Meeting	Advisory Board
Date	07/07/2021
Time	10:00 – 13:00
Venue	MS Teams

Minute

Members	Presenters
Gayle Gorman (Chair)	Maureen Hamilton (Item 5, full meeting attendance)
Janie McManus	Joan MacKay (Item 7)
Gillian Ritchie	Tom Gregory (Item 7)
Patricia Watson	Patricia Dougan (Item 10)
John Fyffe	Andrew Duncan (Items 8 and 12, full meeting attendance)
David Gemmell	
Aileen Ponton	**Governance**
	Roz McCracken
	Clare Connor (Secretariat)

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Gillian Hamilton, Craig Clement, Ollie Bray, Ray McCowan, Kevin Kelman and Gillian Howells. Patricia Watson joined the meeting from 12 noon.

2. Previous meeting

2.1 The minute of 10 March 2021 was agreed to be an accurate record of discussions.

2.2 AB 04/20-21 Arrange a session on improving gender representation of the Board – **Re-forecasted to December AB**. **The scope of this item was also widened to include all equality groups.**

AB 09/19-20 Draft Regional Directorate Plans - **Agreed to delay until October AB.**

AB 20/20-21 LT to review critical friend roles – **Complete so agreed to Close.**

AB 21/20-21 Ne-LO Transformational Change Business Case – **Re-forecasted to October AB**.

3. Declarations/Register of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations or conflicts of interest to note at the start of the meeting.

3.2 However, during item 4 John Fyffe highlighted his previous involvement with the Career Ready Programme.

4. Chair's Update (Gayle Gorman)

4.1 The Chair updated members on developments regarding education reform since they last met on 21 June. It was noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills was due to meet with staff on 8 July.

4.2 Other particular points to note included the recent announcement that a phased return to SG offices would commence at the end of August; Education Scotland's plans to donate old laptops to charities as part of their corporate social responsibility

work; continued work to support staff wellbeing and the hosting of three Career Ready interns.

4.3   Board members discussed the potential impacts that the phased return to offices could have on staff. It was noted that flexible working would continue to be a strong focus within the proposed return to office plans.

4.4   Following discussions Aileen Ponton offered to share the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework's flexible working policy with the Governance Team.

4.5   The Board thanked the Chair for the update, including keeping them appraised of the ongoing developments regarding education reform.

New Action 22/21-22 Aileen to share flexible working guidance for return to offices.

5.   Corporate Plan (Maureen Hamilton)

5.1   The Head of Operations introduced her paper, highlighting the collaborative approach taken to developing the Corporate Plan with all staff.

5.2   The wide range of strategic priorities throughout the paper were flagged as important aspects of the plan. In discussion it was noted that the curriculum section had been further updated and the updated version would be shared following the meeting.

5.3   Board members discussed the overarching objectives and the need to weave the social justice terminology used in the inclusion and equity section throughout the document. The need to ensure messaging is aimed at all sectors was also flagged as important. Members also highlighted the need to be able to properly evidence all the outcomes and it was noted that the KPIs were in the process of being developed.

5.4   The Head of Operations thanked members of the Board for their feedback and agreed to share an updated draft version after the meeting.

New Action 23/21-22 Maureen to share an updated version of the Corporate Plan.

6.   Management information (Maureen Hamilton)

6.1   The Head of Operations also introduced the Corporate Management Information Report for Quarter 4.

6.2   Points to note included the average sick absence levels falling below the Scottish Government's seven day threshold; the decrease in unique newsletter subscriber numbers following the creation of a single mailing list; increased engagement across social media channels and an increase in page views across our Corporate, National Improvement Hub, Parentzone and Professional Learning and Leadership websites.

6.3   The Board welcomed the update and highlighted the need to consider and manage any impact education reform might have on recruitment and staffing levels.

6.4   The need to tailor professional learning opportunities for staff based on their individual roles within the organisation was also flagged.

6.5 The Chief Executive welcomed the need to continue to develop the professional learning offer for staff and thanked everyone involved in the delivery of recent organisation-wide development days. Members also discussed the high number of 'not for Education Scotland' responses that the Official Correspondence Team had reported during the quarter.

