

## Department for Education Board Meeting

13 January 2022, 13:30 – 16.00

### Attendees

Nadhim Zahawi, Rt Hon MP  
Michelle Donelan, Rt Hon MP

Richard Pennycook  
Ian Ferguson  
Toby Peyton-Jones  
Nick Timothy  
Ruby McGregor-Smith  
Martin Spencer

Susan Acland-Hood  
Mike Green  
Indra Morris

Tony Foot

### Title

Secretary of State for Education  
Minister of State for Higher and Further Education  
Lead Non-Executive Board Member  
Non-Executive Board Member  
Non-Executive Board Member  
Non-Executive Board Member  
Deputy Chair, Education and Skills Funding Agency Management Board  
Permanent Secretary  
Chief Operating Officer  
Director General, Children's Services Communications and Strategy Group  
Strategic Finance Director

### Presenters

Julia Yong

Tom Stephens  
Alice Lakeman  
Andrew McCully

Alex Marsh

Simon Parker

Emma Stace  
Neil McIvor  
Dean Williams

Craig Barratt

### Title

Deputy Director, Performance and Major Projects  
Strategic Delivery Adviser  
Financial Planning and Strategy Manager  
Director General, Early Years and Schools Group  
Director of Schools Systems Academies and Reforms  
Director, Transformation and Policy Capability Directorate  
Chief Digital and Technology Officer  
Chief Data Officer and Chief Statistician  
Deputy Director, Education and Skills Funding Agency  
Deputy Director, Planning, Risk and Governance

### Other Attendees

Emily Roche  
Emily Corfield

Sevim Ekmekci  
Shelley Cooper

### Title

Director, Strategy and Delivery  
Deputising for Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State  
Head of Office to the Permanent Secretary  
Board Secretary

### Apologies

### Title

Robin Walker, MP  
Alex Burghart, MP

Will Quince, MP

Hollie Godsmark

Minister of State for School Standards  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for  
Skills  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for  
Children and Families  
Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of  
State

## **1. INTRODUCTIONS, MINUTES AND ACTIONS**

- 1.1. The Secretary of State (SoS) welcomed Members to the meeting.
- 1.2. Ian Ferguson declared that his wife was on the Childcare Review Panel, an interest pertinent to agenda item 8.
- 1.3. The minutes and the action tracker from the previous meeting were accepted without amendment.

## **2. PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

- 2.1. The Board was updated on the Department's performance against the Secretary of State's priorities.
- 2.2. The Board discussed the National Professional Qualifications and the National Tutoring programmes and the delivery challenges of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement and Bootcamp programmes.
- 2.3. The Board considered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on departmental programmes.
- 2.4. Members noted the need to improve efficiency of internal decision-making and the use of data and transparency to develop responsive delivery systems.

## **3. FINANCIAL UPDATE**

- 3.1. The Board was provided with an overview of the Department's in-year financial position and the Business Planning process.
- 3.3. The Board noted the importance of maintaining good, constructive relationships with the Treasury in achieving the Department's funding ambitions.

## **4. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER**

- 4.1. The Board received an update on the progress of the Schools White Paper. The Paper set out the vision for a stronger schools system.

4.2. The Board discussed the importance of providing high quality and relevant education for children to benefit their individual learning and as an investment in the future economy.

4.3. The Board noted the importance of having a strong digital infrastructure to the delivery of the vision of the Schools White Paper.

4.4. The critical role of strong governance in schools would contribute to the development of a strong school system.

## **5. UPDATE ON LEVELLING UP**

5.1. The Board was provided with an update on the plans for Levelling Up. The approach to Levelling Up would change how the Government engages with the devolution of decision making.

5.2. The Board was informed of the four key areas of focus in the White Paper and the long-term benefits that would arise from these proposed changes.

5.3. Members anticipated that the publication of granular delivery data would enable sufficient transparency and so improve local conversations on delivery and outcomes.

## **6. DIGITAL AND DATA STRATEGY**

6.1. The Board discussed how improving data flow would have an impact on the education and care sectors' outcomes and delivery.

6.2. The Board considered the Digital and Data roadmap to 2030. This would be delivered through the three strategic missions of the Department's Digital and Data Strategy.

6.3. Members emphasised the importance of cross-government collaboration, with the Department of Digital, Culture, Media, & Sport involved as a key stakeholder.

## **7. FUTURE DFE**

7.1. The Board received an update on the ongoing work of the Future DfE programme from the Transformation and Policy Capability Directorate.

7.2. The new proposed structure of the DfE was outlined and the timeline for realising the benefits of this change was also provided.

7.3. Members discussed the new strategic centre of the Department which would join up existing functions to ensure that these would work more effectively.

7.4. The proposed revisions to the Digital, Data, and Technology operating model were discussed in depth, including how they would be brought into the Operations and Infrastructure Group.

7.5. The Board emphasised the importance of clear areas of responsibilities and accountabilities in this new structure.

## **8. ARTHUR LABINJO-HUGHES**

8.1. Following the tragic murder of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, the Board was given updates on the Department's response including the commissioning of the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and a Joint Target Area Inspection.

8.2. The findings of these reports would feed into the MacAlister Children's Social Care Review.

8.3. The Board noted the complexity and sensitivity surrounding child protection alongside the importance of this work to the wellbeing of children.

## **9. RISK APPETITE**

9.1. The Board was provided with an outline of the Department's Risk Appetite Statement.

9.2. This Statement had been shaped with the input of Directors across the Department and had been considered by the Board and Leadership Team sub-committees.

9.3. The Board discussed the level risk appetite with regards to operational delivery in the context of delivery of fundamental sector reform programmes.

9.4. The Board was content with the statement and gave its approval.

## **10. AOB**

10.1. The Board requested a deep dive on data and transparency in the Unit for Future Skills at a future Board meeting.

10.2. The next Board meeting would be in March 2022.