

Chair's update

FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/DECISION

1. Board developments

At the last meeting I reported on the wide range of people who had been in touch in connection with our trustee vacancies. I'm delighted now to report that we successfully translated this into an excellent crop of applications and to welcome our five [new colleagues](#) selected through the process and appointed to the board by the extraordinary general meeting held on 2 May. This brings the strength of our board back up to 11, our fullest complement of trustees for several years, and I look forward to the difference we will all be able to make together.

It's been great to have 1:1s with most of the new board members as part of the wide-ranging induction programme that the team have organised. I'm also very pleased to welcome Ramone back from her pause in board activity.

Our strategic board meeting in person on 4 July will be a great opportunity for as many of us as possible to meet face-to-face.

The four trustees who were appointed in 2021 will see our initial three-year terms expire in November of this year, so we intend to use the annual general meeting in July to re-appoint those who wish to serve a second term from November onwards.

RECOMMENDATIONS - The Board is asked to:

1. Note the changes to the membership of the board.
2. Note the intention to conduct board re-appointments at the annual general meeting.

2. Organisational developments

As board members are aware, during April and May we ran a successful process to appoint a successor to Geoff as chief executive when he leaves us later in the year. I will update further during the relevant item on the Part 2 agenda and look forward to being able to make our formal announcement. In the meantime I want to extend my thanks to all of the board members who took part in the process, as well as the staff members and external partners who helped us to make a well-informed decision. Special thanks go to Nuray for the thoughtful and effective way in which she developed and ran a relatively complex process. I think it was well worth all the effort and other organisations involved have said they intend to adopt elements of it for their own purposes.

3. National context

In the run-up to the general election, due to the public functions we carry out we are subject, in addition to our usual requirements of political impartiality, to national guidance covering the sensitive pre-election period. Healthwatch England has helpfully set out [what this means for local Healthwatch](#). The most significant implication for us is that the legislation covering Healthwatch requires us to have prepared (which in practice usually means to have published) our annual report by 30 June each year. Healthwatch England have advised us, in consultation with our commissioners, to comply with the requirement to prepare our report by the end of June but not to publish until after the election. I propose that we take that advice.

In the light of the election I am not including my usual summary of national policy developments but will resume this in my next report.

RECOMMENDATION - The Board is asked to:

3. Agree to prepare the annual report by 30 June but to follow the national advice to publish it after the period of pre-election sensitivity.

4. 'Holding to account' and other meetings

During this quarter I represented us at two meetings of the Integrated Care Board's Primary Care Board (the second in its new guise as the Primary Care Transformation Committee), as well as the Integrated Care Partnership Board and its subsequent development session, plus the Health and Wellbeing Board.

I also presented our insight on dentistry to the Health Scrutiny Committee. Councillors were very appreciative of the team's consistent work on this issue over the years. [A recording of the meeting is available here](#), with our contribution on dentistry from 26:45 to 33:45, following the ICB's presentation.

Fiona and I met the Integrated Care Board's chair and chief executive for our regular catch-up, which on this occasion focused substantially on the system's financial challenges during the current year and on the particular importance of our insight and independence during this period. Geoff and I met the chief executive of the East of England Ambulance Trust and discussed next steps in improving response times and tackling inequalities as well as the role of Healthwatch in helping the Trust understand people's needs and experience as new pathways involving 111 and community services are developed and implemented.

On a related note, I was interviewed for BBC Look East and appeared on BBC Three Counties Radio on the launch of an independent sector ambulance service with plans to cover the north of the county:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0d3e13r7jno> (link to audio is embedded in the news article).

I also recently helped our friends at Healthwatch Luton with interviews for their new chief executive and took part in a Healthwatch England webinar for chairs and board members as part of their continuing work to develop the sustainability of the local Healthwatch network.

RECOMMENDATION - The Board is asked to:

4. Note the report.