

Board and Committee Annual Review Process

for Open session

Subject:

Board and Committee Annual review process

Board meeting:

14 July 2025

Agenda item:

7

Action:

- For noting ☐
- For discussion ☐
- For decision ☒

for implementation.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- i. Note the feedback on the annual review process.
- ii. To approve the small number of actions ahead the 2025 review cycle including:
 - a. Increasing the timings between the issue of documentation
 - b. the deadlines for completion of the forms and the date of the review meeting.
 - c. Housing the documents online in the future.
 - d. The Governance team sending the nominated reviewer feedback forms to two reviewers on behalf of each board member and coordinating their receipt.
 - e. Removing the need to provide feedback and examples on the seven principles to public life, focusing solely on the Board's Values. The opportunity to provide overall commentary on the Principles to Public Life will remain.

Updating the guidance notes to reflect the proposed changes.

- iii. Noting the feedback following the annual review process for the ARB Board Chair and that no adjustments are proposed.

Annexes

No annexes

Author/Key Contact

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1. Open Session

2. Background and Key points

Background

- 2.1. An updated annual review process was implemented for all Board and independent committee members for the 2024 cycle.
- 2.2. The key area of change was around the documentation which enabled greater reflections on contribution and outcomes. The revised annual review form asked the members to reflect on what went well/not so well in the year, a summary of key deliverables and contribution and a reflection against the four values and seven principles of public life.
- 2.3. The form also provided an opportunity to consider the next 12 months, sharing any specific development needs along with an opportunity to set out general thoughts on performance and the year. This completed document would then form the basis of the discussion with the Board Chair/Chair of the Committee. This would be used as documented evidence for decisions around re-appointments.
- 2.4. Feedback from colleagues was also formalised through the implementation of a nominated reviewer's feedback form. The form would be sent to at least two reviewers (by the reviewee) and they would provide commentary on overall board contributions as well as comments on the board values - collaboration; innovation; commitment and value each other. Where possible examples would also be provided.
- 2.5. The reviewer would also have the opportunity to provide general thoughts and comments on the adherence to the seven principles of public life and whether in

their view they would benefit from any development. This completed form would then be sent to the Governance team, who would collate anonymously the feedback and send onto the reviewee.

- 2.6. In terms of logistics, the Governance team arranged the annual review slots with the parties, sending out the documentation with deadlines for completion and then collating all of the material for the reviewer (Chair) and the reviewee ahead of the meeting. There is a QA process in terms of reviewing the documentation to ensure that it has delivered on the required outcome and for the purposes of gathering feedback on the process.

Feedback

- 2.7. During the months of March and April 2024, the Head of People arranged calls with all Board and independent members to seek feedback on the process and documentation. Due to diary availability, it was not possible to seek feedback from one Board member. The feedback was provided confidentially and is summarised below.

Arrangements

- 2.8. Members felt that the distribution of the documentation by the Governance team was effective. Whilst some felt that there was a lot of content, it brought everything together which supported them in the process. There were some comments about the shortness of time in completing the documentation with views that more lead in time from sending the documentation, to completion of the forms, to having the meeting could be increased. It was also suggested that there was a reminder at the six-month mark to enable members to start preparations if they wished.
- 2.9. It was also suggested that having the forms online would be hugely beneficial rather than a number of attachments that required opening, completing and saving which was time consuming. This would bring efficiencies to the process.
- 2.10. There were a number of discussion points and mixed views around the nominated reviewer feedback form and how this was shared with potential reviewers. Some members felt comfortable in sending it to colleagues and thinking about who to send it to based on previous years - so changing the person year on year. Others made the point that they would send it to those that would know them best. It is important to note that one Board member asked the Governance team to choose the reviewers on their behalf so that the process was totally anonymous and removed the need to choose individuals.

- 2.11. Some colleagues also received a higher number of nominated feedback forms to complete compared to others who had one or no forms to complete. Whilst those that had been asked to complete the forms were content to do this for their colleagues, they questioned whether the distribution of feedback requests may be better managed.
- 2.12. In addition, whilst the guidance requested that the reviewers return the form to the Governance team, many members sent the forms back to the colleague as well for full transparency.
- 2.13. Members felt that it was an important process and were dedicated to providing the time and commitment to the process and completion of information for themselves and others.

