board noted the finance and business update report including the 2022/23 outturn position, the progress to date made by the business and key issues and risks.

5.2 AEC reported discussions had begun with Herefordshire Council's commissioning team whether there was an opportunity to consider capital investment works on the buildings occupied by the learning disability services to enable the standard of care provided in Herefordshire to be showcases and create better day-care facilities for service users. There was a question around who would fund the improvements being a Herefordshire Council owned building and what Hoople's position would be, however AEC noted the annual upkeep of the building was impacting Hoople's bottom line. AL suggested setting out a five year plan to put forward and inviting the commissioning team to view the premises.

5.3 AEC confirmed that preparations for the Lincolnshire County Council contract 'go-live' date were going well and there were plans to have staff onsite from 1st April to ensure a smooth transition.

5.4 In response to a board members question in reference to point 3.3, AEC confirmed that this was an error and it should state pressure on the budget for 2023/24.

- 5.5 TS highlighted that the new system the government introduced for organisations to capture teachers' pension information had been suspended for many organisations as it was deemed not fit for the purpose it was intended, however Hoople were still required to comply and to rectify the situation owing to the system error, had taken a considerably amount of manual intervention by the team. TS added there is a potential reputational risk to Hoople but this was thought to be low. Hoople are activity working with Teachers Pensions to resolve the issue of teachers being able to view their contributions on the portal.
- 5.6 In relation to the teacher pensions, TS advised that it was only applicable to employees of Herefordshire Council and those academy schools who buy Hoople's employee services.
- 5.7 TS acknowledged that there were capacity issues within the recruitment team impacted by the increased demand from children's services but it was being managed at this stage.
- 5.8 SW explained referring point 6.25 in the report, there was an ongoing piece of work around stabilising and standardising Hoople's care services, working with the Senior Management Team and Registered Managers to outline the core values for Hoople Care.
- 5.9 SW confirmed the CQC report for Southbank had been published and shared with board members with a confirmed rating of 'requires improvement'. Hoople are working closely with Herefordshire Council's Quality Improvement team, using the feedback from the CQC report to develop the service improvement plan.
- 5.10 AM asked in relation to risk HW10 linked to teckal compliance, whether the mitigating actions were still relevant due to the latest shareholding with Lincolnshire.

Action: AEC to update the risk register

6. Draft Business Plan and Budget 23/24

- 6.1 AEC sought comments on the draft budget and business plan which takes into account an 8-20% rise in expenditure costs due to inflation, plans for the increase to the National Minimum Wage and proposes a 7% pay award for staff.
- 6.2 AEC set out the focus of the business plan was stabilisation of the company, looking for opportunities and efficiencies, attracting and retaining the best staff, building on strengthening the quality of services to be in the best position to support Shareholders.
- 6.3 After some discussion regarding the openness and transparency of Hoople's financial position, it was suggested referencing the balance sheet in the business plan to add some context in terms of Hoople's financial objective.

Action: AEC

6.4 Further suggested changes were:-

- In support of the vision, focusing on Shareholders and their ambition – add some detail around what major shareholders ambitions are and Hoople’s support
- Under Hoople Care, reference Hoople’s intention to improve care services and the CQC ratings
- In the employee section – touch up on sensitivity dealing with cost of living crisis.
- Review the use of language to ensure the business plan is pitched at the right level but not moving away from the focus
- Spilt the income graph between health and NHS

Action: AEC

6.5 An updated business plan and final budget to be brought back to the board meeting in March for approval.

7. Gender Pay Gap

7.1 TS presented a draft action plan as a long term commitment to reduce Hoople’s Gender Pay Gap based on the government’s template. All actions are evidenced based and tested by the government.

7.2 A board member queried whether the mean hourly pay rate under point 4.1 was correct in relation to the national minimum wage. TS would check.

7.3 The board noted the contents of the report and action plan.

8. Auditor Approval

8.1 AEC sought approval of the external auditors advising that Williamson & Croft Audit had scored the highest based on quality criteria followed by cost.

8.2 The board noted the report and subsequently approved the appointment of Williamson & Croft Audit for period of two years, plus a further one year extension.

9. Forward Plan

9.1 The board noted and subsequently agreed the forward plan.