

# Minutes of the March 2023 Advisory Board

**Date:** 08/03/2023

**Time:** 10am to 1pm

**Location:** MS Teams

**Date of next meeting:** 10am on 24/05/2022 (hybrid)

Members	In attendance
Gayle Gorman (Chair)	Joe Griffin, Director General for Education and Justice (for part of item 4)
Ollie Bray	Craig McLean (item 6)
Craig Clement	Jacqueline Nimmo (item 7)
Gillian Hamilton	Gillian Howells (item 9 and 10)
Gillian Ritchie	Evelyn Oliphant (item 10)
Patricia Watson	Michael Moynihan (jnr.) (observing)
John Fyffe	
Kevin Kelman	
Lyndsay McRoberts	
Aileen Ponton	

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting especially Michael Moynihan (Jnr) who was attending to observe the meeting as part of his placement with the Governance and Information Team.
- 1.2 Apologies from David Gemmell, Ray McCowan, and Janie McManus. Lyndsay McRoberts joined during item 4.

## **2. Previous meeting**

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes of 7 December 2022 as an exact record.
- 2.2 The Board accepted the following action log updates:
  - AB 06 - The Board agreed to close.
  - AB 08 - The Board agreed to close.
  - AB 12 - The Board agreed to close.
  - AB 13 - The Board agreed to close.
  - AB 14 - The Board agreed to close.
  - AB 07 - The Board agreed not to forecast this action to July.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

- 3.1 There was no conflicts or declarations of interests to note.

## **4. Chair's update**

- 4.1 The Chair updated members on developments on business activities since the last meeting on 7 December 2022.
- 4.2 Points to note included the Chair's resignation from her post as Chief Executive of Education Scotland, the resignations of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister; the recent progress made with lessons learned exercises for the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC); updates on the Agency's equalities and safeguarding work; and the ongoing internal workshops for line managers.
- 4.3 Board members endorsed Education Scotland's approach to supporting line managers through change and welcomed the updates provided.

Following the Deputy First Minister's resignation, the Chair will formally write to him on behalf of the Agency to thank him for his support during his time as Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.
- 4.4 Gillian Ritchie temporarily left the meeting at the end of this agenda item.

## **5. OECD recommendations**

- 5.1 Ollie Bray introduced the item, updating members on the progress made against the recommendations. He then delivered a presentation which outlined a refreshed version of the OECD implementation plan.
- 5.2 Before discussions took place Joe Griffin, Director General for Education and Justice, briefly joined the meeting to share his reflections on the Chair's tenure as Chief Executive of Education Scotland. He expressed his thanks to Gayle for her leadership and stewardship over the past six years and extended everyone's best wishes as she transitions to her new role overseas. Advisory Board members echoed his sentiments.
- 5.3 The Chair thanked the Director General and Advisory Board for their kind comments before resuming the agenda item.
- 5.4 Joe Griffin left the meeting.
- 5.5 Members of Advisory Board thanked Ollie for the update and discussed practitioner involvement in the co-design groups and potential risks in relation to future progress, especially considering education reform and the known budget pressures. Members also discussed the Scottish Government's response thus far to the Agency's progress, before flagging the potential benefits that curriculum and industry collaboration could bring to this work. A need to recognise the length of time that it may take to embed changes in the system was also flagged.
- 5.6 Ollie Bray thanked members of the Board for their feedback and agreed to bring a further update on progress to a future board meeting.
- 5.7 Craig McLean joined the meeting.

## **6. People survey results**

- 6.1 Craig McLean attended the Advisory Board to give a summary of the 2022 People Survey results, highlighting areas of improvement since the last survey and areas of focus in the coming year.
- 6.2 The Advisory Board welcomed the summary and briefly discussed the variance of results across different business areas. It was noted that while there was still work to be done, the results in the Scrutiny Directorate had improved from last year. It was noted that while Directorates faced some ongoing issues, there was a need to support a focus on organisational culture and staff wellbeing during this period of reform.

- 6.3 Craig McLean thanked the Board for their feedback and left the meeting.
- 6.4 Jacqueline Nimmo and Gillian Ritchie joined before Patricia Watson left the meeting.

