

Minutes

Date	12 December 2023
Subject	ESFA Management Board
Security classification	OFFICIAL – FOR PUBLICATION
Present Members	

Martin Spencer (MS)	Non Executive Director, Chair
Harjit Sandhu (HS)	Non-Executive Director
Peter Kane (PK)	Non-Executive Director
John Lakin (JL)	Non-Executive Director
Paul Woodgates (PW)	Non-Executive Director
David Withey (DW)	Chief Executive Officer, ESFA
Lindsey Henning (LH)	Interim Director, ESFA

Others in attendance	
Rachel Hansford (RH)	Deputy Director, ESFA
Tika Khan (TK)	Deputy Director, ESFA
Rachel Campbell (RC)	Deputy Director, ESFA
Tabatha Wincote (TW)	ESFA, Secretariat
Harry Warren (HW)	ESFA
Ruth Humphreys (RH)	ESFA
El Harrison (EH)	ESFA
Anna McMahon (AM) – item 5 only	ESFA

Apologies Jane Cunliffe (JC) Andrew Thomas (AT) Gemma Peck (GP)

DfE Senior Sponsor Director, ESFA Director, ESFA

1. Welcome and introductions – MS

- 1.1. MS opened the meeting and welcomed HS to his first Management Board meeting. Attendees were reminded about confidentiality.
- 1.2. HS declared that he was a shareholder in a social housing company and that a family member is an employee of KPMG. No further new declarations of interest were made.
- The minutes of 12 September 2023 Management Board meeting were 1.3.

agreed.

1.4. The action log was reviewed. It was agreed that Action 2 (MB 13-12-22) could be closed with the final 2 actions remaining open.

2. Chief Executive's update – DW

- 2.1. DW provided an update and spoke to his immediate priorities.
- 2.2. DW highlighted some key pieces of work over the last 3 months:
 - 2.2.1. Civil Service People Survey results were published on 11 December and DW was pleased to report a 92% ESFA completion rate. The results show improvements across the majority of themes. Management Board Non-Executive Directors passed on their congratulations for a good set of results.
 - 2.2.2. The interviews for the new SFSO Director have recently taken place with announcement of the successful candidate due imminently.
 - 2.2.3. Hybrid working conversations continue to encourage colleagues back into the office. This has included DfE Leadership Team tour with all offices being visited by at least one member of the Leadership Team. Management Board discussed the possibility of having a future meeting at an office outside London.
 - 2.2.4. DW advised that he had recently attended and spoken at the ISBL & AoC conferences and could report that feedback on from the sector at these sessions was positive.
 - 2.2.5. Discussion was held on the recent Ofsted enquiry and it was agreed for an agenda item on what actions the ESFA have taken as a result of the report should to be brough back to Management Board at a later date.

Action 1 – Agenda item to be scheduled for future Management Board on actions taken by ESFA in response to Ofsted report (LH)

3. ARC Chair update – HS

- 3.1. In his capacity as new ARC chair, HS provide an update from the October ESFA ARC meeting and DfE ARC meeting.
- 3.2. ESFA ARC had included a review of risk appetite and deep dives into College Financial Health and Academy Trusts.
- 3.3. The process for pre-recess laying of accounts was discussed at DfE ARC along with deep dive items relating DDaT and HR.
- 3.4. Management Board agreed the latest risk framework and strategic risk register to be shared with them for information at each meeting.

Action 2 – Secretariat to share latest risk framework and strategic risk register along with Management Board meeting papers for information.

4. Finance item - TK

- 4.1. TK presented the finance update for P7 and reported that financial forecasts have remained stable against the now set target forecasts for year end.
- 4.2. Financial planning, including workforce forecasts, for 2024/25 is continuing with saving options being identified across the agency. Potential risks and impacts were discussed.

Action 3 – 14 October 2024 Management Board to include agenda item on the use of technology, AI and automation to support ESFA teams

5. Business Plan Development– HW

5.1. HW presented the latest position on the external business plan and timelines for completion. Current work is focussed on finalising headline measures.

Action 4 – HW to share the draft with Management Board in early 2024 for comment for finalisation in mid-February 2024 and presented to the board at 22 February meeting.

5.2. MS thanked HW on behalf of Management Board for all the work on the business plan

6. Performance Board Updates – PK, PW & JL

- 6.1. PK briefed Management Board on the discussions from the Certainty Performance Board that had included an in-depth at the management of DfE Grants.
- 6.2. PW provided the update on the Support Performance Board with deep dives on academy reserves and casework management. (process and lessons learned from an example case).
- 6.3. JL confirmed that the Assurance Performance Board had held deep dives on Business Plan metrics and academy trusts non-compliance.
- 6.4. Management Board discussed how the effectiveness of the performance boards. Good quality conversations were reported with particular value coming from the deep dives.

7. **AOB**

7.1. MS highlighted the papers for information that had been circulated and for any comments to be sent via correspondence.

7.2. MS closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.