

Meeting:	Advisory Board
Date:	10/10/2023
Time:	10:00 – 12:30
Details:	MS Teams

Minute

Members	In attendance
Gillian Hamilton (Chair)	Lesley Whelan (item 6)
Maureen Hamilton	Gillian Kierans (item 6)
Janie McManus	Andrew Duncan (item 7)
John Fyffe	Clare McAndrew (item 9)
David Gemmell	
Aileen Ponton	Governance
Kevin Kelman	Ann Cura (secretariat)
Ray McCowan	Anne Boland (secretariat)
Patricia Watson	
Lyndsay McRoberts	
Apologies	
Ollie Bray	
Gill Ritchie	

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Ollie Bray and Gill Ritchie.

2. Previous meeting

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes from the meetings of 12 July 2023.

- 2.2 The following action log updates were also accepted:

- AB 01 - The Board agreed that this should remain open.
- AB 17 - The Board agreed to close
- AB 18 - The Board agreed to close

- 2.3 In relation to action 01, it was agreed that members will now draft a letter to the Cabinet Secretary regarding their concerns on Education Reform. It was also noted that non-executive board members may consider requesting a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary.

Action 019: John Fyffe to draft a letter and share with members for comment.

3. Declarations of interest

- 3.1 No declarations to report.

4. Chair's update

- 4.1 The Chair updated members on developments regarding business activities since the last meeting held on 12th July 2023.
- 4.2 The Chair updated members on a meeting held with the Cabinet Secretary, together with a follow up letter. This meeting focused on a number of priority areas identified by the Cabinet Secretary, which were confirmed in the letter. As a result, the Leadership Team will now discuss how the organisation can best focus our staff to take forward these priorities. It was noted that Education Scotland will provide an update to staff at the next Leading Together Day.
 - 4.2.1 Members discussed this and recognised that it could be a challenge to deliver on these priorities within the budget and staffing constraints. It was agreed that the concerns discussed should be included in the letter to the Cabinet Secretary.
 - 4.2.2 The Chair thanked members for their feedback on this matter.
- 4.3 Board members were updated on the Staff Conference held on 22nd August 2023. The Chair thanked members who attended the conference. A detailed update regarding this will be provided in agenda item 5.
- 4.4 A brief update was provided regarding positive work that is currently underway with ADES.
- 4.5 The Chair updated members on the Scottish Learning Festival (SLF). It was noted that the Cabinet Secretary requested that Education Scotland consider various options for SLF for 2024.
- 4.6 The Chair highlighted to members that Education Scotland won two awards at this year's SAMEE Recognition and Appreciation Awards. Also, the group formally acknowledged the two awards that Gillian Hamilton recently won.

5. Update from LT Away Days

- 5.1 Maureen Hamilton updated members on the discussions from the LT Away Days held on 19 and 20 September 2023.
- 5.2 An in-depth discussion took place regarding the Education Scotland budget and several options were considered, including a recruitment freeze, a review of the organisation's estates and travel and subsistence. Planned, but uncommitted spend was also reviewed. LT agreed to stop short of a full recruitment freeze, but to enhance existing processes to control and monitor recruitment. It was also noted that there were several budget transfers that were stopping either in the current financial year or next year. This created issues for the organisation because in some cases, permanent posts had been created, but there would no longer be funding to pay for these posts.
- 5.3 LT also agreed a new revised governance structure to reflect work in the two distinct areas (New Inspectorate and New National Agency). However, it was noted that the Corporate Services and Digital Services Boards will continue. It is anticipated that the

revised arrangements will commence on 1st April 2024, and existing governance arrangements would remain in place until then.

- 5.4 LT discussed the staff conference. It was acknowledged that feedback was mixed regarding the conference, though it was noted that staff appreciated the opportunity to meet together and hear from the Cabinet Secretary and Interim Chief Executive.
- 5.5 Board members welcomed this update and fully supported the decisions taken by the Leadership Team. Members highlighted the challenges with the current budget and resources and agreed that clear and sensitive messaging to staff is vital.

