Governance Improvement Plan 2025-6

Aim - The aim of the Plan is to work on areas of governance that will have a demonstrable positive impact on the governance arrangements of the RNN Group to support the Group's vision and strategic priorities in the new Strategic Plan 2025-30 and deliver an outstanding student experience. The Governance Improvement Plan is informed by self-assessment and the views of our governors and senior team, the new five-year Plan, the adopted AoC Code of Good Governance, the new Ofsted framework and research work on board behaviour dynamics and governance maturity maps. This is an ambitious Plan with some of the actions likely to continue into 2026-7. During 2026-7 the Board will also have an External Governance Review. At year end progress against the Strategic Indicators relating to Governance Improvement Plan will be added.

Background – Last year's Plan had seven priorities and the focus was on moving governance to a stable position. The Plan was completed in June 2025.

Embedding and driving forward the Group's strategic vision and priorities in the Strategic Plan 2025-30 in all areas of the Board's work by:			
1. A review of Board and Committee meetings and information			
Timeline	**Responsible**	**Actions**	**Progress**
Pilot until December 2025 Full roll out by July 2026	Chair and Dir of Gov	Providing the right papers, briefings and governor development to support governors to carry out their roles. Including: • Putting students at the heart of Board and Committee discussions • Providing governors with the right information to carry out their role (executive summaries)	• New exec summary sheet has provided improved focus at meetings on the right issues and the focus on students • Trend data is included in reports • Agendas more flexible to respond to Group needs and align with the strategic plan and Ofsted priorities • Changes to the cycle of business through the year • Openness and transparency in reporting

	All Chairs	• Agendas allowing time for strategic discussion and decision making • Cycle agile to changing external and internal priorities, meeting local skills needs and government priorities, and regional opportunities and risks • Trust, openness and transparency in reporting • All governors to have a detailed insight into the Group's strengths and areas for development with board business and succession planning linked to the five-year plan (Ofsted) • Principal 1 of the Code – Determination of aims and strategic oversight *The values are lived by the Board and underpin all board decisions.* • All governors understand the curriculum and are committed to their role in improving standards, particularly for those who are disadvantaged (Ofsted) • Utilising the work of the task and finish groups • Board briefings	• Governors fully involved in the development and roll out of the Strategic Plan. The Board strategy day in October involved Exec and SLT in considering all curriculum and business areas, their strengths and areas of opportunity • The Quality and Standards Committee has made inclusion a priority area on its agendas • A revised link governor role for Inclusion and SEND • Ofsted briefing sessions ran from January-March 2026 to focus governor knowledge on improving standards • The Board has set up an English and Maths Task and Finish Group to drive improvements for students • The next External Governance Review in September 2026 will focus on the Board's effectiveness to drive, support, and monitor the Group's priorities in the Strategic Plan and the wider environment and culture; interaction, behaviours, and effectiveness of the Board (and Exec) to drive improvements and outcomes for students • The Board receives monthly Board Briefings including sector, Group and Board updates and information on training and development opportunities **Map of change:** • Important to allow time for detail but sharpen/maintain the focus on strategy and the bigger picture. Create more space for deeper discussions on risks and opportunities • Compliance. Move from a "tell" way of understanding to being able to "see/evidence" the assurance of what

			is happening – the link governor for Estates is working with the ED SPCS around this for estates and the FEEP • Focus on long term student destination and outcomes. There has been a focus on inclusion in QSC and opportunities and progression with supported internships. Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) leadership has moved to the Director of Safeguarding and Student Support and is a strong link governor area for oversight • Challenge and hold the SLT to account without excessive involvement and while allowing them to do their roles- there has been a strong lead from all chairs to ensure this takes place with additional discussions taking place at committee level • Challenge the Executive team to take time to (re)think about the questions asked by governors rather than feel the need to respond immediately – the introduction of suggested questions for governors in the exec summary is working well for giving governors and Exec to focus on the right questions • Continue with strategy days to set out and confirm future focus and risk appetite – a lot of work has gone into planning strategy days which bring a future focus to the Group and Board. A risk appetite workshop is taking place in May led by the Chair of ARC • Focus on the implementation of the Strategy Plan/board business linking to the Plan/the values of the Group are lived by the Board and underpin all Board decisions. Ensure the Plan is a living, breathing document that will evolve, as necessary. Understand