## **7. Support for Local Authorities**

- 7.1 Craig Clement introduced this item, updating members on how Education Scotland are deploying resources to meet the requirements of Local Authorities in the context of the Framework for Recovery and Accelerating Progress.
- 7.2 Jacqueline Nimmo then delivered a presentation that covered the following areas:
- insights into the work with one of three Local Authorities where Education Scotland are using resources intensively
  - emerging strengths of the Collaborative Improvement model
  - challenges and proposed next steps
- 7.3 Members discussed and shared their views on the approaches taken before extending thanks to the Regional Improvement Team.
- 7.4 Craig Clement and Jacqueline Nimmo thanked the Board for their feedback, and Jacqueline left the meeting.
- 7.5 Following a two-minute break Gillian Howells and Evelyn Oliphant joined the meeting.

## **8. Scrutiny activity and staffing levels**

- 8.1 Gillian Ritchie gave a brief overview of the summary report, noting that the content covered the period from 1 September 2022 to 30 November 2022.
- 8.2 Board members welcomed the summary report before discussing the recent and ongoing recruitment of Scrutiny staff and the levels of turnover in relation to the age profiling of HM Inspectors.
- 8.3 Gill Ritchie thanked members for their feedback.

## **9. Finance update**

- 9.1 Gillian Howells gave an overview of the finance paper, which detailed the Agency's latest financial position as at 31 January 2023.
- 9.2 Members were informed that further savings had been identified in relation to the predicted resource underspend at the end of December and the possibility of further savings emerging over February and March, which combined would help continue to manage down the budget pressure.

9.3 The Advisory Board were content with the update provided, and the Chair extended her thanks to the Finance Team for the finance papers and summary.

## 10. Budget planning

10.1 Gillian Hamilton presented the budget planning paper and said that it was anticipated that the Leadership Team would be able to approve Education Scotland's core budget by the end of March 2023, which would enable delegated budget letters to be issued by the end of March 2023.

10.2 It was also noted that as part of budget planning the Chief Executive had engaged in discussions with the Cabinet Secretary to agree a budget pressure to enable the recruitment of more inspectors, and the Leadership Team had agreed to accept the risk in relation to the starting budget pressure for next year.

10.3 The Advisory Board were content with the update provided.

10.4 Gillian Hamilton thanked the Board for their feedback before Gillian Howells and Evelyn Oliphant left the meeting.

## 11. Management information report

11.1 Gillian Ritchie introduced the management information report for quarter three. Points to note included the headcount increase; the overall average working days lost; and payment performance return.

11.2 The Advisory Board welcomed the update, and a brief discussion took place regarding the annual leave balance and drop-in click rate for Scotland Learns.

11.3 Gillian Ritchie thanked the board for their feedback.

## 12. Terms of Reference

12.1 Roz McCracken gave an overview of the draft Terms of Reference, and it was agreed that changes that had been made were around the administrative support for the board rather than substantial changes of focus.

12.2 The board thanked governance colleagues for drafting the Terms of Reference before making the decision to accept the changes.

**New decision:** Members accepted the draft Terms of Reference.

**New action:** Clare Douglas to share the updated Terms of Reference with staff and upload a copy of the new version to the Education Scotland website.

## **13. Education reform**

13.1 Gillian Hamilton introduced the item, updating members on progress since her last update at the December board meeting.

13.2 Points to note included the recent feedback from the Cabinet Secretary and Clare Hicks, the SRO for Education Reform, in relation to the draft Target Operating Models for the new independent inspectorate and the new national education agency. She also informed the board that the Scottish Government were supplying service design support for each of the project teams.

13.3 Board members welcomed the verbal update, and the Chair extended her thanks to everyone involved in the project teams.

## **14. Papers for awareness**

14.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided a brief verbal update from the last meeting on 6 March 2023 and highlighted the potential need to escalate risk number 9 to the Director General risk register.

14.2 Members welcomed the Audit and Risk Committee Chair's update.

**New action: Gillian Hamilton to discuss with John Fyffe the escalation of risk number 9 to the Director General risk register.**

## **15. Any other business**

15.1 Gillian Hamilton informed members of the available budget for supporting the critical friend work of non-Executives throughout financial year 2023-24.

## **16. Messages to convey to staff**

16.1 The Board agreed to convey the following messages to staff:

- The Director General and Advisory Board's thanks to the Chief Executive
- The Chair's thanks to the Advisory Board for all their help and support over her tenure as Chief Executive