Meeting	Advisory Board
Date	03/10/2019
Time	13:00-16:00
Venue (Chair)	Aberdeen
VC ✓ Venue 2:	Borders 1, Optima

Minute

Gayle Gorman (Chair)	John Fyffe
Alan Armstrong	David Gemmell
Gillian Hamilton	Ray McCowan
Janie McManus	Aileen Ponton
Maria Walker	Roz McCracken
Audrey Parfinowska (item 6)	Nina Hyslop (Secretary)
Patricia Dougan (item 11)	

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1. The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. This was the first formal meeting of the Advisory Board for three new Non-Executive Board members, Aileen Ponton, David Gemmell and Ray McCowan. A welcome was also extended to the acting Chief Financial Officer, who was in attendance to talk to her detailed paper on the Agency's budget monitoring.

1.2. Apologies were noted from Brian Taylor.

2. Minute and action log

2.1. The minutes from the Advisory Board meeting of 6 June 2019 were ratified, subject to a point of correction at paragraph 7.9 to reference SLF 2019.

2.2. An update was invited from the Board in respect of paragraph 6.6 from the previous minute regarding the 'pause' on recruitment. The Chair advised that this would be clarified under agenda item 6, Finance.

2.3. The action log was reviewed, and concerns were raised around slippage on AB08/18-19 (AB to review the new finance processes in six months to assure themselves of quality of intervention) and any risks generated by this. It was noted that whilst there had been a deadline created, the process was ongoing through review.

2.4. The following updates were noted:
- AB 16/18-19 – A paper noting Digital Services – the way forward, had been tabled for awareness.

- AB 04/19-20 – Advisory Board Annualised agenda planner – was being taken under AOB for feedback.

2.5. The following items had closed since the previous meeting:
- AB 02/19-20 – Note of % variances by area to be included in budget monitoring for awareness in terms of reporting.

- AB 03/19-20 – 'You said, we did' to share outcome of OD. There had been regular communications to staff, including the newsletter, as well as the focus around OD at the staff conference in September.

- AB 05/19-20 – Reissue the CRR to members. CRR had subsequently been renamed the Education Scotland Risk Register (ESRR) as this includes agency wide, and not only corporate risks.

3.   Declarations or conflicts of interest

3.1. There were no declarations made or conflicts to note.

4.   Chair's update

4.1. The Chair confirmed she had taken part in the second meeting of the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA), which was held over two days, and was attended, in part, by DFM and the First Minister. This was a 'stock take', and provided a forum for open discussion to assist with the writing of the ICEA annual report, which is due to be released in February. Also attending were colleagues from ADES, EIS, and Regional Improvement Collaboratives. Views were shared, to determine the progress made in education and attainment. It was agreed there had been a positive shift in the system in terms of accountability and partnership working, and that progress made was sustainable and on-track. ICEA attendees suggested that stability in terms of education policy was now required. No big new initiatives should be launched, and to therefore hold the course, and proceed with learning and leadership.

4.2. SLF 2019 had taken place and was recognised as a further successful event, with the highest attendance recorded. Feedback from both attendees and the media had been positive. The Chair and Board asked the minute to acknowledge their thanks and congratulations to everyone who had been involved in organising the event. Also to record that it was seen to be on a par with internationally organised events in terms of delivering a successful, large scale event.

4.3. The Leadership Team had met to discuss strategic matters and to reflect and agree next steps around Organising to Deliver.

5.   Hot Topics

5.1. There continues to be a huge amount of work in preparing to attend or provide evidence for Parliamentary Committees. In some cases, it had been difficult to determine what evidence should be prepared, due to the clarity of what was being requested.

5.2. The topic of SLF 2019 was brought to the table again, in terms of the feedback received. This year saw the launch of twilight sessions, to allow those unable to attend during business hours get a flavour of the event. A remote link to a new hub in the Northern Alliance had also gone very well. There had been a good mix of attendees at SLF, with groups of young people recording seminars for social media, along with the live streaming of keynote speakers (highlights were still being edited). SLF 2019 trended in the top five on Twitter in the UK on day one of the event and

thoughts to SLF 2020 were already in motion. It was important to recognise that it was a small team who organise SLF.