			what it means to "be the best we can be" – the Chair is leading on this embedding the Plan into strategy day and board discussions. The CEO and Principal has time at Board meetings to report on progress against the Plan and there are KPIs in place linked to SPH targets. Strategy days are well utilised to focus on key areas of the Plan • all governors understand the curriculum and are committed to their role in improving standards particularly for those who are disadvantaged – this is a focus for the Board, with the High Needs/SEND curriculum manager presenting to the QSC and a new link governor role for Inclusion, SEND and EDI**.** There was a development Ofsted session from the DCEO to all governors. **Area for further work** **Student voice**. Ensure that we continue to connect to and understand our core purpose. Create a 360-degree lens to "hear the noise". Re-energise the role of Class Rep. Simon Ashton brought in as a mentor for the student governor from January 2026 to support a wider and more inclusive student voice. The student engagement team lead and Director of Safeguarding and Student Support will join sessions with the Student Governor in 2026-7 for support and development and to triangulate student voice. With only one student governor engaging and the resignation of a student governor in January 2026 this is an area for further work. Student governor appointments for 2026-7

2. Enabling the Board to come together as a collective body			
Timeline	**Responsible**	**Actions**	**Progress**
By July 2026	Dir of Gov	(Using maturity map) • Board and Committee composition • Appointing, reappointing and succession planning • Inducting, training and developing • Evaluating (self-assessment)	• There are policies in place to support Board processes such as appointments, reappointments, succession planning • Governors work collectively on both Committees and the Board • There are opportunities to come together as a Board – post meeting dinners in the training restaurant, the Insights workshop in February and team building with the Executive in March • The September and March Board strategy days involved the Board, Exec and senior managers • Committee composition was reviewed in year to ensure it is robust and to support governor development • Reappointments have been considered alongside the Group's strategic plan and skills required on the Board • The link governor scheme has been revised to focus on important areas for the Group with the introduction of an inclusion role • Succession planning is a standing item on the SGR's Committee and skills are regularly reviewed • There is an open and transparent process for recruitment

			• Board development has focused on priority areas for the Group including Employer Academies, apprenticeships, Ofsted priorities, trauma informed practice. The Board has made good use of the interim FD with development sessions on FE funding and risk • Self-assessment is ongoing through the year and the Board has a wide range of evaluation activities which are reviewed by the SGR Committee. At the autumn Board meeting the Chair shared a Map of Change which included self-assessment reflections from 2024-5 and the focus of the Board for 2025-6. This is included as part of the Governance Improvement Plan • Insights work will be utilised in succession planning and self assessment **Area for further work** **Map of Change:** • Retain and attract governors. A lot of work has taken place on succession planning
3. Continuing to align governance with the Principles in the AoC Code of Good Governance			
Timeline	**Responsible**	**Actions**	**Progress**
By July 2026	Chairs/link governors	Including: • Greater oversight of environment and sustainability and social responsibility matters by the Board	• **Environment and sustainability** is a standing item on the Finance and Resources Committee agenda. The ED SPCS has taken over the leadership of E&S as part of the Estates role.

