

## **GPG Report to the Board**

**Meeting Date:** 11 March 2026

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### **1. Attendance**

**Members present:** Frances Dewhurst (Chair), Ann Green

**In attendance:** Jonathan Jelley, Jess Slater and Carole Rose

**Apologies:** Chris Palmer and Johnny Hebron

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### **2. Previous Minutes**

The minutes from the December 2025 meeting were reviewed and agreed with no substantive matters arising.

A clarification was provided regarding previously referenced draft questions, which relate to questions for an external consultant who will undertake a marketplace analysis expected to commence from April 2026.

**Action:** Jonathan Jelley will make contact with the Chief Executive of the Chamber of Commerce regarding potential engagement.

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### **3. Staffing Changes and Recruitment**

The group reviewed upcoming staffing changes. Two members of staff will be leaving the organisation around Easter, and recruitment is planned for two replacement posts by the end of April 2026.

It was agreed that:

- The new roles will initially be offered as one-year contracts.
- Training opportunities may be included to increase the attractiveness of the roles.

The group noted that although contracts may be temporary, the partnership board activities the organisation supports are expected to

continue, and there remains verbal interest from the local authorities in maintaining these arrangements.

An update was also provided regarding a staff member currently absent due to long-term health issues. A return to work is anticipated toward the end of March.

The group also noted the discontinuation of the VolunteerO system, which had been considered unhelpful. The closure of the system will result in a cost saving of approximately £3,000, and existing data will be transferred to an alternative system at no extra cost.

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#### **4. Data Protection**

Our Data Protection provider, Taproot, has reviewed their service offer and decided to scale back their support plans. As a result, they will no longer act as our appointed Data Protection Officer (DPO). Instead, they will provide ad hoc support when required, including assistance with Subject Access Requests and advice on data protection policies or related issues.

This change means that the CEO, Jess, will take on the role of Data Protection Officer. Taproot will continue to support Jess as needed should any concerns or requests arise.

The revised arrangement will reduce costs to a fixed annual fee of £492 which includes two policy and operations reviews per year. Any additional casework will be charged at an hourly rate. Previously, the annual cost for this service was £1,860.

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#### **5. Staff Development**

Jess gave an update on the staff development taken up, many of the staff have proposed courses to support the organisation in its future direction, with £8.5k spent of the £60k budget so far.

The group also discussed the importance of maintaining board engagement and morale during a period of organisational uncertainty. It

was agreed that regular informal check-ins with board members would continue.

The group welcomed the introduction of weekly updates for Non-Executive Directors, noting that these should remain concise and will complement information provided in formal Board reports.

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## **6. Policy Review**

Three policies were reviewed:

- Safeguarding (Adults and Children)
- Code of Conduct
- Dress Code

Discussion points included:

- The inclusion of whistleblowing procedures within the safeguarding policy, which reflects the external reporting nature of safeguarding concerns.
- The suggestion to add a process flowchart to improve clarity.
- Confirmation that mandatory safeguarding training must be completed every three years through Cambridgeshire County Council.
- The purpose of the dress code policy, which supports professionalism when representing the organisation.
- The need to explicitly reference the Nolan Principles in the Code of Conduct policy and reinforce expectations of political impartiality.

**Action:** Policies will be updated to reflect these amendments and minor grammatical corrections.

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## **7. Financial Position and Budget**

The draft budget for the coming year was reviewed.

Key points included:

- A 4% salary increase planned from April 2026 subject to board approval.
- Possible adjustments to the annual summit, dependent on staffing capacity and subject to discussion with commissioners.
- Investment accounts will remain in six-month terms due to uncertainty around the future of the organisation.

Financial forecasts indicate a positive financial position, with strong cash reserves projected. If redundancy payments were required, reserves would reduce to approximately £120,000, but overall the budget outlook for the year ending March 2026 remains positive.

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## **8. Risk Register**

The risk register has recently been updated.

It was agreed that:

- The GPG will review the risk register at each meeting.
  - It is not scheduled for presentation at the next Board meeting, but will be brought forward in line with the reporting cycle.
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## **9. Board Attendance**

The group discussed attendance levels at Board meetings. It was agreed that follow-up conversations will take place with individual Non-Executive Directors where attendance has been inconsistent.

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## **10. Meeting Schedule**

A new annual schedule of meetings is required.

**Action:** A full year's meeting schedule will be produced before the next Board meeting, ensuring the availability of both the Chair and Chief Executive.

## **11. Close of Meeting**

The meeting closed at 11:57