

**Department for Education Board Meeting
04 February 2020, 13:00-16:30
Permanent Secretary's Boardroom**

Attendees

Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP	Secretary of State (<i>Chair</i>)
Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP	Minister of State for School Standards, Minister for the Board
Richard Pennycook	Lead Non-executive Board Member
Ian Ferguson	Non-Executive Board Member
Irene Lucas	Non-Executive Board Member
Toby Peyton Jones	Non-Executive Board Member
Jonathan Slater	Permanent Secretary
Indra Morris	Director General, Social Care, Mobility and Disadvantage
Mike Green	Chief Operating Officer
Jonathan Clear	Strategic Finance Director

Other Attendees

Juliette Cammaerts	<u>Title</u> Private Secretary to the Secretary of State
Shelley Cooper	Board Secretary

Apologies

Ruby McGregor-Smith	<u>Title</u> Non-Executive Board Member
Michelle Donelan, MP	Minster of State for Children, Families and Skills

1. INTRODUCTIONS, MINUTES AND ACTIONS

- 1.1. The Secretary of State welcomed members and noted apologies.
- 1.2. No new interests were declared and both the action tracker and minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without amendment.

2. SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

- 2.1. The Secretary of State introduced the item.
- 2.2. The Board were informed that a key focus of the Leadership team had been managing the department's finances and business planning for 2020/21.
- 2.3. The Board received an update on the Audit and Risk Committee noting the continued focus on the Group and SARA accounts. ARC had continued its work as a third line of defence scrutinising the assurance framework and financial controls.
- 2.4. The Board noted that the Implementation Committee had focussed on

some key departmental issues such as Children's Social Care and assuring the work of the Major Project Directorate.

3. BOARD PURPOSE

- 3.1. The Secretary of State invited the Non-Executive Directors to take more in-depth roles in supporting the DfE deliver its objectives noting their valuable breadth of skill. He noted:
 - The department was a large and complex organisation which must be run as efficiently as possible;
 - NEDs had very valuable breath of skill and experience. While they would not be asked to influence policy, their advice at an early stage on policy implementation, delivery and departmental transformation would be extremely valuable.
- 3.2 In discussion, members noted that the enhanced role of NEDs would be welcomed and that the NEDs would regularly meet with the Secretary of State and as a Ministerial Board team.

4. PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

- 4.1. The Secretary of State confirmed that delivering Brexit would be a key priority of the new Government alongside 'Levelling Up'.
- 4.2. The Government believed that departments should work together to support the delivery of its objectives and recognised that education was key to regenerating the communities that had not done so well as other places.
- 4.3. The Government priorities for education included raising standards and addressing the root cause of educational disadvantage that affected too many families.
- 4.4 The Board discussed the transformational impact of bringing highly skilled colleagues into underperforming schools. Members also recognised the importance of Children's Social care, providing support to vulnerable children.

5. BUSINESS PLANNING AND BUDGET SETTING

- 5.1. The Board considered an update on the Business Planning and Budget Setting process and noted that the timetable for the Single Department Plan would align to the plans for the 2020 Spending Review.

6. STAR CHAMBER PROCESS

- 6.1. The Board considered an update on the Star Chamber Process which had been designed to scrutinise the department's programmes.

- 6.2. The Board agreed the proposal, highlighting that it was important that high quality information was provided to the panel, giving panel members time to review data in detail and the opportunity to ask supplementary questions.

7. DEPARTMENTAL RISK APPETITE

- 7.1. The Board were updated on Departmental Risk Appetite and noted that agreeing and documenting risk appetite statements was best practice in terms of risk management.
- 7.2. The Board noted that training on risk appetite had been piloted, and Members were keen for the approach to be rolled out to the whole department.
- 7.3. The Board discussed risk appetite relating to technology and people risks.
- 7.4. The Board approved the risk appetite statement.

8 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 8.1. The Board considered the Quarterly Performance Report and noted improved PISA scores and the successful creation of Social Work England were areas of strong performance. Achieving the target to reduce the London headcount was identified as an area of improvement.
- 8.2. The Board noted that the Performance and Risk Committee were developing improved KPIs and that future iterations of the report would include OFSTED ratings and examination results.

9 AOB

- 9.1. It was noted that it was difficult to identify DfE sites in Sheffield and Darlington, and the Board agreed that visibility of all DfE sites would be improved.