



**RICHARD HUISH TRUST  
GOVERNANCE (including PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE)  
COMMITTEE**

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 5:00pm**

**Rowan House and Teams**

**Committee Members Present:** Dan Maycock – Chair (via Teams)  
Catherine Christie (via Teams)  
Jade Renville (via Teams)

**In Attendance:** John Abbott – Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (via Teams)  
Steve Chattell - Chief People Officer (CPO)

**Clerk:** Helen Wells – Governance Specialist (via Teams)

**MINUTES**

**1. MEETING FORMALITIES**

**Action**

**GOV 23/01 1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were apologies from Pat Flaherty (Committee Chair), Dan Maycock confirmed he would chair the meeting in his capacity as Vice Chair of the committee. The meeting was quorate.

**GOV 23/02 1.2 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

**GOV 23/03 1.3 Previous minutes**

Directors approved the minutes from the last meeting and the Chair consented for his electronic signature to be added.

**GOV 23/04 1.4 Matters arising**

All matters arising were agreed as either being complete or pending completion as detailed on the related report.

**2. HUISH GOVERNANCE**

**GOV 23/05 2.1 Annual report for the committee 2022/23**

Directors noted this is the first annual report for the committee, providing a useful and accurate review and evaluation of the committee based on the model of the annual report produced for some years by the Audit & Risk committee. Directors noted that revisiting the last external review of governance to see how well these recommendations have been met would be a useful exercise. The CEO noted that it may be prudent to undertake another external review soon as it may be a condition for any new academies joining.

**GOV 23/06 How will progress towards recommendations be monitored by the committee?**

The Governance Specialist confirmed she has already incorporated these actions into the annual meeting schedule for the committee, pending approval from the board. This will ensure they are picked up in a timely way at future meetings.

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD: The Governance and P&P Committee recommend the committee’s annual report to the board for approval and inclusion in the annual monitoring activities.**

**ACTION: Revisit the recommendations from the last external governance review(s) and update directors regarding progress on meeting the recommendations. Clerk**

Signed:...P Flaherty..... Date:...29/01/2024.....

**ACTION: Put together a list of approved external reviewers of governance from the NGA. Clerk**

**ACTION: At a future meeting consider the scope of the any external review of governance. Clerk**

**ACTION: Ensure PF is in agreement with the detail of the content of the annual report. Clerk**

**GOV  
23/07**

Directors then discussed routes into recruiting new directors and opportunities for how to increase numbers, noting how challenging recruitment of directors and governors is at the present time. They discussed the need for recruitment to be an urgent priority and that every effort needs to be made to attract possible new directors.

**ACTION: Look at the marketing material available and consider how we are appealing to possible directors. Clerk/  
CPO**

**ACTION: Ensure that recruitment of new directors is a priority area of activity and that progress is reported back at future board/governance meetings, with the appointment of Foundation Directors being urgent. ALL**

## **2.2 Strategic Plan 2023-2027**

**GOV  
23/08**

This is the final review by committees of the new strategic plan, ahead of the board adopting it at the December meeting. Directors noted that it is helpful to understand the plan within the context of the latest people update, which suggests that it is reasonably embedded. Directors noted they have discussed this at length already and are happy with the content to be approved by the full board.

**GOV  
23/09**

**Are all objectives as smart as they could be so that achievement of them can be evidenced in due course?**

The CEO agreed with this observation, noting that this plan is more of an overall guide of priorities for development against each of the strategic drivers. Some of these activities lend themselves to a sharp focus of measurable metrics, others do not but these will be picked up by other means in much more detail to ensure that the focus is right.

**GOV  
23/10**

**Could the strategic plan be kept at this level but provide more opportunity for insight for directors into some of the detail of the quality of education?**

Within the current context of improvement for one of the academy's it is understandable that directors might want more oversight, the challenge is how this is achieved without overreaching into LGB work or to undermine the work that they are doing.

**GOV  
23/11**

The next stage is to delegate the drivers to the most appropriate sub-committee to break the work up on the plans, the lead person from the executive team will then give an update periodically of what is being done and the work around it, this will ideally link back to the risk register and the risk management plan.

**ACTION: Add the strategic plan updates to each sub-committee for future consideration and explicit links to the risk register. Clerk**

## **3. PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE**

**GOV  
23/12**

### **3.1 People update and strategy**

The CPO gave an overview of the People Strategy. Directors discussed the detail of the strategy.

**GOV  
23/13**

**How will the strategy drive development and how effective will this be?**

The measures are indicators, rather than rules, to help guide the strategy where plans will then emerge to implement the strategy.

