

REPORT TO THE TRUST BOARD: PUBLIC
21 May 2020

Title	Interim Chair's Report
Author	Eileen Taylor, Interim Chair (and Vice-Chair) of ELFT

Purpose of the Report:

The report informs the Board of key points arising from the Council of Governors and Members discussions and the Interim Chair's most significant activities.

Summary of Key Issues:

To receive feedback on Governor discussion and key strategic points arising from Chair and Non-Executive Director activity.

Strategic priorities this paper supports (Please check box including brief statement)

Improved experience of care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Annual Plan consultations enable the Trust focus on key priorities for improving the experience of care
Improved population health outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Board discussions on how we can best achieve our population health ambition within a changing context will enable the organisation to be better prepared.
Improved staff experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Members have highlighted staff experience as a key priority for the Trust and provided areas of focus.
Improved value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Working collaboratively with our health and care partners will secure better integrated and more accessible care, thereby increasing value.

Committees / Meetings where this item has been considered:

Date	Committee / Meeting

Implications:

Equality Analysis	Positive impact on reducing health inequalities through system partnerships
Risk and Assurance	Ensuring that we respond effectively to Member feedback will provide additional assurance, minimise risk and improve accountability
Service User / Carer / Staff	Engagement in our Annual Planning Process which ensure its contents better meet the needs and aspirations of service users, carers and staff.
Financial	Increasing the potential for creating value by involving and working with others to maximising benefits of investments.
Quality	Improving in response to the experiences of Members will help drive quality improvements further.

Glossary

Abbreviation	In full

1.0 Background/Introduction

- 1.1 This report updates the Board on the Council of Governors discussions so that these views inform Board decisions. It also provides information on the Chair's main activities and strategic outcomes of Non-Executive Director (NED) visits as part of the Board's commitment to public accountability.

2.0 Council of Governors

- 2.1 The Trust has made strong efforts to keep in regular contact with the Governors during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 30 March 2020 I chaired a meeting with the Lead Governor and Council of Governors Committee chairs to discuss the impact of the emergency on the Trust and to find a way forward to adjust the Council's work and operations particularly as the decision was made to cancel the Council of Governors meeting scheduled for 12 March.

Our discussions took account of the 'reducing the burden' guidance from NHSE/I to free up management capacity and resource where advice was given in relation to stopping face to face Governor meetings, stopping/delaying Governor elections, and deferring membership engagement.

As a result, a communications and engagement plan was produced to enable Governors to be kept informed the Trust's response to COVID-19 and also included other communications options to reflect both how Governors can fulfil their statutory responsibilities but also to provide an informal support network amongst Governors. The plan has been shared with NHS Providers who have published this as a 'good practice' approach and a copy is attached at appendix 1 for information.

- 2.2 I have also personally sent an email update to the Governors early in my tenure as interim Chair, have held meetings with the Lead Governor, and participated in a Governors Open Forum on 23 April 2020. In addition, the Council of Governors Nomination and Conduct Committee successfully concluded the process to recommend a candidate to become the next Chair of ELFT.
- 2.3 My communication to the Governors on 6 April 2020 included an update on the Chair recruitment process and the process to be followed for recruitment of a new NED to replace Mary Elford who will sadly be leaving us in the coming months.
- 2.4 I used the opportunity of the Governors Open Forum to update on the activities of the Trust during COVID-19, how services were being maintained but in new formats and how staff were coping.

Governors were particularly concerned about staff and how we support them. They identified the potential surge in requirement for mental health services and were pleased to hear that the Trust had identified this and were preparing to shape the future based on learning from some of the new ways of working during COVID-19. Governors also helpfully identified some areas where they felt ELFT services should be posted (such as council websites) where they were not. They felt keenly a sense of being disconnected due to the inability to hold meetings

with Borough Directors. I used the opportunity to inform the Governors that the Board and NEDs are receiving appropriate assurance from the Executive.

- 2.5 The Chief Medical Officer sent a report to the Council on 7 May 2020 to update them on the impact of COVID-19 on the Trust.
- 2.6 At the 14 May Council of Governors meeting:
 - Paul Calaminus updated the Governors on the Trust's response to COVID-19 and talked about recovery plans which we are calling "Shaping our Future"; a briefing session for Governors has been arranged on Shaping our Future
 - Received a status update on the search for the new Non-Executive Director
 - Received a high level overview of the CEO search process
 - Appointed Mark Lam as Chair of ELFT
- 2.7 I would like to give special thanks to Norbert Lieckfield for the tremendous job he has done holding the Council together during this difficult time when they feel somewhat adrift. Norbert has taken a very personal approach to this, touching base with Governors regularly and encouraging them to look out for one another.

3.0 Chair and NED Activities

- 3.1 I have kept external stakeholders of ELFT informed about my role as Interim Chair and, in confidence, of the incoming Chair's appointment.
- 3.2 With the inability to meet physically with anyone, I have had regular WebEx meetings with the Executives on a rotating basis to stay updated on activities at the Trust and to constantly convey the appreciation of the Board to the staff.
- 3.3 NEDs have continued to exercise their oversight responsibilities through the Committee structures, albeit looking at risks through a COVID-19 lens, going above and beyond national guidance for governance through this period. I have been in regular contact with the NEDs via email, individual conversations and hosted a NEDs' WebEx in early April to discuss the Trust's response to COVID-19 and to update them on governance during this period.
- 3.4 I have been in regular contact with our incoming Chair and we are working on an induction for him.
- 3.5 There have been regular meetings with the Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships in which we operate. I have been attending weekly meetings of the North East London STP to initially discuss the STP's response to COVID-19 and collaboration across the partnership which has been superb. We have more recently been responding to requirements from NHSE/I London to put together a report, the first version submitted on 11 May 2020, as to how we build on the changes introduced as a result of COVID-19 and respond to very strong new infection prevention requirements going forward.

- 3.6 In early March, Mary Elford and Sam Everington met with Andrew Selous MP to discuss the Trust's work in Bedfordshire and the background to our decision to our move into primary care. Mary Elford also visited Fountains Court and the Archer Unit with the Chair of Beds CCG. The Bedfordshire and Luton Strategy Group met virtually and was particularly interested to learn of the steps taken during COVID-19 to advance system working across community settings. Mary Elford and Navina Evans sat on the stakeholder panel for the appointment of the BLMK independent chair and a recommendation for appointment has gone to NHS England.
- 4.0 I would like to thank the Board and Council for the tremendous support you are providing me during my term as Interim Chair, a period more challenging than anyone's wildest imagination. You all continue to be available, supportive and provide excellent advice. I look forward to working with our incoming Chair in the coming weeks to ensure a smooth transition.

5.0 Action Being Requested

- 5.1 The Board is asked to **RECEIVE** and **NOTE** the report for information.