			• A strategic priority of the Group approved by the Board under Skills and Learning is *to foster sustainable development and embed sustainability and environmental literacy within all curriculum areas and training programmes* and under Innovation and Growth *to Embrace Emerging Technologies and Sustainability to and contribute to regional sustainability positioning the Group as a hub for innovation and a champion of environmental responsibility* • In December 2025 the Board approved the Estates Strategy and Vision 2023/4-2028-9 which includes a firm commitment to Net Zero 2030: Decarbonisation proceeds, prioritizing a 'fabric-first' approach and maintaining constant bid-readiness for external Heat Decarbonisation funding • The FRC receives updates on E&S through the Estates report which updates the Board on Eddisons, the heat decarbonisation plans, boilers and funding, solar, PV opportunities, energy efficiency opportunities • Lets Go Zero and the curriculum. The September 2025 Board looked at the positioning of the Group as a green skills hub, embedding net zero and sustainability across programmes, offering retrofit, renewable energy and clean technology training for employers and SMEs. **Social responsibility** • A strategic priority of the Group approved by the Board under Skills and Learning is social justice and inclusion

			to increase educational opportunities and attainment levels for underserved and hard to reach individuals and communities by addressing barriers to learning and fostering an inclusive, supportive environment, providing equity in education. Work around inclusion comes to the QSC.
		• Foster positive relationships with stakeholders • Increase the Board's oversight and involvement in stakeholder engagement	**Progress** • A strategic priority of the Group approved by Board under Place in the Community is being *an anchor institution for community engagement, meeting sector demands and building partnerships with industry* • Student and Staff governors sit on the Board and Committees • The Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment reports to the QSC and attends Board strategy days • The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy was approved by the Board in June 2026 with a substantive item from the Director of Marketing and Recruitment. The revised strategy includes the role of governors in stakeholder engagement and the Chair has requested a review against progress on the Strategy at both QSC and the Board in 2026-7 • Understanding of what can governance do to strengthen stakeholder engagement? • The CEO is proactive in inviting key governors to attend events and meet with stakeholders

		• Increase the Board's promotion and understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion across all of its work	• The Chair has taken on a supportive role in joining the CEO at meetings with key stakeholders • The March 2026 Board strategy day focused on Local Skills Needs and priorities in Bassetlaw with presentations from the Head of Growth and Economic Prosperity for (Bassetlaw District Council), Wright Engineering, visits to the Creative Village and Laing O'Rourke, and an LSIP update for EMMCA and SYMCA • The plan for the October 2026 strategy day is to hold at Step Fusion • The Board will receive and endorse the Rotherham Plan 2026-2036 • The FRC receives results of Employer surveys • The Board approves the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy • The Board approves the Annual Accountability Statement • The Chair attends the Annual Strategic Conversation with the DfE and FEC **Map of Change:** • Greater assurance that the Group meets local needs • Greater understanding of gaps in wider stakeholder engagement • Stakeholder and community strategy. Focus on our "doorstep". Understand how local businesses can best

			interact and feed into the college. What and how do we develop our partnerships and initiatives in the communities in which we operate. Greater governor involvement **Progress** • Re accreditation of Investors in Diversity • The link governors for EDI and Safeguarding and SEND attend Group meetings and met with assessors as part of the Investors in Diversity re accreditation • The link governor scheme has been revised with a new role for Inclusion, SEND and EDI • Inclusion is a substantive item at Quality and Standards Committee • EDI/FREDIE is a standing item at Quality and Standards Committee • EDI training is part of the Board's training and development programme **Areas for further work** • Focused session on environment and sustainability at the FRC (estates) and QSC (curriculum). Add to the Board development sessions programme

			• Continued focus from the Board on how the Group meets local skills needs on Board and strategy day agendas • Governors invited to observe employer advisory boards next year • More work required on oversight of social responsibility matters by the Board • Environment and Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility policies to be finalised and brought to the Board for approval
4. Reviewing and improving the governor link scheme			
Timeline	**Responsible**	**Actions**	**Progress**
Review by December 2025 and in place by July 2026	Chair and Vice Chairs	Review of the Governor Link scheme focusing on feedback from link governors and managers about the reason/focus for the scheme and how it can positively impact the Group and Board.	**Map of Change:** • Reset the remit of the link governor role The VC led on this work with support from the Director of Governance and the DCEO around the new Inclusion, SEND and EDI link governor. The new policy was shared as a pilot with approval to the May SGR Committee.
4. **Focusing on the well-being and development of governors and staff**			
Timeline	**Responsible**	**Actions**	**Progress**
By July 2026	Chair and Dir of Gov	Including: • Board development and training opportunities	• Board development and training focused on priority areas and sessions are recorded 2025-6 and is reduced

