



JOINT GOVERNANCE BOARD

22nd June 2022 @ 10:00
ONLINE

PRESENT:

Kate Jackson, Chief Finance Officer (Chair) [KJ]
Rachel Barber, Joint Audit Committee Chair [RB]
Guto Edwards, Head of Finance [GE]
Stephen Hughes, Chief Executive [SH]
Sian Wyn Jones, Risk and Business Continuity Coordinator [SWJ]
Phil Kenyon, Force Solicitor [PK]
Sophie Rousseau [SR] (minutes)
Seb Phillips, Director of Finance and Resources [SP]
James Sutton, Assurance Board Chair [JS]
Helen Williams, Finance Control Accountant [HW]
TIAA Helen Cargill [HC]

APOLOGIES:

Anne Matthews, Finance & Budget Officer
TIAA Sarah Davies, JAC Lead on Ethics & Governance
Sian Beck, T/Ch Supt

300. MINUTES

The board reviewed and approved the accuracy of the previous minutes.

301. ACTIONS

See action log for updates.

302. GOVERNANCE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW (ANNUAL)

SWJ highlighted that we are in a good position with positive feedback received. There is now more awareness and understanding of the governance around the force proving we are moving in the correct direction. There are lots of discussions around repeat discussions in meetings, this is where the corporate template will possibly help with the issue and making reports clearer as to what the actual purpose is, SWJ also mentioned that previous discussions are included in reports to avoid repeat discussion on work that has already been completed.

Amendments to the governance structure, addition of a few meetings and decommissioning of one meeting.

Some recommendations for the Joint Governance to approve:

- Take assurance from the report
- Ask the force to consider reinforcing to the chairs and secretariat the importance of adhering the terms of reference – ensure meetings remain focused and achieve objectives
- Timings of meetings national/regional.
- Consider reinforcing the use of corporate templates – reduce duplication/ repetition of work
- More descriptive of highlight reports in terms of including more detail around previous discussions
- Approve proposed governance structure which have the amendments that have been highlighted in the report – [SP suggested taking it to a wider forum such as SLT]

RB questioned whether the findings will be shared with all those who have contribute in order for them to see the output and where it has gone to and the response that it has been given. For example: what SLT say about it as this continues to show the importance. SWJ in agreement and reassured that all that contributed will receive feedback.

SH question SWJ – When new meetings are commissioned, is it documented anywhere as it provides clarity to the Joint Governance? SJ explained that when a meeting is commissioned/decommissioned a report should be submitted to SLT seeking approval, once approved it should report into the JGB to highlight that a meeting has been agreed/removed.

303. AGREE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (AGS)

SP highlighted one of the elements that doesn't feature in the AGS currently – also an action to pick up is the action plan around governance associated with the AGS for the current year we are in now, there are a couple of elements. Considering the findings of the governance review and their implementation of the coming year could feature within the action plan and how we look to move some of those issues forward over the coming year. SP also suggested that another formal review of governance being done could feature in the AGS action plan.

There is currently a draft AGS that reflects discussions had at the JGB at the beginning of March and there has been an attempt to incorporate those comments and discussions into the version circulated for today's meeting, although due to it nowt being issue SP thinks it is one potential area which could be expanded on within the AGS following the governance review. The Governance plan is also still need for the year; SP shared some thoughts on this:

- Considering the findings of the governance efficiency review and their implications over the coming year
- Undertaking another formal review of governance over the coming year
- Considering the appropriateness of the AGS format and considering any potential enhancements for the FY 22/23 governance statement (Prompted by discussions in this forum from March)
- Considering the governance implications of the HMICFS PEEL review that is currently ongoing

RB made the reminder of that the AGS is to be published later this year in the early autumn and therefore could be an aspiration of what we've done one of the items before that time and then would disappear from the action plan as it has already been done.

304. REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

305. REVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS ISSUED BY INTERNAL AUDIT

306. ICT FIXED ASSETS LIMITED ASSURANCE – UPDATE AGAINST RECOMMENDATIONS

(All three agenda items were discussed and linked together)

3 audits have been finalised since the last meeting – collaborative audit on debtors which can back substantial assurance. We had a fixed assets audit which was focusing on ICT and that came back as limited assurance (page 58&59 of pack provides detailed report/update). The 3rd area where we have had a finalised audit is around network security where we've had reasonable assurance. One report at its draft stage and five further reports that are due.

CBNs continue to progress, and fraud alerts continue to progress.

ICT fixed assets limited assurance – update against recommendations

Six recommendations – outlined in detail on page 58&59. Through the head of ICT infrastructure those recommendations have been progressed with CGI. Recommendations highlight issues around gaps in our asset register and a lack of fully robust records around our fixed asset register opposed to missing or lost assets. Although the assets are not lost or missing they were not recorded from March 2020 when employees took their items away to work from home meaning when TIAA took a sample to verify the computer equipment to the IT asset register, they didn't know where to look for it – which gives the impression that it's missing (i.e. lost, stolen, or broken and thrown away). When IT looked for these "missing" items, they did find them all, and the records for these specific items were updated. Work is ongoing to ensure the location/person for all IT assets is recorded on the appropriate register.

HC updated that there is going to be a further audit later on in the year for the ICT fixed assets and will therefore pick up on the recommendations and ensure they have been implemented.

RB questioned whether it was a sample audit and therefore the only missing items were the only missing items – are the location of the assets recorded? Are they where they say they are?

HC confirmed that it is based on a sample approach – when they completed sample testing they found gaps which then led to the recommendation.

SP highlighted it has been taken as two strands, the specific sample with some specific issues identified. Then the wider process and the need to get wider assurance which is an ongoing piece of work that sits within the ICT team currently. The importance of fixed asset management has been stressed to the potential vendors who are taking on the work for the transition of the ICT target operating model, we have also stressed this with CGI. The process of deployed ICT assets accelerated under the context of COVID which definitely increased the risk although there were still processes in place and therefore the level of gaps has come as a surprise.

307. REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE

No recommendations

RB highlighted we rarely have anything to discuss recommendations under this agenda item – is there a reason for this, from JAC or from this group? RB requested what time of items should flow through to this group from JAC. Example given: one of the actions from the last JAC meeting was the deep dive into risk – could that have flowed through to this agenda item?

SP explained initially the approach was looking at outstanding JAC recommendations and seeing which of those had a bearing on or was related to the governance or a governance related issue – recommendations that relate to governance.

SP suggested we reflect and pin our approach down a little more especially following the risk example RB mentioned – that could have come under this item.

Action: In the agenda setting Seb and Kate to give the agenda item a thorough review – discuss what elements are of merit of discuss and then have them circulated to the membership in good time for proper discussion.

308. ASSURANCE UPDATE (BY EXCEPTION)

No update

309. REVIEW FORWARD WORK PLAN

Action: SR to arrange meetings for 2023.

SP highlighted dates on the statutory accounts have got out of sync - the statutory accounts and introduction narrative, final AGS will be for our next meeting

310. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 7th September 2022.