

Meeting	Advisory Board
Date	07/10/2020
Time	10:30-13:30
Arrangements	WebEx

Minute

Gayle Gorman (Chair)	Ray McCowan
Alan Armstrong	Lyndsay McRoberts
Gillian Hamilton	Aileen Ponton
Janie McManus	Gillian Howells (5)
Maria Walker	Stephen Edgar (7 & 8)
John Fyffe	Carol Copstick (9.2)
David Gemmell	Roz McCracken
Kevin Kelman	Nina Hyslop (Secretary)

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Minute and action log

2.1. The minute of the meeting held on 6 July 2020 was approved.

2.2. The action log was reviewed, with due and outstanding items updated:

19 /19-20 Onboard training. Virtual Onboard training bespoke to Education Scotland was being considered, pending suitable dates from attendees and external provider, and confirmation of costs.

6 / 20-21 Communications discussion with Non Executives. Scheduled for 19/11/20.

7 / 20-21 Advisory Board Terms of Reference to be published. Pending the Framework Document being published, to link into.

11 / 20-21 Increase the frequency of strategic Advisory Board meetings. Requested availability from members, pend full response.

The following items were to be closed:

22 / 19-20 Meeting with Non Executives and Finance. Held 05/10/20

25 / 19-20 Evaluating our Work. Tabled for discussion at this meeting (item 7)

1 / 20-21 To share the revised Corporate Plan. Issued 28/08/20

5 / 20-21 To share to OD and Comms paper with members. Sent to Gillian Hamilton to share

8 / 20-21 Q2 Board meeting to be rescheduled. Rescheduling no longer necessary

9 / 20-21 Share the ES Comms strategy. Issued 02/09/20

10 / 20-21 Comments on the Corporate Plan and Recovery Plan. Completed 07/09/20

3. Conflict or declarations of interest

3.1. There were no declarations or conflicts of interest to note.

4. Chair's strategic update

4.1. The Chair provided a verbal update on the range of engagement across the agency.

4.2. Maria Walker's imminent retirement was acknowledged. It was reported that there was a strong field of candidates for her post, with interviews taking place at the end of

October, and a staff panel forming part of the process. In the interim the Senior Regional Advisors would provide cover for the Regional SD role on rotation, and Janie McManus would undertake the role of Sponsor to the Transformation Programme.

- 4.3. It was reported that recruitment had taken place for a Gender and Equalities Officer.
- 4.4. The People Survey was now open and trade union colleagues were working with us to jointly encourage staff participation. High level results were expected in December, with detailed reporting in January.
- 4.5. A virtual all staff conference had taken place earlier in the month with a good level of participation and interaction between attendees.
- 4.6. Non-Executive Board Members had been invited to a wider variety of forums recently, including the staff conference, finance discussions, programme meetings, etc. Members were asked to confirm if this level of engagement was helpful.
- 4.7. It was important to note the realignment of work and teams to support the recovery year work. A revised governance reporting framework had also been agreed at the recent Leadership Team meeting. This would be shared after the meeting.
- 4.8. Work had been ongoing to finalise the Education Scotland Framework Document, which was now with DFM for approval, following which it would be published.
- 4.9. The Regional Improvement Directorate was working to develop a new agile process to meet the asks from the sector.
- 4.10. It was noted that whilst routine inspections had paused, special inspections had continued where there were concerns around an establishment.
- 4.11. Following the publication of the revised Corporate Plan, there had been a well-received round of webinars with Directors of Education and stakeholders.
- 4.12. There had been a focus on e-Sgoil, and its ability to support remote learning. A series of lessons was being prepared, along with after school study classes. It was further reported that the work on Scotland Learns had evolved, and a range of home learning activities would be ready to share following the October break, for fortnightly release.
- 4.13. The OECD review was underway, with the Chair attending assessment workshops, meetings, and providing evidence.
- 4.14. It was noted that Education Scotland had also submitted evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry.
- 4.15. The outcome of the national exam review would shortly be published by SG.

Action

12 / 20-21 Issue the governance diagrams to Board members. Secretary – 31/10/20

5. Finance update to 31 August 2020

- 5.1. Gillian Howells attended to present the finance position as at 31 August 2020. An underspend was noted of almost £500k, with further savings in Scrutiny identified. Whilst it was acknowledged that there may be some further additional savings, these were not anticipated to be significant.
- 5.2. A meeting between finance and Board members had recently taken place to explain finance processes and the work undertaken between the finance team and business partners to identify savings. It was agreed that a similar session should be included in the Non-Executive induction programme to facilitate an earlier understanding of budget planning and reporting.

- 5.3. Members confirmed that the variance analysis provided was helpful although there was a need to avoid the use of abbreviations. Members also requested a breakdown of central overhead figures. It was explained that the Treasury permits budget movements between categories (i.e. staff and non-staff) subject to providing reasons for the movement on a monthly basis. Budget can also be reclassified from Resource budget to Capital budget, but this requires explicit permission from the Treasury.
- 5.4. At this stage there was no impact anticipated for the Agency following the publication of the Programme for Government.
- 5.5. Board members asked for their thanks to be recorded on the work completed by Finance on the improvement to finance papers tabled.

