

Hoople Board	
Monday, 29 Sept 2025	
2:00pm – 4.00pm – Boardroom 2, Auxilium House	
Chair:	Nicola Twigg (NT) – Hoople Director (Wye Valley Trust)
Board Members:	Andrew McLean (AM) – Hoople Director (Lincolnshire County Council) Anthony Oliver (AO) – Hoople Director (Herefordshire Council)
Hoople Officers:	Audrey Clements (AC) – Chief Executive Officer Mark Aldsworth (MA) – Head of Buildings Operations Simon Mortimore (SM) – Head of Information Technology Daley Jones (DJ) – Head of Training & Education Lisa Yates (LY) – Head of HR and OD Stephen Weller (SW) – Head of Hoople Care Helen Worth (HW) – Company Secretary
Apologies:	Hilary Hall (HH) – Hoople Director (Herefordshire Council)
Guests	

	Item
1	Introduction and Apologies
1.1	Apologies have been received from Hilary.
2	Declarations of Interest
2.1	No interests were declared.
3	Minutes, Actions and Matters Arising
3.1	The minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 July 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting
3.2	The board acknowledged the updates against the actions. NT also confirmed that the Terms of Reference are due to be discussed at WVT Board later this week.
3.3	NT requested some clarification around action 06/Jul and whether there is anything that the Board need to ratify in relation to this action. AC confirmed that she had received confirmation in writing from HH.
4	Business Performance
4.1	AC shared an update around the work that has taken place to take on the delivery of the Community Equipment Service on behalf of Herefordshire Council. It was good experience for Hoople and great to see how much all of our services came together and how much we were able to do in around 8 days to get the service up and running
4.2	AO asked whether there are any lessons learnt or areas that didn't go so well.

	AC confirmed that the actions to mobilise the service went well however we will now be going through the process of the service bedding in. There were some concerns around Health and Safety and compliance and we continue to work in these areas. The building isn't suitable for the service and we are looking at options for more suitable premises.
4.3	NT asked what feedback had been like from customers and employees.  AC confirmed that we have received some lovely positive feedback from the employees. They have raised some queries and concerns but nothing that isn't to be expected and we continue to work with them closely on a daily basis.
4.4	MA advised that collectively the employees are grateful that it is a Herefordshire company that has taken on the running of the service and although we don't do what they do we do know what we are doing.
4.5	AC shared that alongside the mobilisation of the Community Equipment Service we were asked to move the IT service out of the annex at Plough Lane.
4.6	AO advised that from a Herefordshire perspective it has really helped the council out and he thanked Hoople.
4.7	NT asked how many teams/people are now based at Auxilium House and where else do we have pockets of people. SM advised that we have an IT office at the hospital, and going forward we will have four to six desks at Plough Lane for the ICT drop in operational centre. We have effectively moved 12 members of the procurement, desktop and service desk teams out of Plough Lane to Auxilium. There are very few employees who are not based at Auxilium now.
4.8	AC confirmed that the financial statement are with Companies House to be filed
4.9	A summary of the sub committees was shared with Board
4.10	AC shared the financial position.
4.11	AO suggested that this could be reflected in section 10 of the business performance report. AC confirmed that the service is running well at the moment and she would like to work with SM identify more automation.
4.12	NT suggested that if we don't invest in transformation of these services they will not mature. AM advised that Revs and Bens is probably the most mature area of digitalization in local government so there are opportunities out there.
4.13	SM shared the number of projects currently in flight is lower than previously forecast and there is a 'risk' around resource availability should customer organisations decide they do wish to commission projects in the current year.
4.14	SM shared that Hoople IT Services have been awarded the ISO27001:2022 information security management standard which is an upgrade from the previous certification of ISO27001:2013, simplifying language and shifting from periodic audits and reviews to continuous monitoring and evaluation.
4.15	LY shared the HR updates. The Payroll team are currently tendering for Birmingham City Council elections payroll. Borough of Hounslow have also asked Hoople for a solutions paper

