Governance

RNN GROUP

Meeting/Committee	Search & Governance Committee
Date of meeting	7th December 2021 at 5pm (via Google Meet)

1 Appointment of the meeting Chair

Committee agreed to appoint Jenny Worsdale as the Chair for this meeting.

2 Declarations of interest and eligibility

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. There were no declarations from governors and standing declarations were noted from employees.

3 Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence

Attendees:

Jenny Worsdale	Meeting Chair
Janet Pryke	
Jason Austin	
Stephe Bulley	

In attendance:

Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Owen Newby	HR Systems Analyst (for iTrent system presentation)

Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence with all members of the committee present.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2021

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2021.

There were no matters arising.

5 Action progress report

The Director of Governance presented the updated document and the committee were happy to note the progress made and comments provided.

6 I-Trent system update

Owen Newby provided a presentation and key matters highlighted were:

1) Background – requirements

- Create a consistent and centralised approach to performance management
- Use of the groups existing HR system (I-Trent) to replace paper processes
- Ability to measure progress on strategic objectives
- Ongoing monitoring of uptake/completion of PDRs and employee objectives

- How the requirements were met:
- A new process was researched and developed based on best practice from similar organisations
- The required modules were purchased for the i-Trent HR system then consultants were booked to help implement the new process
- Organisational strategic objectives were created and published to all staff
- Reports are developed to analyse the data from i-Trent and provide useful progress information to managers and ELT. Further reporting will be developed as the process embeds.

- How i-Trent has been used:
- All strategic objectives were combined in to a 'catalogue' which was published on the staff portal and uploaded in to i-Trent
- A PDR lifecycle was created in i-Trent which highlighted three windows of activity in the year and all tasks associated with that window
- These are initial review, mid-year review and final review
- Managers then assign the employee an objective during the initial review
- As part of the objective creation they can then select one of the organisational objectives which it links to
- Once the objective is linked then specific actions can be created to explain how the employee contributes to the strategic objective
- All actions and targets should link to a strategic objective

- The theory versus the practice – committee were advised that there were a number of issues and solutions found.
- Issues
- All strategic objectives had some links made to employees objectives however some were only attached to small numbers
- The quality of some objectives was questionable (e.g. basic requirements of someone's role)
- Managers who did not engage with the PDR training made some mistakes when setting up objectives
- Solutions
- A smaller number of strategic objectives is being discussed for 2022
- Training and smart guidance provided on setting SMART objectives that are quantifiable or achievable
- Training sessions in 2021/22 will be scheduled for all managers

- What we hope to achieve in 2022
- In early 2022 we will be able to report on:
  a) Number of staff working on strategic objectives
  b) Number of objectives complete
  c) Update on training and development related objectives
  d) Highlight positive actions taken to challenge 'below baseline' performance
- The PDR process
- Streamlined to two formal reviews in the year (initial review in January to March and final review October to December)
- Introduce competency self-assessment for all employees so we can begin to assess against core values
- Further develop our performance related reporting

In general discussion he advised that having 40 objectives in 4 categories was, upon reflection, probably too much to make the process manageable and therefore the proposal is to reduce this in 2022. He advised that there were a number of real positives, including:

- System overcomes an inconsistent set of approaches
- It is a simple process which is supported by training
- The system is manageable and simple to use so not an arduous process
- It encourages conversations
- The hope is that the uptake will be more next year as the challenges are overcome and reduced

One member of the committee expressed the view that it would be really interesting to see how staff self-assess against the vision and values. Owen Newby confirmed that the team were still working on how this would be approached and that currently it is fairly fluid. Owen Newby was thanked for his update and all agreed that he had provided a very clear summary of the position.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Owen Newby left the meeting at 5.15pm)

7   Performance Management update

It was agreed that discussions would be recorded on a confidential basis.

8   Board review 2021/22

The Director of Governance introduced her detailed report and a number of aspects were considered, including:

a) Current Membership

Committees attention was drawn to the schedule of tenures and it was noted that there is only one current vacancy following the resignation of Gareth Owen. Committee all agreed that they were quite keen to replace his legal experience on the board and therefore the Director of Governance was asked to specifically recruit this skill with a focus on improving diversity. It was agreed that the Director of Governance would seek support from the colleges marketing manager in charge of social media with a view to using LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter etc. to specifically target a number of organisations that would have a diversity focus e.g. network for black lawyers. Committee acknowledged that there was no particular rush to recruit in this area but asked that the Director of Governance make initial enquiries to get the ball rolling.

b) Committee Membership for 2021/22

Committee were happy to note the schedule of current membership and were satisfied that governor skills were being best utilised. Director of Governance noted that she would be speaking to Mirella Palazzo in the new year to see whether she feels that she has capacity to re-join the Quality and Standards Committee.

c) Training and Development for 2021/22

Director of Governance indicated that there is a heightened focus in the sector on the need to ensure that board members and the Director of Governance receive appropriate training and development opportunities and that there is also a

requirement that details of training and development will be specifically included within the 2021/22 yearend financial statements. She drew committees attention to the rolling logs maintained and all agreed that there was a high level of engagement and that there were no particular concerns in this area.

9   Governor Engagement activities for 2021/22

Director of Governance drew committees attention to the rolling log maintained and she confirmed that any additional opportunities will be added as soon as confirmed. She advised that supporting governors in this area was going to be a focus for her in the early part of the new year as hopefully new governors will have settled in, completed induction etc. and therefore feel they have more time to give to engagement opportunities.

Director of Governance advised that a board development need identified is to 'create a sense of team' given the new appointments made and for governors to get to know each other a little better so that individual strengths and experience are understood. It has been suggested that a 'coffee and cake' meeting be scheduled 4-5pm immediately before the next planned development session which is on 2nd February 2022 at 5pm. It was acknowledged that this may need to be a hybrid opportunity and that this would be reviewed from an operational perspective close to the date.

10   DFE Guidance documents

The Director of Governance drew the committees attention to two DFE guidance documents recently circulated, these are:
   a) Skills for jobs white paper – interim guidance on strengthening governance
   b) Guidance on external governance reviews.

She explained that the first document sets out a number of 'requirements' and also details 'other areas of reform'. The areas to consider/note are:
   - Annual self assessment and a 3 yearly external governance review
   - Qualifications/experience required for a governance professional appointed
   - Annual reporting requirements in relation to board and Director of Governance training and development
   - Introduction of a competency framework
   - Governance development programmes
   - Board recruitment (specifically diversity)
   - Senior leadership recruitment
   - Payment to Chairs

Committee recommendation to the board is to undertake self-assessment in the summer of 2022 and thereafter plan for an external governance review at some point in 2022/23. Governors who attended the AOC conference in November indicated that there had been some considerable discussion regarding this, particularly in terms of potential costs, quality of individuals capable/available to undertake reviews and ensuring a focus on support for development rather than a 'tickbox exercise'. View expressed was not to rush in and be a 'guinea pig' but that it would be helpful to gather options regarding individuals and companies willing to provide this service and associated costs. Director of Governance expressed the view that it is likely that organisations like AOC and ETF may develop an 'approved contractor' list which would be helpful but that she is aware of other colleges who have had successful external reviews which can be used as a benchmark.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

11   AOB

There were no matters of additional business.

12   Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as Tuesday 17th May 2022 at 5pm via Google Meet.

The meeting closed at 6pm.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____