

Meeting:	Advisory Board
Date:	18/01/2024
Time:	10:30:13:00
Details:	MS Teams/In-Person

Minute

Members	In attendance
Gillian Hamilton (Chair)	[REDACTED] (item 6)
Maureen Hamilton	[REDACTED] (item 7)
Janie McManus	[REDACTED] (item 8)
John Fyffe	[REDACTED] (item 10)
David Gemmell	Neil Rennick (item 12)
Aileen Ponton	Governance
Kevin Kelman	[REDACTED] (secretariat)
Ray McCowan	[REDACTED]
Patricia Watson	
Lyndsay McRoberts	
Apologies	
Ollie Bray	
Ray McCowan	

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Ollie Bray and Ray McCowan.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed David Gregory, recently appointed as a Strategic Director to the meeting.
- 1.3 Congratulations were noted to Janie McManus who has been appointed as the Interim HM Chief Inspector of Education.

2. Previous meeting

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes from the meetings of 10 October 2023.
- 2.2 The following action log updates were also accepted:
 - AB 01 - The Board agreed to close.
 - AB 20 - The Board agreed to close

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 10th October 2023.

4.2 The Chair highlighted that Neil Rennick, Director General for Education and Justice visited Optima on 20th November 2023. It was noted the Director General was keen to hear more about the work of ES, particularly the impact we have on Scottish education, as well as Board member feedback on education reform.

4.3 The Chair briefly mentioned the staff restructure and highlighted that this would be discussed in more detail under agenda item 11.

4.4 It was also noted that ES is encouraging staff to attend the office one day per week, in line with Scottish Government policy.

4.5 The Chair informed members that, following their communication to the Cabinet Secretary, an Advisory Board meeting will be arranged with Clare Hicks, Director of Educational Reform, to discuss education reform in more detail and to enable the board to share some of their concerns.

Action: [REDACTED] to arrange a meeting with the Advisory Board and Clare Hicks.

4.6 Janie McManus, HM Chief Inspector provided an update to members. The following key points were noted:

- Patricia Watson will take over as Strategic Director for Inspection on 31st January 2024.
- A national thematic inspection of mathematics with a focus on teaching and learning will be taken forward with the report due to be published in Autumn 2024.
- HM Chief Inspector has also agreed that a thematic inspection of literacy and English will be undertaken in Autumn 2024.
- New governance arrangements are in place for the Inspectorate.

4.7 It was agreed that an update from the HM Chief Inspector should be provided at future Advisory Board meetings.

Action: [REDACTED] to ensure future agenda includes an update from both the Chief Executive and the Chief Inspector.

5. Education Scotland Risk Register

5.1 [REDACTED] provided an update on the risk register.

5.2 An update was provided regarding changes to risk ES03 and ES06.

5.3 It was also noted that two new risks have been added to the risk register. One around the safety, security and health of our staff while carrying out their duties online and in person and the other is about Leadership Team autonomy due to the ongoing education reform.

5.4 Members expressed concerns regarding Leadership Team autonomy.

5.5 Members highlighted that a specific risk regarding innovation would be useful to include on the risk register.

Action: [REDACTED] to add risk regarding innovation to the risk register.

6. Finance Update

6.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to provide an update on the November financial monitoring report. It was highlighted that, as noted previously, the budget position has become increasingly challenging across Scottish Government.

6.2 An update was provided regarding the new financial controls which were put in place following a letter from the Permanent Secretary. Additional financial controls for at least the final three months of the year were approved by the Leadership Team on 9 January 2024. The process will be reviewed at the end of March. Members asked if this new process would increase workload for staff. It was noted that the Leadership Team are not expecting many requests during this time period, however, the process will be closely monitored.

6.3 Members expressed appreciation for the work of the Finance Team for providing clear and accurate papers.

6.4 [REDACTED] left the meeting.

7. Scrutiny report on activity and staffing levels

7.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting.

7.2 Gill Ritchie and [REDACTED] provided a brief overview of the summary report from September to November 2023. It was noted that following feedback the report has been updated to ensure it provides the relevant information to members.

7.3 Board members welcomed the updated reporting template and agreed that the information was useful.

7.4 [REDACTED] left the meeting.

8. Management Information Quarter 2 report - 23/24

8.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to present the Management Information Report for Quarter 2, 2023-24. This report highlighted key management information from across Education Scotland from July-September 2023.

8.2 Members welcomed this report, noting the positive reduction in sick leave.

8.3 The Chair thanked the team for the work on this report and [REDACTED] left the meeting.

9. Audit and Risk Committee

9.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided a brief update.

9.2 It was highlighted that there was an in-depth discussion regarding the risk register at the Audit and Risk meeting held in December 2023.

9.3 It was also noted that a new way of completing the Certificate of Assurance was discussed at the Audit and Risk meeting.

9.4 The Chair thanked John Fyffe for this update.

10. Staff Survey Results

10.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to provide a summary of the 2023 People Survey results, highlighting areas of improvement since the last survey and key areas of focus in the coming year.

10.2 The Advisory Board welcomed the summary and briefly discussed the results. It was noted that while Directorates faced some ongoing issues, there was a need to maintain a focus on organisational culture and staff wellbeing during this continued period of reform. It was also noted that there is a need to review the results regarding bullying and harassment to understand the issues more fully and to address concerns.

10.3 It was suggested that ES look to other agencies to benchmark staff survey results.

Action: [REDACTED] to source results from other organisations to benchmark and to identify good practice.

10.4 It was noted that Strategic Directors will consider the results for each directorate in more depth to identify key areas for improvement.

10.5 It was agreed that the staff survey results should be discussed at the Strategic Board meeting on 22nd February 2024.

11. ES Restructure

11.1 Maureen Hamilton introduced this item, updating members on the ES Restructure.

11.2 Maureen provided members with an update regarding the restructure. It was noted that the proposals were launched on 28th November and consultation with staff had taken place. Following the feedback it was agreed that Early Learning and Childcare, Communities and Families should sit with the Scottish Attainment Challenge team. Also, the Leadership Team agreed that the composition of the Data Performance and Research Team will be agreed once the head of the team is appointed. Further adjustments to the structure will take place during the transition period.

11.3 It was agreed that slides showing the new high level structure should be sent to members.

Action: [REDACTED] to ensure slides are sent to non-executive members.

11.4 It was noted that the new structure will be in place by early March 2023.

11.5 It was agreed that a further update will be provided to members at a future meeting.

12. Education Reform

- 12.1 Neil Rennick, Director General joined the meeting and introduced himself. The Director General also noted his appreciation to Gillian Hamilton for her support in her role as interim Chief Executive.
- 12.2 Non-executive members were invited to introduce themselves.
- 12.3 Non-executive board members expressed their disappointment regarding the response from the Cabinet Secretary to their letter about the reform of ES, both with the response itself and the fact that the Cabinet Secretary had directed her reply to the Chief Executive rather than the non-executives.
- 12.4 Non-executive members stressed the need for greater clarity regarding the role of the proposed Centre for Teaching Excellence and the New National Agency.
- 12.5 The Director General thanked the non-executive board members for their constructive feedback.

13. Date of the next meeting

- 13.1 A Strategic meeting will be held on 22nd February, it was agreed that this will be a hybrid meeting.
- 13.2 The next Advisory Board will be held on 28th March, this will also be a hybrid meeting.

Name [REDACTED]

Date 18/01/2024