Education & Skills Funding Agency

Minutes

Date 15 April 2021

Subject ESFA Management Board

Security OFFICIAL – FOR PUBLICATION

classification

Present Non-Executive Members

Dame Irene Lucas-Hays (IL, Chair)

Hunada Nouss OBE (HN) Stu McMinnies (SM)

Martin Spencer (MS)

Members

Eileen Milner (EM)
Warwick Sharp (WS)
Matt Atkinson (MA)
Stuart Proud (SP)
John Edwards (JE)
Kirsty Evans (KE)

Kirsty Evans (KE)
Sue Lovelock (SL)
Charlotte Briscall (CB)
Peter Mucklow (PM)

George Chachou (GC) Simon White (SW)

Emily Simons (ES) Portia Bailey (PB)

Bal Toor (BT, item 7 only)
Frank Bowley (FB, item 4 only)
Harry Warren (HW, item 3 only)

Debbie White (notes)

1. Welcome, minutes and actions from last meeting

- 1.1. IL welcomed all attendees to the meeting; no apologies were noted.
- 1.2. No new declarations of interest were made, and attendees were reminded about the confidentiality of the meeting.
- 1.3. The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February were agreed.
- 1.4. All outstanding actions were closed. CM informed the meeting that Sir Kevan Collins has accepted an invitation to attend Management Board on 30 June 2021.

2. Chief Executive's Perspective

- 2.1. EM reported that schools and colleges will return after the Easter break. Results for GCSE, A-level and vocational technical qualifications (VTQ) will all be announced during week commencing 9 August. ESFA is working closely with Ofqual to ensure a smooth process around the release of results in the VTQ space.
- 2.2. Work on Further Education (FE) reform is progressing at pace across the ESFA and the wider Department.
- 2.3. All funding and allocations were made by the ESFA in a timely manner.
- 2.4. ESFA will be heavily involved in supporting the work on education recovery and will be liaising with the Education Recovery Commissioner, Sir Kevan Collins.
- 2.5. EM celebrated recent achievements by the ESFA.

3. Audit and Risk Updates

- 3.1. HN gave an overview of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) meeting held on 18 March, which focussed on preparing for the year-end accounts.
- 3.2. ARC covered progress against the regularity assurance timetable and continues to liaise with the National Audit Office as to their criteria.
- 3.3. ARC also received an update about the work of the agency's Performance and Risk Committee; the internal audit plan for 2021-22; and the outcomes of ARC's annual effectiveness review.

4. Deep Dive - Apprenticeship Value for Money (VfM)

- 4.1. FB gave a presentation to the Board.
- 4.2. PM discussed feedback from apprentices themselves captured from annual surveys and from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education's apprentice panel.

5. Management Board Effectiveness Review

- 5.1. HW summarised the responses to the Management Board effectiveness survey which show overall the board performs well and asked for the board's feedback and view on the next steps.
- 5.2. The board agreed with and supported the actions suggested.
- 5.3. MS supports the action around increasing still further engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

ACTION 1: HW to develop a detailed action plan on improving board effectiveness.

6. Performance Update

- 6.1. GC outlined the performance highlights from the Performance and Risk Committee (PaRC) meetings since the last Management Board meeting.
- 6.2. Risk updates will now be reported annually to Management Board to avoid duplication of the work of Audit and Risk Committee (ARC).

ACTION 2: Risk reporting to be an annual item for the Management Board meeting, DW to liaise with the Chair and GC re scheduling.

- 6.3. PaRC's priorities for the next quarter were outlined. IL asked that the next report includes more narrative to explain the position around key performance indicators (KPIs).
- 6.4. SM congratulated the agency on the improvements and achievements outlined in the PaRC report and requested that an update about the School Resource Management Programme (SRM) is presented at a future meeting.

ACTION 3: GC to share the end of year performance summary at the next meeting in June.

ACTION 4: Secretariat to add an update on the School Resource Management Programme to the forward look for Management Board.

7. People Update

- 7.1. BT provided the board with a high-level update on the ESFA people response during the Covid-19 pandemic and an update on business-as-usual people data and programmes.
- 7.2. Work has begun on the overall DfE strategy around use of offices in the future.
- 7.3. The People Team is working across the ESFA to understand workforce planning to enable delivery of the FE reforms.

8. Customer Services Review

- 8.1. CB outlined the background, the objectives, and the progress so far with regards to transforming the customer service experience at ESFA.
- 8.2. Since its launch in 2020, use of the ESFA Help Centre, a digital self-service knowledge base for education providers, has seen a 10% increase and customer satisfaction scores have improved.
- 8.3. The board supports this ongoing programme of work and agreed to attend a future workshop to be arranged by CEDD.

9. Directorate Updates

9.1. Each director gave an update on the key challenges and achievements of their respective directorate since the last Management Board meeting.

ACTION 5: Holly Lawton to attend a future meeting to give an update on counter fraud work.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1. The board ratified ARC's updated terms of reference.
- 10.2. EM advised the board that she has invited staff across the agency to observe Management Board meetings.
- 10.3. The date of the next meeting is 30 June 2021.

Meeting closed.