



**RICHARD HUISH TRUST
GOVERNANCE & PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING**

30th September 2025 at 5.00pm

Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members present: Catherine Christie (Chair)
Dominic Lynch
Pat Flaherty

In attendance: Steve Chattell (CPO)
John Abbott (CEO)

Clerk: Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

MINUTES

G&P	1. MEETING FORMALITIES	Action
25/01	1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that director Stuart Hill was in attendance to observe. There were apologies from Jade Renville. The meeting was quorate.	
25/02	1.2 Declaration of interests None of the committee members present had declarations to make in relation to items on the agenda.	
25/03	1.3 Minutes of the previous meeting Directors agreed the minutes of the previous meeting were accurate and the Chair consented for her electronic signature to be used to formally sign them off.	
25/04	1.4 Matters arising Directors discussed the matters arising report noting all items as complete as noted on the accompanying paper.	

2. GOVERNANCE

G&P	2.1 External Review of Governance (ERG)	Action
25/05	The Governance Specialist noted key points from the accompanying draft proposal paper for an ERG to take place during the spring term. Directors discussed the proposal, noting that there were several areas that were being suggested for a specific focus beyond the normal compliance areas. These included the role of the academic performance related committee and how governance operates more broadly across the trust structure with local committees. The CEO noted that the experience of the last ERG was informing the approach to this one, particularly with respect to the specific focus and approach the ERG should take to give the most insightful outcomes.	
25/06	Directors discussed that whilst the finance and audit facing committees regularly come under scrutiny from auditors would be beneficial to have a focus on the academic performance related committee but also, given the significance of the impact of this committee, that it too should be considered for a specific focus as part of the review.	

ACTION: Update the ERG proposal to include a specific focus on the Governance & People Committee. **Clerk**

G&P**To what extent are members required to be involved in this process?**

There is no specific requirement for Members to be involved in the commissioning or output of this process. The report could go to them for information.

G&P

25/08 Directors were supportive of the suggestions. It was agreed that the proposal should be further developed and requested it be shared again at the next meeting in November, before seeking final approval from the board in December.

ACTION: Ensure the ERG draft proposal features as an item at the November G&P meeting. Clerk

G&P

25/09 **2.2 Board Self Evaluation progress monitoring**
Directors noted and discussed the update to the recommendations from the self-evaluation of the board completed last October. The Governance Specialist highlighted that many of the recommendations that are still in progress relate directly to other key developments, such as changes to the Scheme of Delegation that will be undertaken this year.

G&P

25/10 Directors agreed with making a recommendation to the board to undertake the self-evaluation of the board on an annual basis along with reviews of directors, in line with good practice.

RECOMMENDATION: The committee recommended to the board to undertake a self evaluation of the board and director reviews on an annual basis.

G&P

25/11 **2.3 Specific board roles**
Directors noted that the need to ensure a director takes on the safeguarding lead role and that the same should be considered for SEND but that the guidance allowed for this to be delegated to a committee.

G&P

25/12 The CPO highlighted that processes are in place to inform the board and provide assurance around SEND and safeguarding based upon the NGA guidance and role profiles.

G&P

25/13 The CEO added that they are putting in place a trust wide Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will be working directly with the trust lead director. Further CPD and support will be available for the lead director.

G&P

25/14 Directors agreed to take forward the discussion at the next board meeting, requesting a briefing note to be shared with all directors.

ACTION: To bring forward at the next full board meeting a discussion with supporting paper regarding the lead director safeguarding role and lead SEND role/committee delegation to ensure these responsibilities are met. Clerk

G&P

25/15 **2.4 Local governance update and appointments**
Directors noted the recommendations for approvals and ratifications from local boards within the supporting document, and noted the updates mentioned.

RESOLVED: All appointments recommended were approved or ratified.

3. PEOPLE

G&P

25/16 **3.1 People update**
The CPO presented a summary of key points from the accompanying paper. Directors noted the updates; key highlights discussed from last year's key performance indicators included:

- Staff sickness at 3% (target was 3.5%), noted this is partly due to how proactive the HR team are with regard to this.
- Turnover target was 11%, which is a challenging target, came in at just over 12.5%. Generally, retention of teachers is very good which impacts significantly on the experience of the children. It is significantly below national benchmark for days lost to sickness per person (9 nationally, 6 at RHT).

G&P
25/17

Directors discussed the benefits of retaining staff, the additional cost but added value of meeting upper pay scales, and how succession planning is being managed.

G&P
25/18

Are the reasons for sickness monitored?

The CPO confirmed that they are the data is presented to directors during the year. Sickness related absence is generally quite cyclical as are peaks in when staff hand in their notice (e.g. teachers in August).

The CPO added that some further parallel data will be available to directors in future to enable further insights.

G&P
25/19

3.2 Staff survey results

The CPO presented the survey results and provided context about the approach taken. He highlighted that an external survey operator, QDP, has been used for staff surveys for the last five years. This approach provides anonymity of responses and assurance for staff on this front, encouraging them to be honest in their opinions. It also enables benchmarking with similar organisations.

G&P
25/20

He highlighted that the data included a new report, 'the wellbeing summary' which takes wellbeing related questions and gives a rating on perception of the trust's approach to wellbeing; Huish scored well in relation to the benchmarked data. Directors agreed the wellbeing report is helpful to understand this perception of staff.

G&P
25/21

Directors discussed the overall data trends, noting top quartile outcomes for recommend/enjoy working here responses. They noted some areas where the data was not as positive as hoped for, they reflected on the possible reasons for this and what has/is being done in identified areas. Directors praised the overall positivity of the results.

