

Healthwatch Milton Keynes (HWMK)

Extra-ordinary Meeting of the Board of Trustees - Minutes, Wednesday

29th March 2023

Time: 2.00pm – 3.00pm

Location: Microsoft Teams

Attendees	Paul Day (PD) - Deputy Chairperson, Carol Older (CO)- Chairperson, Steve Lazell (SL), Vaasavi Singh (VA), Dorothy Pearce (DP)
Other Attendees	Maxine Taffetani – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Board Secretary
Apologies	Mirza Lalani (ML), Michaela Tait (MT), Mike Cass (Treasurer) Jeff Maslen (JM), Jane Whild (JW)

Agenda Item No.	Agenda Item	Action/Agreements
1	<p>Opening Remarks and apologies</p> <p>Paul Day chaired the meeting. The Chair opened the meeting and summarised the purpose of the extra-ordinary Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair outlined that following late processes and decisions by Milton Keynes City Council in regard to Healthwatch Milton Keynes grant and funding allocation, a 3-year grant period had now been approved and an extra-ordinary meeting of the Board be held to approve the budget.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed with the CEO that the Treasurer was unable to be present at the meeting but had provided the supporting paper to trustees</p>	

	<p>in advance of the meeting which provided a 2023-24 budget position, a draft 3 year forecast of the budget position at March 2026 and a briefing on risks, and opportunities to mitigate expected deficits building as a result of the Council providing no inflationary increase to the grant for the 2023-26 period.</p>	
2	<p>Declarations of Interest None</p>	
3	<p>Adoption of Agenda The agenda was adopted without amendment.</p>	
5	<p>Budget Presentation and Decision Making</p> <p>The CEO spoke to the Treasurers supporting paper. Dorothy Pearce had provided email comments in response to the paper ahead of the meeting, which trustees agreed to use as the basis of discussion.</p> <p>Trustees requested clarification as to whether the estimated loss for 2023, taken together with actual loss for 2022 was funded from reserves, and the impact of the 3-year forecast deficit on reserves. The CEO confirmed that the budget was planned to a deficit in 2022-23 to spend remaining 2021-22 surplus from the Covid-19 restrictions on activities. The CEO confirmed that reserve levels were recently reviewed, and lifted to align with wind-up costs. The CEO noted that reserves would continue to be reviewed, and would need to raise over the life of the 3-year grant but were not included within the figures presented. Any 3-year end deficit would therefore, effectively reduce reserves levels but there is sufficient reserves levels to cushion the impact of the deficit forecast at end March 2026.</p> <p>Trustees discussed concerns about the level of overhead reduction plans within the paper and how realistic the achievement of identified opportunities to both reduce current costs and</p>	

increase funding from other sources. The CEO clarified that there were small areas of cost that were quickly achievable i.e., reductions to telephony services, cleaning and pensions support, but noted that there were other areas that whilst progressing well, could not be guaranteed e.g., funding from the Integrated Care Board, office relocations etc.

Trustees relayed concerns about the capacity and competency of the staffing team to prepare the end of year accounts, so as to enable reductions in charges incurred by accountancy services which the CEO supported as a key risk and acknowledged that there is no future guarantee of consistent high-quality support from a Treasurer as qualified as the current Treasurer.

Trustees expressed their concern regarding Milton Keynes Council's decision not to provide an inflationary uplift to the Healthwatch Milton Keynes grant and whether the organisation should position itself to refuse the grant, seeking to further negotiate an uplift. The CEO, supported by both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, outlined the risk of steering MKCC toward a competitive procurement situation, the result of which could mean reductions made to any contract value to offset the cost of a procurement exercises, as well as the risk that the organisation would have to reduce the funding requirements within a bid to secure the contract within a competitive market.

Trustees were unanimously agreed that organisational outputs would need to fit the funding envelope and that it made clear to MKCC that the organisation could not continue to perform at current levels without increased funding.

The Chair of the meeting formally proposed the adoption of the 2023-24 budget. The vote was not

	unanimous but sufficient approvals were made that the motion to approve the budget passed.	
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Signed:



Name:

C. A. OLDER

Position:

CHAIR.