Documentation

- 2.14. Generally, it was felt that a lot of time was needed to complete the documentation and for some it took longer than expected, however the consensus was that the documentation provided was clear and provided the guidance needed.
- 2.15. Overall members felt that the nominated reviewer's feedback form was a good basis to provide feedback, however the need to provide examples was not easy and some felt it was disproportionate when the board/committees didn't meet regularly. However, some did feel that it provided some good structure and enabled them to think about their feedback in a structured way. Some felt that the need to comment on the seven principles of public life as a separate section to the values was repetitive.
- 2.16. A couple of members also shared an important point that if there was a concern about a colleague, they would raise it at the time with the Chair of the Board, and not wait until a feedback process.
- 2.17. The annual review form was seen to be positive in that it brought everything together for reflection. Some did refer to the form during the discussion. Observations were made that the self-reflection on the values could be condensed to one section rather than having to think across each area, as the thoughts were similar for each value.

Proposed changes for approval

- 2.18. No significant changes are being proposed to the approach or documentation; however, the feedback has been important to reflect, and we are proposing to make some adjustments for the future. These are set out below.
- 2.19. Consider for the future moving the process to online which in turn will allow the form and feedback to be provided and completed through a more effective and efficient way.
- 2.20. Extend the timelines from sending the documentation, to completion to the meeting date. We will also have a 6-month reminder to enable members to think ahead to their review and feedback on colleagues.
- 2.21. In terms of the nominated reviewer feedback form, remove the need to comment on principles of public life in the values section. This is covered at the end under any other observations, so the point remains within the form.
- 2.22. We are proposing that the advice around providing examples will remain. We will update the guidance notes to expand the illustrations on where feedback could be provided in the context of how the reviewer knows the reviewee, and how many times they have seen them. Reminding members that they may wish to capture key thoughts following a meeting in the event that they may be asked to provide feedback on a colleague. This would not need to be set out in explicit notes but could be observations and thoughts on how things went and if anything in particular stood out.
- 2.23. To support this, we will run a short re-fresher session on values and behaviours which will either be run in a workshop setting or an online briefing session with the executive.
- 2.24. The process around identifying reviewers will sit with the Governance team, in that they will identify two reviewers for each Board member/Committee member. This is to ensure that there is a balance on who is asked and ensures that different people are asked to provide feedback on an individual each year.
- 2.25. The feedback will then continue to be collated and shared with the member. This is important particularly where feedback may not be positive and the delivery of this anonymously reflects 360 feedback models and good practice. Collated executive feedback will continue.
- 2.26. For the 2025 cycle and for those members that are going into the second review period, there will be a lighter touch review process. This will include a refresh of the narrative around the values where there has been significant change, with the

information around what went well/not so well and achievement of the objectives being updated to reflect what has taken place in that year. A full review will then take place in year 3 (2026).

Independent Review Process for the ARB Board Chair

- 2.27. An external Independent Reviewer was appointed to run the appraisal process for the Board Chair and having taken feedback from both parties, the process ran smoothly and successfully. The Chair felt that it had been a valuable experience and that the final report produced was as expected and of high quality. From the Reviewer's perspective, they found the arrangements and documentation that formed part of the review to be of a high standard. The only observation made was that the feedback forms from Board colleagues may need to be collated sooner to be able to feed into the review period/process. No changes are proposed for the next review cycle.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1. There are no resource implications to the proposed changes being made, as any changes are within our capacity, resource and budget plans.

4. Risk Implications

- 4.1. It is important that there is a robust performance management process for Board members and their re-appointment. Having an open feedback process also ensures that the process and approach is up to date and practical to those that are participating in it. This in turn reduces the risk around poor performance, ensures engagement with the Board and ensures that procedures and policies are effective.

5. Equality and Diversity implications

- 5.1 The EDI implications are taken into account with regard to the approach to performance management of our board and committee members.
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6. Recommendations

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