Actions

- 13 / 20-21 Include a meeting with Finance on budget processes as part of the induction for new Non Executives. Secretary – 09/12/20**
- 14 / 20-21 Avoid the use of abbreviations in future finance reports. G Howells – 09/12/20**
- 15 / 20-21 Include a central overheads breakdown in future reports. G Howells – 09/12/20**

6. People and Place update

- 6.1 Work was ongoing to complement the learning and support available in schools and locally from their Regional Improvement Collaborative, as well as nationally. It was reported that there had been a good number of specialist curriculum and early years professionals working with e-Sgoil to build learning. However whilst e-Sgoil had its own staff to draw on, authorities were being encouraged to supplement e-Sgoil resources from available staff.
- 6.2 The digital team continued to deliver webinars, which have been well received, with an increased ask for mixed delivery, through webinars and Glow, or other platforms, for simultaneous learning for pupils studying at home or in class. It was agreed that there was a great transformative opportunity to get the system aligned to support the future of young people.
- 6.2. Blethers and webinars on a range of themes continued, and going forward we would also be working with SG on parental involvement, guidance, additional support needs etc. It was also noted that professional learning remained at a high level. Work to align responsibility for our comms, events and online presence into one team had been completed.
- 6.3. It was noted there had been a significant shift towards place based work. Heads of Scrutiny and Senior Inspectors had been in discussions as to the nature of support required for each local authority to aid recovery and all Early Learning and Childcare, CLD, and HM Inspector colleagues had been connected with a locality providing a range of skills and expertise. Individual support to coach new and acting headteachers had also been provided, delivering critical friend or mentoring support.

7. Evaluating our work

- 7.2. The Chair welcomed Stephen Edgar to speak to his paper about our approach to evaluating our work and impact during the Recovery Year, linking this to the revised Corporate Plan.
- 7.3. The tabled paper set out a proposed approach to monitoring and evaluation of the agency's work to June 2021. It was acknowledged that given the resource challenges it would be important to understand the basis of each question and what it was trying to achieve.

- 7.4. Members agreed that the logic diagram provided was helpful, and that further understanding was needed about what value the sector sees Education Scotland bringing in the short and medium term. It was suggested that the questions be tested within an small area, incorporating a few schools as a temperature check. Background detail around the rationale for each question should be included in any subsequent papers to board members.
- 7.5. It was agreed that it would be helpful to hold any future early stage thinking at the Advisory Board strategic meetings, where more time could be taken to discuss topics at length. An alternative suggestion would be to consider allocating Non Executives as critical friends to project work, at the early planning stage.

Action

16 / 20-21 Provide a case study to supplement the background for the work undertaken and invite feedback. Stephen Edgar – 09/12/20

8. Management Information

- 8.2. Stephen Edgar presented his MI paper for Q4 2019-20 and Q1 2020-21 to the Board.
- 8.3. It was acknowledged there had been an improvement over the course of the reporting periods, in terms of the scope and focus of the data provided. Suggestions were put forward for further refinement, including regrettable staff loss, agency turnover for internal and external jobs, FOI numbers as well as percentages, Ministerial Correspondence rejections and reasons why, consider targets for measures e.g. optimal staffing headcount, and short term absence levels to be considered.
- 8.4. It was confirmed that although SG managed absence, work was underway to look at whether this continued to be appropriate.
- 8.5. The Board welcomed the recognition of the Agency's improved FOI performance by the Scottish Information Commissioner in his second annual review.
- 8.6. Board members thanked Stephen and his team for their hard work on items 7 and 8.

Action

17 / 20-21 consider further refining the MI report to include:

- **External turnover as well as the agency turnover rate (internal/external jobs)**
 - **FOI numbers as well as percentages,**
 - **Ministerial Correspondence returns to SG reasons why,**
 - **short term absence levels**
- Stephen Edgar - 09/12/20**

9. Scottish Attainment Challenge and National Improvement Framework updates

- 9.1 Maria Walker presented Patricia Watson's paper detailing the range of work undertaken by Education Scotland to deliver the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the national reporting timeline for the fifth year of the programme.
- 9.2 Board members agreed the report was helpful in evidencing Education Scotland's support to the sector.
- 9.3 Carol Copstick presented her paper on the National Improvement Framework, which provided an update at national and local level. It was noted that work was progressing to streamline the complexity of NIF reporting. The progress on NIF was recognised by Board members.

10. Any other business

10.2. Board members asked for the record to note their thanks to Maria Walker for her significant contribution to the work of Education Scotland and their best wishes for her retirement.

Date of next meeting: 9 December 2020, 10:30-13:30

Name Nina Hyslop
Role Governance Officer
Date 08/10/2020