



Meeting: NHS Highland Board
Meeting date: 31 May 2022
Title: Review of Governance Arrangements
Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Boyd Robertson, Board Chair
Report Author: Ruth Daly, Board Secretary

1 Purpose

This is presented to the Board for:

- Decision

This report relates to a:

- Emerging issue
- Local policy

This aligns to the following NHSScotland quality ambition(s):

- Safe
- Effective
- Person Centred

This report relates to the following Corporate Objective(s)

Clinical and Care Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving health • Keeping you safe • Innovating our care 	X	Partners in Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership • Listening and responding • Communicating well 	
A Great Place to Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing talent • Leading by example • Being inclusive • Learning from experience • Improving wellbeing 	X	Safe and Sustainable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting our environment • In control • Well run 	X X

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

In March 2022 the Board agreed to extend the decision taken in November 2021 to prioritise essential business at Board and Committee meetings and to pause Committee development sessions, with a further review of the situation at this meeting of the Board.

2.2 Background

Throughout the pandemic Scottish Government have encouraged Boards to consider revisions to governance mechanisms and urge that they must be proportionate to ensure maximum focus on the challenges currently being faced. Boards have been counselled to ensure that the chosen model enables agile and effective decision making and places staff and their resilience at the centre.

NHS Highland has changed and reviewed its governance arrangements throughout the pandemic. In compliance with the UK Corporate Governance Code and the Scottish Public Finance Manual, no amendments have been made to the operation of the Audit and Remuneration Committees.

2.3 Assessment

Due to the lessening of pressure on the organisation as the spread of infection reduces, the Board Chair and Chief Executive request that the full scope of Board and Committee business should now be reinstated with effect from 1 June 2022 and that a watching brief remain over the situation. It is also now considered suitable for development sessions for Committees to be reintroduced.

In terms of the format for business meetings, there have been many advantages to using MS Teams, particularly in terms of reducing carbon emissions, travel time, and travel and accommodation costs. It is proposed therefore that business meetings should continue to use MS Teams as the means of participation.

It is acknowledged that there are some benefits to be derived from in person participation, particularly at more informal meetings such as Development and Strategy sessions. However, we are keen to maximise our contribution to reducing carbon emissions, and to keep travel and accommodation costs to a minimum. On that basis, as a standard approach, it is proposed that Development and Strategy sessions should also continue to be held over MS Teams for all participants, with discretion being extended to individual Chairs to agree to hold them in person as appropriate.

2.4 Proposed level of Assurance

This report proposes the following level of assurance:

Substantial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Limited	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Impact Analysis

3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

3.2 Workforce

3.3 Financial

All Governance Committees provide assurance and governance on staff, clinical and financial matters on behalf of the Board. During the period that governance has been revised, with the exception of the Audit and Remuneration Committees, decisions taken by the Board have been done with due consideration given to clinical, staff, and financial governance matters appropriately recorded in minutes.

3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

A risk assessment was carried out in relation to amendments to our governance arrangements during April/May 2020 which underpins the recommendation of this report.

3.5 Data Protection

There are no data protection considerations arising from this report.

3.6 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this paper.

3.7 Other impacts

No other impacts.

3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

Board and Committee Chairs and Lead Executives have discussed the proposal to extend the current arrangements.

3.9 Route to the Meeting

This has been considered at the Chairs Group on 3 May 2022 and EDG on 9 and 23 May 2022.

4 Recommendation

The Board is invited to **agree** that from 1 June 2022:

- (a) the full suite of business should be reinstated at formal Committee and Board meetings and the full timetable of Development sessions for Board and Committees should be reintroduced,
- (b) Committee and Board business meetings continue to be held using MS Teams as the only means of access for all participants, and
- (c) Development and Strategy sessions should also continue to be held over MS Teams for all participants as a standard approach, with discretion being extended to individual Chairs to agree to hold them in person as appropriate.

4.1 List of appendices

This report has no appendices.