



Date 2 May 2024
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
Andrew Thomas (AT)	Director, ESFA
Gemma Peck (GP)	Director, ESFA
Lindsey Henning (LH)	Director, ESFA

Others in attendance

Jane Cunliffe (JC)	DfE Senior Sponsor
Tika Khan (TK)	Deputy Director, ESFA
Tabatha Wincote (TW)	ESFA, Secretariat
Harry Warren (HW)	ESFA
Alannah Breeze	Head of Chief Executive Office, ESFA
Charlotte Briscall (CB) – item 5 only	Chief Digital Officer, DfE

Apologies

Rachel Hansford (RH)

1. Welcome and introductions – MS

- 1.1. MS opened the meeting and welcomed AB to her first Management Board meeting.
- 1.2. No new declarations of interest were made.
- 1.3. The minutes of 22 February 2024 Management Board meeting were agreed.
- 1.4. The action log was reviewed. Actions 11 & 12 to remain “in progress” on action log. All other open actions to close.

2. Chief Executive’s update – DW

- 2.1. DW provided an update and was pleased to report good performance outcomes on all key indications for 2023/24.
- 2.2. The internal business plan has been launched and the external plan is planned to be launched shortly once Ministerial sign off has been secured.
- 2.3. Management Board discuss the delivery risk associated with financial settlement and staffing levels.

3. Sponsorship Chair update – JC

- 3.1. JC provided the sponsorship update and was pleased to report no issues concerning the ESFA.
- 3.2. JC highlighted the good work taking place educating DfE colleagues on considering potential delivery implications of policy decisions affecting the Funding Service.

ACTION: Management Board secretariate to arrange for DfE Connect team to demonstrate their system at a future Management Board

4. Funding Service Strategy – GP

- 4.1. GP briefed Management Board on the Funding Service strategy which is unifying the mission and vision across teams to enable the ESFA to deliver a robust and enduring service.
- 4.2. The team have been linking up with and learning from others running big funding operations such as the Student Loan Company.
- 4.3. GP was pleased to report that the response to the work from DfE has been very positive.
- 4.4. Management Board discussed the opportunities for efficiencies that are being explored and confirmed their support for this important piece of work.

ACTION: GP to present an update at October 24 or January 25 Management Board and consider if this should be a joint presentation to include an update from CB on DDAT

5. DDAT Performance - CB

- 5.1. CB joined the meeting to present a DDAT performance overview and plans for looking ahead and was pleased to confirm that the majority of ESFA KPIs are rated green.
- 5.2. CB highlighted the challenges faced in the DDAT teams and plans to develop smart tools and dashboards to replace manual work.

6. Audit & Risk Committee update – HS

- 6.1. HS provided an update from the April ESFA ARC meeting which had included a deep dive on staff engagement risks and an update on counter fraud and prevention.
- 6.2. HS was pleased to report that the ESFA Investigations team had been recognised by DfE, winning the “DfE Hero Team” award at the recent

DfE Awards ceremony.

- 6.3. HS confirmed that the ESFA was still on track for pre-recess laying of accounts.

ACTION: Management Board secretariat to circulate ARC minutes to Management Board on sign off for all future meetings

7. Finance & Budgets update - TK

- 7.1. TK presented the finance and budgets update confirming that spend remained in budget across admin, programme and capital at the end of year.
- 7.2. TK updated Management Board on the 2024/25 budget challenges.
- 7.3. Management Board approved the ARC ToR subject to the amendment as discussed.

ACTION: Finance & Budgets update to be taken off ARC agenda and brought to Management Board only for future meetings unless there is an exceptional issue that needs to be brought to ARC's attention.

8. Support update – PW & LH

- 8.1. LH & PW briefed Management Board on the Support Performance Board meeting which had included a look back at 2023/24 and a review of the new headline measures and KPIs.
- 8.2. Management Board discussed the key challenges for 2024/25 and how the work with DfE Operations and Infrastructure Group on sector facing services would help alleviate some of these.
- 8.3. LH confirmed that CEO pay information will be published on gov.uk at the end of May.

9. Assurance update – JL & AT

- 9.1. AT & JL provided the update from the Assurance Performance Board highlighting the continued good performance in 2023/24 and the more stretching KPIs for 2024/25.
- 9.2. Management Board discussed how CARD could link to other Government departments working on similar areas.

ACTION: MS to share contact details for Companies House fraud team with AT

10. Certainty update – PK & GP

- 10.1. PK & GP briefed Management Board on the Certainty Performance Board which had reported generally good performance and more stretching KPIs for 2024/25
- 10.2. GP was pleased to report that the 2023/24 KPIs on timeliness and accuracy had been met:

Payments value	£72,963,030,477
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Number of payments	571,977
Payment accuracy and timeliness by number of payments	99.974%
Payment accuracy and timeliness by value of payments	99.983%

11. AOB

- 11.1. MS confirmed that JL comes to the end of his term as a Management Board member at the end of September and new Non-Exec Director will be joining.
- 11.2. MS closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.