5.3. The teachers' pay deal had featured a number of non-pay agreements, including an offer of increased professional learning, and there was a number of proposals about what that may look like. These had been well received, but it was important to understand what implications, if any, there would be in terms of delivery.

5.4. The Regional Improvement plans were tabled for discussion under item 8. Peer review work with Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC) leads and partners had resulted in plans which would be submitted to Gayle. Key areas identified in the plans included self-evaluation on empowerment; curriculum, resources, and partnership working, although it was noted that partnership working required embedding in some areas and so developing collaboration skills across the RICs would also be important.

5.5. There had been a focus on quality assurance and moderation of scrutiny and the new approach in early learning and childcare. The aim was to be open and transparent, to support the learning capacity, reporting against national benchmarks, and sharing messages through established inspections and identifying the key messages and challenges to share with the system.

5.6. It was reported that instead of producing the State of the Nation publication every three years, the intention was to develop and share an online Chief Inspector's report with regular messaging across and alongside sector messages. It would link to highly effective practice and be released regularly through a schedule of up to date narratives, and link in with the RICs. This was in the early stages of being developed and would become an evolving, ongoing and current 'State of the Nation' narrative, with key messages by theme and across sectors.

6. Finance

6.1. Further to the papers tabled at the Audit and Risk Committee on 18 September, it was requested that detailed budget papers be tabled for discussion at Advisory Board. Revised budgets were to include the spring and autumn budget review (SBR and ABR), incorporating in-year transfers.

6.2. The Non-Executives shared their thanks for the helpful induction session on Finance. However, it would be beneficial for the narrative included in the paper overview to clearly reference and correlate, by way of markers, the detail contained in the spreadsheets tabled. A request for a graph detailing spend forecast, month on month, which would assist members when reviewing budget spending.

6.3. It was recognised that the organisation was working hard to reduce the budget pressure to bring this back in line with the agreed pressure by the end of the financial year, and frequent discussions on recycling posts where appropriate were being held. Further, it would assist discussions if future narratives also included a note in terms of the impact of budget reductions on areas.

6.4. In terms of the 'pause' on recruitment referenced in the previous minute, it was reported that only posts essential to business delivery would be recruited for at this time.

6.5. It was suggested that a review of third party suppliers and costs associated would be a useful exercise to undertake. Whilst the organisation was limited in third party costs due to being an agency of Scottish Government (SG), it was recognised that this would be insightful. It was also noted that two of the buildings leases were due for renewal, and a review of our estate was being undertaken.

6.6. Thanks were recorded in terms of the work undertaken by the Finance Team. Additionally, the Board extended their best wishes to the acting Chief Financial Officer who would be returning to core SG within the coming weeks, having been on a temporary secondment to ES.

Action: AB 07/19-20   Coversheets for finance reports to include clear referencing to the budget spreadsheets, along with a graph showing a monthly spend, the spend forecast, and to include a note in terms of the impact of budget reductions for any areas impacted.   Audrey Parfinowska/Gillian Howells – 05/12/19

Action: AB 08/19-20   Finance to undertake a review of third party suppliers and costs associated with ongoing or near to end procurement contracts. Audrey Parfinowska/Gillian Howells – 24/03/20

7.   SQA results 2019

7.1. The media publicity around August exam results and pupils' success in the number of qualifications and grades obtained in SQA examinations was discussed. This failed to recognise how pupils could also reach positive destinations through college, apprenticeships, and developing the young workforce. It was recognised that there was no one defined or best path to a positive destination, and the SQA results released in August only showcased one specific aspect of attainment, without reflecting on the wider achievement of results through a curriculum designed to create a wider portfolio for young people, some whom perform through a progressive route, and not by final assessment.

7.2. It was recognised that outside of education, the national qualifications were not clearly understood, with people often seeing these as directly equivalent to the previous standard grades system. Information about the wider attainment of young people was made available in February the following year. This provides a full analysis of achievement and performance across the whole range of SCQF levels.

8.   Draft Regional Directorate Plan

8.1. The Regional Directorate Plan was tabled for information. It was noted that the Regional Directorate Plans were out for discussion and consultation within the regional teams and Education Scotland. The regional plans would demonstrate how the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) and National Improvement Framework (NIF) is working on the ground.