**GOV**

Directors noted that the staff turnover indicator is ambitious in light of last year's figures and is linked to making high quality recruitment decisions. Huish is committed to recruiting high

Signed:...*P Flaherty*..... Date:...29/01/2024.....

**23/14** quality staff; applications are high and of a good quality but there are some harder to fill posts. Recruitment is a mindful process and is already limited to two attempts, with any further attempts taking a more creative approach.

The People Strategy will be for the board to agree once the Strategic Plan has been approved.

**GOV  
23/15**

**The priorities for 2023/24, the aim for online performance review, is this different from an appraisal?**

The first challenge was to ensure everyone is receiving a good quality appraisal, this is now in place consistently so the next step is to manage this via an online system, moving away from a paper-based process. Directors noted the value of the conversation of the appraisal and the CPO assured them that would still be fundamental to the process.

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD: Directors agreed they are supportive of the People Strategy and recommend it for approval to the board.**

**GOV  
23/16**

The CPO gave a summary from the people update:

- Appraisals are underway, pay recommendations will come to the P&P committee in November.
- Pay awards – the funding has been increased by government, but final rates are subject to the P&P committee approving pay awards in line with national recommendations;
- Staff disciplinaries and performance management – **How does this compare to previous years?** There was more activity last year than in previous years, more weight is given to supporting managers to have early frank conversations than waiting to resort to disciplinary or capability measures. Directors noted that there have been some instances of higher-level probations not being successful, in each case they were hard to recruit to posts but that the match was not right. Directors noted the importance of the probation period being a formal process that needs to be handled sensitively and in the interests of both Huish and the individual.
- Settlements – **What is the level of involvement from directors?** The executive team work to propose this and work with chair and vice chair, checking ESFA thresholds in the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH). The ATH requires ESFA approval for substantial payment thresholds, there have not been any at this level.
- Recruitment – at start of September there were no teacher vacancies at any of the schools, compared to the rest of the sector, this was a notable success. The induction for the 15 new starters at Pyrland has been given a high priority with a middle leader being made accountable. Recruitment remains strong overall, teaching assistants remain hard to attract.
- Staff turnover - the CPO noted that some turnover is healthy, but turnover was higher than anticipated last year, although still under the turnover rates in the sector nationally. Directors noted some higher turnover two academies for teachers – small numbers at these academies skew the data. Directors noted there are a variety of reasons for people leaving, with no common themes arising, but for teaching assistants and LSAs there is higher turnover with the underlying reason being the salaries not being competitive with other less demanding jobs. Directors discussed possible alternative approaches for these roles.
- Staff sickness - the main reason is viral illness, absence due to work related stress is very low but is being looked at with middle leaders about how to prevent and manage work related stress. **Is a free flu jab offered?** This is offered to staff, 100 have been bought this year and will be offered to staff and more can be bought if they are used. The CPO noted this demonstrates how staff are cared for and that it may help with overall absence.

#### **4. GOVERNANCE OF LGBS**

Signed:...*P Flaherty*..... Date:...29/01/2024.....

#### 4.1 Chair/Governor approvals

GOV 23/17 Directors approved the appointment of:

- Kerry Chappell – Community Governor at West Buckland
- Jamie Sullivan – Community Governor at West Buckland

These will be subject to DBS checks returning successful.

**RESOLVED: Directors approved appointments of new governors subject to successful DBS outcomes.**

### 5. GOVERNANCE/PEOPLE RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

#### 5.1 RHT Board – Standing Orders

GOV 23/18 Directors reviewed the Standing Orders and agreed to recommend them for approval to the board. Directors noted that there may be option to secure external input for committees to include different input.

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD: Directors agreed they were happy to recommend the RHT Board – Standing Orders for approval to the board.**

### 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### 6.1 Items for the next meeting

GOV 23/19 Items for the next meeting were discussed with reference to the draft agenda, based on the agreed annual business planning schedule.

The clerk noted she would add an item about director recruitment and directors agreed that reviewing the skills audit at the next meeting would be useful.

**ACTION: Ensure skills audits are reviewed by directors ahead of the January committee meeting.** Clerk

#### 6.2 Confidential items for the minutes

GOV 23/20 There were no confidential items for the minutes.

#### 6.3 Any other business

GOV 23/21 The Governance Specialist noted that she would presently be undertaking a level 4 qualification in Academy Governance run by the Chartered Governance Institute (CGI). 40% of the summative assessment is a project which can take the form of a research paper, a case study, or a proposal for improving governance in a specific organisation. She asked for any specific ideas about a focus for the project, that could benefit Huish, to be passed on to her ahead of March.

#### 6.4 Dates of future meetings

GOV 23/22 Directors noted the dates of forthcoming committee meetings.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.40pm

Signed:...P Flaherty..... Date:...29/01/2024.....