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| Meeting: | Advisory Board |
| Date: | 28/03/2024 |
| Time: | 11:00:13:30 |
| Details: | MS Teams/Optima |

Minute

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

1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Ollie Bray, Patricia Watson and Ray McCowan.
- 1.2 It was noted that Ray McCowan had now resigned from the Advisory Board, with a letter of thanks for all his support and work with the Agency issued by the Chief Executive, on behalf of the Advisory Board.

2. Previous meeting

- 2.1 The Board agreed the minutes from the meetings of 18 January 2024 and the strategic discussion of 22 February 2024, with one exception.
Minute of 18 January 2024 – It was noted that agenda item 12.3 was incorrect.

Action 27 / 23-24 Text at agenda item 12.3 to be amended – [REDACTED].

- 2.2 The following action log updates were also noted:

- AB 19 - The Board agreed to remain open.
- AB 21 - The Board agreed to close.
- AB 22 - The Board agreed to close.
- AB 23 - The Board agreed to close.
- AB 24 - The Board agreed to close.
- AB 25 - The Board agreed to close.

- AB 26 - The Board agreed to remain open.

3. Declarations of interest

3.1 No declarations to report.

4. Update from the Chief Executive

4.1 The SG had now confirmed ES would lead on the Curriculum and Improvement cycle work. Advisory Board would be kept updated with this work going forward.

4.2 The Chair noted that Maureen Hamilton was retiring and recruitment was underway to fill her post as Corporate Services Strategic Director.

4.3 The Chair confirmed that her engagement with local authorities was continuing and it was noted that the intelligence gathered from the these visits was proving extremely beneficial. She noted that her recent visit to South Ayrshire had been particularly well received. The Chair had since updated the Cabinet Secretary on the focus work being carried out there, with the result that the Cabinet Secretary was now keen to visit South Ayrshire to directly hear more about this work.

4.4 Following on with our restructure and introduction of new ways of working, the Chair advised that the educational C3 posts had now been filled and transfer of line managers across the organisation was almost complete. The New People team had provided a package of support materials for all colleagues to help and assist through the transition period.

4.5 The Chair informed members that the ES budget for 2024-25 had still not yet been signed off due to the challenges faced and this would be discussed further at item 7. The Chair confirmed that the additional financial controls put in place in January 2024 would continue.

4.6 The Chair advised that as part of the reform work, the first Chief Executive's forum had taken place in January 2024 and the next one was scheduled for April 2024.

5. Update from the HM Chief Inspector of Education

5.1 The Chief Inspector updated members on various meetings she had attended, including a session with the AHDS Council and School Leaders Scotland, noting the positive feedback received from both organisations as a result. She also confirmed she would continue to focus on engaging with stakeholders going forward.

5.2 It was reported that the recruitment campaign for HMI posts had now closed. Staffing and resources continued to be a challenge, with a small restructure having taken place within the Inspectorate. Senior roles and responsibilities had been reviewed and shared with staff. Two new Heads of Strategy were also now in post and two Stakeholder Engagement Officers would be joining shortly.

5.3 The Chief Inspector updated members on two national resources that had recently issued, one was an overview of activity in Colleges and the second one was a follow

up to the phase 1 bullying report, this was published as an online resource of case studies.

- 5.6 The Chief Inspector highlighted other areas of work that are being looked at, this included behaviour in schools and persistent absence. She was also planning to join some inspection teams.

The Chair agreed for agenda item 9 to be brought forward to this part of the meeting.

6. Finance Update

- 6.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to provide an update on the financial monitoring report as at 29 February 2024. An error on the report was flagged – it showed an overspend when it should have read an underspend of £472k.
- 6.2 Members were updated about a change in the accounting rules but noted that this would not impact on the outturn. Discussions had taken place with SG to ensure this would be addressed going forward.