8.2. The tabled Directorate Plan was agreed to be easy to read, clearly linking to the Agency's Corporate Plan and strategic priorities. It would be important to provide updates at future Advisory Board meetings, with a measure against PIs to provide the Board with a measure of comfort. Once the PIs were agreed in this area, they should

be tabled for discussion and assurance at a future Advisory Board meeting. It was suggested that the RAG status used in the plan be reviewed to better identify 'on-track' activity. The colour code used should be consistent across all PI/MI and KPI information.

Action: AB 09/19-20   Provide an update on the regional directorate plan progress and process at a future meeting, measuring against PIs and using a RAG status which is aligned across the organisation. Maria Walker – 24/03/20

Action: AB 10/19-20 Table an update on progress with baselining the agreed organisational KPIs, along with MI and PI information for awareness and assurance purposes. Stephen Edgar – 05/12/19.

9. **Education and Skills Committee Inquiry: Subject choices in schools**

9.1. The vocational pathway is part of the subject choice, and CfE allows local knowledge to be applied, and for schools to make bespoke decisions in regard to curriculum options and subject choice. Pupils may require subjects which wouldn't typically have been offered in the past e.g. leadership skills, or beauty courses. It was important to note that the system recognised that young people now had different requirements in terms of the subjects being offered by schools for their career aspirations. SCQF had provided evidence to the Education and Skills Committee on how and what choices are made by young people. This approach would appear to be positive for young people, however the change in approach offered by schools had not been widely understood by parents and the general public.

9.2. Following publication of the Committee's Report, partners were in agreement about the response approach. It was clear that the overarching message would be to demonstrate the improved outcomes and delivery for young people.

9.3. It was important to note the disparity in terms of the evidence submitted and the report which was published by the Education and Skills Committee in terms of subject choices in schools.

10. **Excellence in Headship – Enhanced support package**

10.1. Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be taken by correspondence. Feedback was invited to be returned on the programme activity planned thus far, and comments around other aspects of learning which may be useful to include in the programme. The slides that had been due to be presented would be shared with members after the meeting.

Action: AB 11/19-20   Members to provide feedback to Gillian Hamilton on programme activity planned and any other comments in terms of aspects of learning. All – 22/10/19

Action: AB 12/19-20 Share Excellence in Headship slides with members for background information. Secretary – 08/10/19

11. **Digital Services – the way forward**

11.1. It was reported that between February and June 2018 the organisation had engaged with an enterprise architect and business analyst to review the status of the organisation's corporate digital systems and services. It became clear that some corporate systems were no longer fit for purpose.

11.2. The tabled paper provided a comprehensive and detailed note on the organisation's system risks, and included information about the current agile approach taken in respect of the Scrutiny Planning and Administration System, the Establishments database, and the Note of Visit tracker. A team had engaged with the Digital Directorate, and had also engaged with another stakeholder to learn from them as they had recently undertaken their own digital transformation, and had sought input and support in the production of a business case, plans and implementation, including the costs for potential improvements.

11.3. Members acknowledged the helpful paper, and recognised the importance of the work and findings for improvement completed thus far, to develop systems which would deliver increased value and flexibility, and reduce bureaucracy.

12. Audit and Risk Committee – Chair's brief

12.1. The current Chair of Audit and Risk Committee tabled a paper in respect of the meeting held on 18 September 2019. In addition to this, due to the previous Advisory Board meeting having been taken as an informal strategic meeting for the Non-Executive's induction, the brief from the previous ARC Chair was shared with members. No comments were to note, and the papers were accepted to be a correct record of discussions.

13. Any other business

13.1. Advisory Board – annualised meeting planner

A late paper was shared with members around the proposal to prepare and agree a comprehensive annualised meeting planner in respect of agenda items for the Advisory Board.

It was agreed that it would be fundamental, in terms of a formal record of Advisory Board meetings, to demonstrate the review of the organisation's work, in planning for future development and delivery of its strategic objectives and priorities, to see these are being actively managed.

Comments on the content of the planner were invited by correspondence to be returned to the Governance mailbox, to finalise the planner and table this for sign off at the December Advisory Board meeting.

Action: AB 13/19-20   Members were invited to review and make comment on the annualised planner, and return these to the Governance mailbox to table at the next meeting. All – 04/11/19

Date of next meeting:

5 December 2019, 13:00-16:00, Boardroom Optima

Name   Nina Hyslop
Role   Governance Officer
Date   08/10/2019