		• Review of governance workload for governors and the senior team and ways to reduce, including the capacity of senior team and governors in writing and reading papers • How governors' skills, knowledge, energy time and efforts can be best utilised • Boardroom behaviours and inclusion • Developing Board relationships and working as a team • Balanced engagement in meetings • Maintaining management/governance boundaries • Opportunities outside of the boardroom for engagement • Support for governors and Exec	compared to 2024-5 to support governor and manager workload (see schedule) • Strong triumvirate that meets fortnightly. The triumvirate are on training programmes to develop their roles to support the Board and Group: Chair leadership programme; Public Leaders Programme; Governance Professional Leadership Programme. • SGR Committee looks at the development and progression opportunities for SPHs • Strategic Priorities approved by the Board under People and Culture are *to promote healthy lifestyles, creating a culture of self care, resilience and openness that has an impact on the health and wellbeing of our staff by providing resources, training and support and to celebrate staff* achievements and under Place in the Community are *playing a key role in addressing the health and mental health challenges facing young people and adults through targeted education and support initiatives that strengthen social and health awareness* • The FRC has a standing HR report and an annual plan that includes health and wellbeing and staff development days, CPD and development sessions around mental health, fitness, emerging talent and opportunities, Skills academy, , data on sickness, retention, KUDOS recognition scheme

			• Staff survey outcomes are shared with governors and were a focus on the September 2025 Board strategy day with a key strength being that *colleagues feel they are treated fairly, with dignity and respect from both managers and colleagues*. The next survey is currently out for completion with an increase in completion rates • The monthly Board briefing shares information for governors on staff health and wellbeing opportunities • All governors are actively involved in events outside of the Boardroom (see governor engagement log) • Opportunities for Board development are shared monthly in the Board briefing • The new Exec summaries aim to save managers and governors time and bring more balanced engagement and focus to meetings • Support and flexibility for governors and Exec around holidays, family commitments and sickness, including sabbaticals for governors • The chairs and Director of Governance ensure and monitor the management/governance boundaries • The Insights workshop for governors in February and March strengthened the relationships, teamworking and Board dynamics and working with managers. • Opportunities for governors and exec to come together outside the boardroom by starting Board meetings

			earlier and going for supper in the Wharncliffe (student training restaurant) • Chairs meet at the end of each term to review the term, evaluate impact, and support each other and the CEO. See notes for details • Chair 121s with governors, introduction of six month touch points, support for governors, Exec and SLT from the Director of Governance • Induction and mentoring for new governors • The SGR regularly reviews governor roles to see how skills, knowledge and time can be best utilised. There is recognition that there is a range of time from governors taking on additional roles and the risks of this • Governor exit summaries have identified the need to be mindful of governors' time and capacity and this is a focus area for the SGR Committee **Map of Change:** • Evaluating governance for impact. Governance adds more value for the same effort • Clear concrete actions for the Vice Chairs were agreed. With the resignation of one VC the remit is being reviewed • Ensure meetings are all inclusive/involved for all governors. Make governors feel valued. Ensure the Board environment remains conducive to open, honest conversations

			• Build a working partnership to offer a broader perspective. Socialise the Board to get to know each other better. Stronger personal relationships develop improved participation and understanding. • **Areas for further work** • More understanding of the work around senior staff wellbeing and inclusion. The Board has requested a review at FRC on resource and support for senior team • Balanced engagement in meetings • More opportunities for learning walks