7. 2024-25 Budget Planning

- 7.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to provide an update on the 2024-25 budget planning. Board members welcomed the accompanying paper which helped them to understand the pressures faced.
- 7.2 Members noted the options to reduce costs, with discussion around what was being stopped and if SG would provide a package of support. The pause on recruitment was noted but recognised the need to fill essential posts such as HMI and the Corporate Services Strategic Director. The Chair advised that SG had confirmed there would be no compulsory redundancies during the reform process.
- 7.3 The Chief Inspector highlighted some of the challenges and advised the annual scrutiny plan would be looked at for next year to ensure that the number of inspections planned would need to take resourcing into account.
- 7.7 There was further discussions around TRS/TP posts and the impact on Attainment Advisors. It was also noted that hybrid and remote working had been positive but an element of frontline delivery still continued.
- 7.8 The Chair advised that the budget would be signed off in April in order to delegate budgets and the board would be kept up to date with the budget position.
- 7.9 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the meeting.

8. Internal Professional Learning discussion

- 8.1 The Chair welcomed [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to the meeting. The Professional Learning and Leadership Team and the new People Team had come together to undertake a joint piece of work aimed at improving the internal professional learning (PL) for all ES staff.

- 8.2 The starting point for this work was the feedback from the 2023 People Survey results and the scores for four key learning development questions that had decreased from the previous year.
- 8.3 It was noted that the current PLL offer was being reviewed as part of this work. The aim was to develop a professional learning strategy that takes account of both individual and organisational learning needs.
- 8.4 An overview was given on how colleagues intended to take this work forward. Three impact statements were highlighted and the intention was to initially conduct some user research by issuing a staff survey to establish what learning and development would be the most useful and impactful.
- 8.5 Consideration was being given to having a single point or place to hold all professional learning to ensure it is fully accessible to all staff, with the possibility of using Pathways for this and including all mandatory learning.
- 8.6 During discussion, members provided useful and constructive feedback, some based on their experience within their own organisations. Kevin Kelman referred to a specific framework that focuses on different levels of learning used in his organisation and the Chair asked if this could be shared with the team.

Action 28 / 23-24 Kevin Kelman to share framework with the team and send to [redacted]@educationscotland.gov.scot

- 8.7 The team thanked members for their input and confirmed the intention to share a draft professional learning strategy with LT before the summer break.
- 8.8 [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] left the meeting.

9. Audit and Risk Committee

- 9.1 The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided an update from the last meeting.
- 9.2 It was highlighted that there had been an in-depth discussion on internal audit and noted that the audit plan for last year was almost complete with the audit on travelling officers being finalised.
- 9.3 The planned activity for 2024-25 was outlined. It was noted that there would be a review of digital capacity and governance and the approach to cyber resilience.
- 9.4 Members were advised that two new external auditors had joined from Audit Scotland.
- 9.5 The Chair of ARC provided an update on risks and advised there was a significant increase in red risks across the Agency. He also referred to the Scrutiny Annual report and commented that the dashboard was helpful.
- 9.6 The Chair of ARC also reported that a member of ARC had recently attended the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee and noted that that Committee was doing a really good job.

9.7 The Chair thanked John Fyffe for this update.

10. Management Information Quarter 3 report, 2023-24

10.1 [REDACTED] joined the meeting to present the Management Information Report for Quarter 3, 2023-24. This report highlighted key management information from across Education Scotland from October-December 2023.

10.2 It was highlighted that the dashboard now included response rates around the Management Information data, complaints, FOIs and SARs. It was noted that there would be a focus on the performance aspects of the response rates, as Governance have specific timescales to respond.

10.3 It was noted that the staff absence data was now presented as a percentage which is based around absence spells.

10.4 There was a discussion around the increase in FOIs and PQs and presumed this may be due to an increase in inspections. Members also asked if long covid was having an impact on staff absence and officials confirmed long covid was not an issue within ES.

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

11. AOB

11.1 Members discussed agenda items for the next strategic discussion. It was agreed that if the budget was signed off mid-April it would be worth a discussion to be clear about what the budget would cover. Also agreed to include reform if any update was available.

Action 29 / 23-24 Two agenda items to be added to a future strategic meeting – [REDACTED].

11.2 The Chair, on behalf of AB members, expressed a huge thank you to Maureen Hamilton, she has been a real asset to ES and wished her a long, happy and healthy retirement.

12. Date of the next meeting

12.1 A Strategic meeting would be held on 30 May 2024.

12.2 The next Advisory Board would be held on 25 July 2024.

Name [REDACTED]

Date 25/04/2024