G&P
25/22

3.3 Huish People Strategy

The CPO presented the latest iteration of the People Strategy, noting that it is largely unaltered as it is still relevant and representative of what we want to achieve and how we work.

G&P
25/23

How is the strategy tracking against the measures of success it contains and actual data?

The CPO confirmed that the quantitative measures are comparable and for qualitative measures it is also very close to the measures detailed (or are in place through close monitoring and discussion).

G&P
25/24

The CEO noted that there is a draft strategic development plan for consideration at the forthcoming board meeting the people strategy links directly to the delivery of strategic driver 5 in the overall trust strategy.

G&P
25/25

How is the staff survey and people strategy shared back with staff teams across Huish and if they're looking at it to what extent does it matter to them?

Once the results are available they are distributed to the headteacher/principal. The CPO meets regularly with them and has a conversation about the data including how that informs approaches, any surprises with the data and how to support their staff team to help them understand any specific context around the data. This is different in every academy. Some of the best practice happens in the college where the Principal actively delves deeper into the more concerning areas through follow up enquiries to test the perception, and then is well informed on how to address any areas not performing as expected.

4. POLICIES/KEY DOCUMENTS

G&P
25/26

4.1 Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) Compliance

Directors noted the matrix and that the self-assessment against the 'musts' for last year showed compliance in all areas.

4.2 Scheme of Delegation

The Governance Specialist updated the committed with the proposed changes to the scheme that had previously been discussed, noting that there remained work to do in pulling together the governance procedures and the oversight and intervention approach in moving them out of the existing scheme of delegated authority. Directors noted progress with the scheme of delegation and agreed that it would be helpful to consult the local governing boards (LGBs) about the proposed changes.

ACTION: Consult regarding the proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation with the LGBs ahead of seeking board approval. Clerk

4.3 Policy review schedule 2025/2026

Directors noted the review schedule and the Governance Specialist confirmed it will be updated to reflect any new policies this year.

4.4 Policies for review/approval:

a) Code of Conduct – Staff & Volunteer

Directors noted that changes were made to the code to ensure it was consistent with the with the Gifts & Hospitality Policy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Code of Conduct – Staff & Volunteer was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

b) Grievance Procedure

There were no material changes to the policy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Grievance Procedure was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

c) Pay Policy

Reference to the updated STPCD and addition of new Appendix 12 which references the changes in the Academy Trust Handbook for September 2025 in relation to executive pay.

RECOMMENDATION: The Pay Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

d) Recruitment of Ex-Offender Policy

The policy had been refreshed based on the Vetting & Barring template.

RECOMMENDATION: The Recruitment of Ex-Offender Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

e) Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure

Updates made to exploring gaps in employment history and a change to recognise that it's not possible to always verbally verify every reference received.

RECOMMENDATION: The Safer Recruitment Policy & Procedure was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

f) Whistleblowing Policy

There were no changes made to this policy.

RECOMMENDATION: The Whistleblowing Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

g) Absence Policy

This has been reviewed early to reflect the need for discretion by headteachers/principal for specific family circumstances and arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION: The Absence Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

h) Low Level Concern Policy

Signed Jade Renville Date:.....17th November 2025.....

25/36

There were no material changes.

RECOMMENDATION: The Low Level Concern Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

G&P

25/37

i) **Safeguarding Policy**

Directors noted that the DSL information, legislation references and expectations for Alternative Provision, definitions of risk in relation to online safety and the definition of unexplainable or persistent absence from education had been updated.

RECOMMENDATION: The Safeguarding Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

G&P

25/38

j) **Probation Policy**

Directors noted this was a new policy in anticipation of the change in the law related to day 1 claims for unfair dismissal.

RECOMMENDATION: The Probation Policy was recommended for approval by the Full Board.

G&P

25/39

k) **Allegations of Abuse against Staff Policy**

There were no changes.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/40

l) **Capability Policy**

Reference to 'informal processes' but no material changes otherwise.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/41

m) **Disciplinary Procedure (Staff)**

Reference to conduct outside work which may bring the Trust into disrepute.

Small changes making little or no material difference to procedure.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/42

n) **Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy**

There were no changes to the policy.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/43

o) **Gifts & Hospitality Policy – Staff**

There were no changes to the policy.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/44

p) **Handling of DBS Certificate Information Policy**

The policy had been refreshed based upon the Vetting & Barring template.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/45

q) **Stress Management Policy**

There were no changes to this policy.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/46

r) **RHT & RHC LGPS Pension Discretion Policies**

There were no changes made to this policy.

RESOLVED: APPROVED

G&P

25/47

s) **Expenses Policy**

No changes

RESOLVED: APPROVED

5. COMMITTEE MATTERS

G&P

25/48

5.1 Annual committee report 2024/2025

Signed Jade Renville Date:.....17th November 2025.....

Directors noted the report and agreed it is a useful to reflect on the work and impact of the previous year. Directors were invited to add further comment on any of the content ahead of it being reported to the full board in December.

G&P 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25/49 6.1 Agenda for next meeting

Directors noted the agenda; the Chair invited comment to inform planning for the next meeting.

G&P 25/50 6.2 Confidential items

The committee agreed that papers marked as confidential would remain confidential. There were no confidential minutes for the meeting.

G&P 25/51 6.3 Any other business

There was no further business.

G&P 25/52 6.4 Dates of future meetings

Directors noted the dates of future meetings: 17th November 2025, 2nd February 2026 and 2nd June 2026

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6.40pm