	for replacing their current payroll provider. These are both new business opportunities which is great for Hoople.
4.16	AO asked whether we are named on any Framework as Payroll would be an obvious one. LY advised that this is under consideration and a number of conversations have taken place to identify Frameworks
4.17	AO suggested we take each service and identify Frameworks. ESPO and NEPRO are popular ones. AO offered his assistance with this if required. AC shared that we identified this as part of our growth planning and we need identify what we need to change in order to attract new business.
4.18	SW presented to Hoople Care update. Hillside and Homefirst have both received PIR requests which indicates a CQC inspection potentially this side of January. Learning Disability services have not yet received PIR requests. D2A workshop coming up with the D2A Board. AC advised there is a lot of noise around the cost of Hoople for reablement services. Seen as expensive and we need to work with colleagues across health to ensure that we are comparing the right data.
4.19	NT advised that due to changes with Directors at WVT we need to make sure we explain these issues clearly backed up with data. AC suggested that we also need to consider longer term options such as domiciliary care vs reablement care which stops people coming back into the service. It is important for us to articulate the saving that you are getting by stopping people coming back through the system. SW shared that the data is very clear. 64% of people leaving Home First are actually re-enabled and their package of care is lower than when they entered.
4.20	DJ advised that Ofsted have changed their inspection criteria. We are due an inspection between now and Oct 2027. They now inspect 8 areas plus safeguarding and less of a deep dive. The inspection is new for everyone and we don't quite know where we land. We would like an opportunity to understand where others are falling short. It's a period of change and there are mitigating steps in place.
4.21	DJ shared that we have done well with the UKSPF funding to support business. Skills boost works differently. Businesses are able to apply up to 50% funding costs but they claim it back by Worcester Growth Hub. We have shared this via social media and letting business know that they can apply.
4.22	AC shared that the social care debt has moved on since writing the board papers and a better way of working going forward has been agreed to resolve the issues. It will lead to a longer project with Mosaic but comfortable we will now move that forward.
5	Budget setting and Business Plan 2026/27
5.1	AC shared the budget setting and business plan report. We are putting a bigger focus on our business plan and in particular ensuring that the growth elements are built in and the ambition is set out more. We are also reviewing our mission and vision statements.
5.2	It is important that we are easy to do business with so we need to do some work on our website to ensure that visitors to the site are 3-4 clicks away from being able to 'buy' from us and ensure that the website tells prospective customers about us.

5.3	AC shared our approach to budget setting. We need to ensure that set a balanced budget and in an ideal world we produce a profit to re-invest into services. We will be setting a reasonably tough budget this year and challenging our Senior Management Team to look at what we can do differently to find savings.
5.4	NT advised of a WVT initiative amongst teams to get them to identify savings. The people who do the work identifying where money is being wasted and where savings can be made.
5.5	AC confirmed we will be carrying out a similar exercise with employees at the next all staff briefing.
5.6	AC shared the assumptions that will feed into the budget setting process. We are not aware of any changes to the national minimum wage, employers NI etc but until we have that assurance it is difficult to call an overall budget number.
5.7	NT advised that we need to be clear that Board can't agree anything that isn't a balanced budget
5.8	AC advised we will be bringing the budget position back to the November Board and if we need to make changes we have time.
6	Articles of Association – Dividend Option
6.1	HW presented the report about Articles of Association and options to pay a dividend. HC have asked that Hoople consider the payment of a dividend to shareholders in the future.
6.2	The Articles provide the Framework for us to make a dividend payment however there are a number of considerations for Board; mainly the reinvestment of profit for growth versus the payment of a dividend.
6.3	NT confirmed we are not in a position to pay a dividend however we could consider it for future years. Profits of the company don't currently allow it. We need to consider what an appropriate retention of profit looks like. Would we want a minimum retained for development and growth.
6.4	AM agreed that we are not in a position to pay a dividend this year would rather work up what the protocols would be around the principles of a dividend. AM would be far more interested in a reinvestment for of potential dividends and invest to save as a principal, but perhaps should be something that's brought to shareholders for a discussion on each year.
6.5	It was agreed that we would talk about future principles in terms of future profits to bring back to next Board.
7	Scheme of Reservation and Delegation
7.1	HW presented the updates to the Scheme of Reservation and Delegation. Updates have been made to some credit card and Bankline limits and new credit cards have been introduced as a result of the Community Equipment Service coming on board.
7.2	Board approved these changes.
8	Company Policies
8.1	HW shared the work that has been carried out over the last 12 months to introduce governance around policy updates to ensure that the risks associated with having out of date policies are mitigated.
8.2	A process for reviewing policies has been implemented and over the last 2 months 31 policies have been through the review process and 9 new policies have been introduced. Work continues to ensure the remaining out of date policies are reviewed.

8.3	Board acknowledged the work that had taken place to introduce governance around the process.
9	Forward Plan
9.1	The Board acknowledged the forward plan
10	Any Other Business
10.1	No items were raised as any other business
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Communications and Announcements No communications to share</li> <li>➤ Date of Next Meeting</li> </ul> <p>12 November 2025 – 12:30pm – 2:00pm – Boardroom 2, Auxilium House</p>