



Meeting	Advisory Board
Date	10/03/2021
Time	10:00 – 13:00
Venue (Chair)	Virtual, Microsoft Teams
VC <input type="checkbox"/> Venue 2:	

## Minute

Gayle Gorman - Chair	John Fyffe
Alan Armstrong	David Gemmell
Gillian Hamilton	Ray McCowan
Ollie Bray	Lyndsey McRoberts
Joan MacKay (Item 6)	Aileen Ponton
Carole Copstick (Item 7)	Roz McCracken
Gillian Howells (item 8)	Clare Connor - Secretary

### 1. Welcome and apologies

- 1.1. Apologies were received from Janie McManus, Gillian Ritchie, Kevin Kelman, and Craig Clement. David Gemmell could only join for the first half of the meeting due to another commitment.
- 1.2. A warm welcome was extended to Patricia Watson, who attended in her new TRS role as strategic director, and Joan MacKay who attended to present item 6.

### 2. Previous meeting

- 2.1. The minute of the 9 December Board meeting was approved.
- 2.2. Members reviewed the action tracker. A number of actions were approved for closure:
  - AB06 : The comms session took place on 3 February 2021.
  - AB18: Discussion regarding Scrutiny took place 9 February 2021.
  - AB19: Comparative sick absence was gathered as part of the Q3 Management Information report.

### 3. Declarations or conflicts of interest

- 3.1. There were no declarations or conflicts of interest noted.

### 4. Chairs Update

- 4.1. The Chair provided an update on the ongoing significant activity across Education Scotland, and expressed thanks to colleagues for their exceptional work ethic. Particular points to note included the continuation of CERG work; the wide range of coaching and mentoring sessions delivered by Barnardo's and Place2Be, Members discussed the decision to reduce floor space at Denholm House, particularly the financial impact. It was noted that dilapidation costs would be built into the 2021-22 budget.

- 4.2. Following publication of guidance for the phased return of schools, feedback from the system had been positive and the Chair recorded her thanks to everyone involved.
- 4.3. It was also highlighted that the Agency's People and Place work continues to identify local needs, and that Education Scotland will continue to use this data to shape future packages of support.
- 4.4. Members discussed the reputational impact of the recent Parliamentary motion and how to build knowledge of our activity across the public domain. Given the significant reputational impact, members recommended investigating the possibility of using an external media company experienced in brand management in order to strengthen the organisation's reputation. However, there were some concerns about how that might be publicly perceived.

## 5. Leadership roles and responsibilities

- 5.1. The Chair updated members on changes to the Leadership Team remits. It was noted that there had been an extension of the LT to include two new strategic directors on TRS. This had been done to add temporary capacity to address cross cutting issues.
- 5.2. The need to identify who, at LT level, should own the Change process and policy was flagged as something to consider, especially since the change function identified within Organised to Deliver had not been set up. Members agreed that this sat with the SD for Corporate Services and Governance.

**ACTION POINT:** LT to review critical friend roles in line with their new accountabilities.

## 6. National e-Learning Transformational Change

- 6.1. Alan Armstrong and Joan MacKay delivered a presentation about progress with the National e-Learning offer. Members welcomed the plans, recognising the huge potential that this could bring to engage children and young people.
- 6.2. It was reported that next steps would involve developing thinking further with stakeholders and setting out findings from the scoping phase.

**ACTION POINT:** Ollie Bray to bring the strategic business case to the July Advisory Board.

## 7. National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

- 7.1. Carol Copstick provided a brief overview of the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, noting the challenges faced during 2020
- 7.2. The Plan was significantly slimmer this year, in order to make it more engaging and more focussed.
- 7.3. Board members were asked to note the changes to the focus and design of actions planned for supporting the system.

## **8. Finance Report to 31/01/21**

8.1. Gillian Howells attended to present the finance monitoring report. It was noted that at 31 January 2021 Education Scotland had forecasted an underspend of £0.9m.

8.2. In looking ahead, the Advisory Board were made aware that the budgets for 2021-22 were currently being finalised and that a paper on the consolidated position and underlying assumptions would shortly go to the Leadership Team for review.

## **9. Management Information Report Q3**

9.1. Gillian Hamilton introduced the Corporate Management Information Report for Quarter 3.

9.2. In reviewing the MI report, members discussed the Average Working Days Lost, noting that a number of long term illnesses and bereavements had contributed to the numbers.

9.3. Members were also updated on the accelerated laptop replacement programme which sought to address the stress caused by technical issues.

9.4. The Chair and Advisory Board were content with the information provided and expressed thanks to Marion Brady for producing this report.

## **10. ES Risk Register and accompanying heat map**

10.1. Roslyn McCracken provided a brief overview of the ES Risk Register and accompanying heat map.

10.2. The Advisory Board were content with the updates regarding risks.

## **11. Audit and Risk Committee**

11.1. The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) provided an update regarding the positive discussions during the last meeting. Particular points to note included the substantial reassurance arising from the Finance audit by Internal Audit; the Agency's improved finance reporting, the current review into managing risk across Education Scotland. It was also noted that Procurement would become a standing item on the ARC agenda.

11.2. The Chair asked the minute to note thanks to David Richardson for his invaluable contribution to Education Scotland's Audit and Risk Committee.

## **12. Items for noting**

12.1. The Equity Audit was tabled for information.

## **13. Any other business**

- 13.1. There was a discussion regarding the method of distributing papers and it was confirmed that the secretary would liaise with members to identify a more tailored approach.
- 13.2. The Advisory Board were made aware of the upcoming report on closing the attainment gap due to be published on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021.
- 13.3. The Chair and Advisory Board thanked Alan Armstrong for his exceptional contribution to the work of the Agency and wished him a happy retirement.

**Date of next meeting of the Advisory Board:**

The next session of the Advisory Board would be a strategic session on 19 May 2021.

**Date**            **10/03/2021**  
**Name**           **Clare Connor – Information Officer**