

General Purposes Report

Date: 17 June 2026

Present

Board Members: Frances Dewhurst (GPG Chair), Ann Green, Chris Palmer

In Attendance: Jess Slater (CEO), Carole Rose (Head of Admin & Finance)

Apologies: Jonathan Jelley (HW Chair), Johnny Hebron

Guests: Representatives from Azets Accountants

1. Annual Accounts and Audit Report

The Board received the annual accounts and audit report from the external auditors.

The audited accounts confirmed that the organisation held reserves of approximately **£311,000** as at 31 March 2026. This remains above the organisation's reserves policy, which is to maintain the equivalent of approximately four months of operating expenditure.

The auditors confirmed that the audit had been completed without any significant issues or concerns and issued a clear audit opinion.

The Board discussed the wider financial outlook in light of continuing uncertainty regarding the future commissioning and funding of Healthwatch services. Members acknowledged that contingency planning may be required should national decisions result in the cessation of funding in future years. It was noted that at least one further set of annual accounts would be required before any potential closure arrangements.

The Chief Executive reported that planned expenditure during the year had reduced significantly following staffing changes, resulting in lower than anticipated spending on staff development and training.

The Board considered the organisation's reserves position and agreed that reserves would not be utilised during the current financial year. Members agreed that further work should be undertaken to develop appropriate contingency plans

to ensure the organisation is able to respond effectively to any future commissioning decisions.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the March 2026 Board meeting were approved as an accurate record.

There were no substantive matters arising. An update was provided on a previous action regarding external marketplace analysis, and it was confirmed that this work would not be progressed further.

3. Management Accounts (May 2026)

The Board reviewed the management accounts for May 2026.

As these accounts relate to the beginning of the financial year, no full-year forecast was included.

Members discussed future financial reporting requirements should contingency planning become necessary, including how potential liabilities and financial commitments may be reflected within management reporting. It was agreed that enhanced financial updates would be provided to Board members if circumstances required more frequent monitoring.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining the existing reserves policy while recognising that reserves currently exceed the minimum level required.

An update was also received on investment accounts. Existing investments will be reviewed later in the year as fixed-term arrangements mature.

Action: The Chief Executive will provide a financial and contingency planning update at the next Development Session.

4. Workforce Update and Policies

The Board received an update on workforce matters.

Members noted the successful recruitment of staff to fixed-term posts to support service delivery through to the end of the current commissioning period.

The Board reviewed a number of employment matters in accordance with its governance responsibilities. Individual cases were considered in confidential session where appropriate, and no personal employment details are recorded within these public minutes.

The Board also received updates on volunteer engagement and governance arrangements. Members welcomed the positive impact of revised recognition arrangements in supporting participation within partnership boards and Youthwatch, whilst acknowledging that attendance remains an ongoing area for development.

An update was provided regarding staff mileage rates. The Board agreed that current arrangements remain appropriate and that the position should continue to be monitored.

5. Risk Register

The Board reviewed the corporate Risk Register.

A new operational risk relating to organisational capacity and recruitment was noted and will continue to be monitored.

Members also agreed that the potential closure of the organisation, subject to future national commissioning decisions, should be reflected as a strategic high-level risk within the register.

Action: The Chief Executive will update the Risk Register to include organisational closure as a Red strategic risk.

6. Any Other Business

The Chief Executive introduced an initial proposal regarding future strategic opportunities for the organisation. Members agreed that the proposal would be considered in more detail during the Board Development Session on 24 June 2026.

Meeting Close

There being no further business, the meeting closed at **12:19 pm**