6.6 Joan MacKay and Tom Gregory joined the meeting to present item 7.

7. National e-Learning Offer (Joan MacKay and Tom Gregory)

7.1 Joan McKay and Tom Gregory attended to provide an update on the National Digital Approach for Scotland, including progress with the 12 week pre discovery phase which they reported had finished the previous week. The resulting business case would be tabled at an upcoming National e-Learning Offer Partnership Board meeting before being presented at the next Advisory Board in October.

7.2 The Board welcomed the update and discussed the great partnership working taking place as part of this ongoing development. There was a discussion about the technology platform that will be used for delivery, to ensure the offer has equitable access for all learners across the system. Following discussions it was noted that there was still some clarity required regarding the preferred platform for delivery of the offer.

7.3 Joan Mackay and Tom Gregory thanked the Board for their feedback and left the meeting.

8. Annual Report and Accounts (Andrew Duncan)

8.1 Board members agreed that they were satisfied with the content of the 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts and that the range of assurances and evidence on the effectiveness of the internal controls were sufficiently reliable to provide overall assurance and support to the Accountable Officer in her financial stewardship responsibilities.

8.2 The Chair, as Accountable Officer, would now sign the 2020-21 Annual Report and Accounts, and expressed her thanks to all colleagues involved for the hard work that went in to the development of the report.

9. Audit and Risk Committee (John Fyffe)

9.1 The ARC Chair provided an update on the recent ARC meetings that had taken place since the last Advisory Board meeting.

9.2 Members of the Advisory Board discussed concerns relating to the risk escalation process following the outputs from the cyber security and safeguarding risk session.

9.3 In particular, the ARC Chair reported the concern from ARC members about not being sighted on the risks associated with the Digital Transformation Programme.

9.4   Following discussions the Chair of the Advisory Board asked for the Digital Transformation Programme risk register to be shared with ARC and Advisory Board members, by email, before the next meeting.

9.5   Patricia Dougan joined the meeting to present item 10.

10.   Digital Transformation (Patricia Dougan)

10.1   Patricia Dougan attended to present the Digital Transformation Programme update and advised that the overarching status remains amber – with all programme vacant roles now filled or awaiting security validation and confirmation of start dates. It was further reported that the Programme will move to green assuming those offered all take up positions.

10.2   The volume of work identified as part of the Transformation Programme was presenting a budget challenge and the range of mitigating actions was noted.

10.3   In looking ahead, it was noted that approval process of the customer relation management contract would continue and more frequent meetings with suppliers would be scheduled to identify emerging risks or issues earlier.

10.4   Although the risk status was reported as green there was discussion about whether the report fully reflected the current position of the Digital Transformation Programme with members commenting that the highlight report required more detail as it did not fully reflect the known challenges facing the Programme.

10.5   Board members discussed the importance of this update becoming a standing item as part of future Advisory Board meeting agendas. The Board also asked for greater detail on plans for procurement to give a full understanding of the life cycle of costs before approving the customer relation management contract.

10.6   Patricia Dougan thanked Board members for their feedback and left the meeting.

New Action 24/21-22 Patricia Dougan to share the Transformation Board risk register before the next meeting.

New Action 25/21-22 Clare Connor to add the Transformation Board update as a standing item for all future Advisory Board meetings.

11.   Education Scotland Risk Register (Roslyn McCracken)

11.1   The Head of Governance tabled the risk registers for information.

11.2   No further amendments to the risk register were noted following the discussions around risk earlier in the meeting.

12.   Finance Update (Andrew Duncan)

12.1   Members were content with the finance papers provided which detailed the Agency's latest financial position.

13.   Key Considerations for Education in a Post-pandemic Scotland (Gayle Gorman)

13.1   The Chief Executive briefly talked to this paper on behalf of Ollie Bray. No further comments were noted.

14.   For awareness and AoB

14.1   No items were noted for Any other Business.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting was noted as scheduled for 6 October 2021, 10:00 – 13:00. Substantive items for discussions expected are:
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge Update
- Advisory Board self-assessment and review of ToR

Clare Connor
Secretary
7 July 2021