6. Education Reform – New National Agency

- 6.1 Lesley Whelan and Gillian Kierans joined the meeting.
- 6.2 Lesley Whelan presented members with slides shared with the Leadership Team regarding transition and transformation in Education Scotland. It was noted that five priority areas have been identified for ES during the transition and transformation period.
- 6.3 It was noted that following the staff conference a survey was sent to colleagues (excluding the Scrutiny Directorate). This set out key questions regarding what staff think should change and what each team can do to contribute to the tilting/transitioning work. It was highlighted that responses will be analysed, and the transition plan will be adapted based on the feedback received.
- 6.4 Board members welcomed this update.
- 6.5 The Chair thanked Lesley and Gillian for attending the meeting.
- 6.6 Lesley and Gillian left the meeting.

7. Finance

- 7.1 Andrew Duncan joined the meeting to provide an update on the August financial monitoring report. It was highlighted that, as noted previously, the budget position has become increasingly challenging. There is concern over the budget transfer for the Scottish Attainment Challenge and Education Reform, which have not yet been agreed.
- 7.2 Members expressed appreciation for the work of the Finance Team and Strategic Business Unit for providing clear and accurate papers.
- 7.3 Andrew Duncan left the meeting.

8. Scrutiny report on activity and staffing levels

- 8.1 Janie McManus provided a brief overview of the two summary reports, March-June 2023 and June-August 2023 report.
- 8.2 It was noted that this is the first full year of inspections following covid.

- 8.3 Members discussed current staffing levels and recruitment challenges within the Scrutiny Directorate. It was acknowledged that there has been a positive response to the secondee recruitment campaign.
- 8.4 There was a discussion regarding the Early Learning and Childcare Inspections. It was noted that schools were given the option not to have their nursery class inspected if there had been an inspection by the Care Inspectorate in the preceding 18 months.
- 8.5 Janie McManus thanked members for their feedback.

9. Management Information Quarter 1 report - 23/24

- 9.1 Claire McAndrew joined the meeting to present the Management Information Report for Quarter 1 2023- 24. This report highlighted key management information from across Education Scotland from April to June 2023.
- 9.2 Members welcomed this report particularly the reduction in annual leave balances since the previous report.
- 9.3 It was noted that there has been an increase in the number of Freedom of Information requests. This will be monitored, and an update will be provided in the next reporting period.
- 9.4 There has also been an increase in the number of complaints. It was acknowledged that the number of complaints is in-line with the amount pre pandemic.
- 9.5 The Chair thanked the team for the work on this report and Clare McAndrew left the meeting.

10. Audit and Risk Committee

- 10.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided a brief update.
- 10.2 It was highlighted that progress with the HR and Finance shared services project being led by SG is being closely monitored. The current go-live date for both areas is April 2024.
- 10.3 It was noted that the Audit and Risk Committee were asked to suggest potential areas for future audits, staffing and digital strategy were suggested by the group. John Fyffe asked members to let him know if they would like to identify other areas.
- 10.4 Members were informed that Ollie Bray will be invited to future Audit and Risk Committees to discuss digital and potential cyber-attacks.
- 10.5 The Chair thanked John Fyffe for this update.

11. SAC National Performance

- 11.1 Patricia Watson provided a brief update on the SAC summary paper.

11.2 Members welcomed this report and acknowledged progress made in some areas. During the discussion it was noted that it would be beneficial to do a spotlight on good practice in the system. This would be useful for schools that have recently received Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Action 020: Patricia Watson agreed to speak to the comms team about this.

11.3 Members formally requested that a note of appreciation is passed to the Attainment Advisors for their work on this summary paper.

12. Date of the next meeting

12.1 Ann Cura to review dates for January 2024 meeting and confirm dates with the group. It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in-person in Glasgow.

Action 021: AC to confirm date with members.

Name Ann Cura
Date 11/10/2023