

Minutes

Date 15 July 2024

Subject ESFA Management Board

Security OFFICIAL – FOR PUBLICATION classification

Present

<u>Members</u>	
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 – from 3pm onwards
Tika Khan (TK)	ESFA
Rachel Hansford (Rha)	ESFA
Tabatha Wincote (TW)	ESFA, Secretariat
Harry Warren (HW)	ESFA
Ruth Humphreys (RHu)	ESFA
Alannah Breeze (AB)	ESFA
Mark Wisdish (MW)	ESFA – Finance & budgets update only
Anna McMahon (AM)	ESFA – Organisational plan only
Sophie Marriott (SM)	ESFA – Organisational plan only
Sarah McClean (SMc)	DfE – Post election brief only

1. Welcome and introductions – MS

- 1.1. MS opened the meeting and thanked JL for his work and support as an ESFA NED over the last 6 years as his tenure comes to an end before the next Management Board meeting.
- 1.2. No new declarations of interest were made.

- 1.3. The minutes of 2 May 2024 Management Board meeting were agreed.
- 1.4. The action log was reviewed. Actions 14 & 15 to remain "in progress" All other open actions were agreed to close.

ACTION 19 – HW to draft and circulate a Management Board 12 months forward look to Management Board members for comment

2. Chief Executive's update – DW

- 2.1. DW was pleased to report that the ARA was endorsed last week and thanked ESFA, DfE and NAO colleagues for their work on this.
- 2.2. The results from the recent pulse survey have been released and show significant improvement across most areas. Managing change results were lower and work is continuing with senior leaders within the ESFA in response.
- 2.3. The ESFA Executive Team continue to review workforce trajectory on a monthly basis and DW is confident that the ESFA will reach the target.

3. Post Election brief – DW, AT, GP, LH & SM

3.1. DW provided an update on the latest information following the General Election. The full Ministerial team has now been appointed with Catherine McKinnell confirmed as the ESFA minister. Teach-ins are now taking place.

ACTION 20 – DW to invite Catherine McKinnell to a future ESFA Management Board meeting

- 3.2. The focus of Ministerial meetings have so far been centred on the manifesto principles:
 - 3.2.1. Best start in life
 - 3.2.2. Achieving & thriving
 - 3.2.3. Skills for opportunity & growth
- 3.3. SM provided an update on the remit and progress of setting up Skills England. Management Board members were keen to be kept abreast of developments.

ACTION 21 – SM to be invited to provide an update on Skills England at October Management Board meeting.

3.4. GP advised that the ESFA has a slot at the next DfE Leadership Team meeting to discuss funding streams and how they can support delivery of any new policies. HS offered support to ensure any messages are

reinforced at DfE ARC.

ACTION 22 – GP to share papers for Leadership Team meeting with Management Board members.

4. Finance & Budgets update - MW

- 4.1. MW joined the meeting and presented the update highlighting the pressure in DfE on the programme & capital budgets. Admin budget pressures were discussed including the link the FTE target.
- 4.2. MS thanked TK and MW for their continuing work.

5. Organisational Plan – AT & AM

- 5.1. AM and SM joined the meeting to provide the latest on the organisational plan.
- 5.2. SM detailed the various continuous improvement projects that were taking place across the agency including looking at processes and operating models. The team are working closely with DfE digital and data to implement any changes.
- 5.3. Discussion was held on what was in scope and the reasons for undertaking smaller continuous improvement projects rather than larger changes requiring bigger investment.

ACTION 23 – AT to share with Management Board details of projects that are not being taken forward

ACTION 24 – AT/SM to provide an update at October Management Board including real life examples of implemented continuous improvement projects and how they have helped ESFA colleagues and external stakeholders

- 5.4. MS thanked SM & AM for the paper.
- 5.5. DW wished AM good luck in her new role within DfE and thanked her for leading on this piece of work.

6. Audit & Risk Committee update - HS

- 6.1. HS updated on the 2 risks which are outside of tolerance, one of which, FUND04, has been escalated to DfE.
- 6.2. HS confirmed that he had provided final approval for the ARA following the delegation to him at the joint Management Board and ARC meeting. DW had followed up from the meeting by submitting the letter of representation to NAO.
- 6.3. MS thanked HS and the team for providing the paper which had highlighted the changes made to the ARA since the joint board

meeting.

6.4. Discussion was held on the risk management framework and how ESFA colleagues are made aware of their responsibilities.

7. Sponsorship Chair update – JC

- 7.1. JC joined the meeting and provided an update on new ministers' priorities which are focussed on the opportunity mission. Management Board members are keen to support any strategic planning that is required to link to the opportunity mission.
- 7.2. JC confirmed that the Secretary of State has written out to the sector and had a held a stakeholder reception on Thursday evening.
- 7.3. The Ministerial team are all keen to work outside of London with SoS visiting Sheffield last week and Stephen Morgan going to Manchester later this week.

8. Support update – PW & LH

- **8.1.** LH briefed Management Board on the Support Performance Board and were pleased to report that most KPIs are currently rated as green or amber/green. DDaT colleagues have recently attended a CE KiT to discuss data collection.
- **8.2.** PW added that it was a good session with useful discussion on metrics.

9. Assurance update – JL & AT

- **9.1.** AT provided the update from the Assurance Performance Board confirming that the assurance plan had been delivered and had highlighted priority areas of work for this year.
- 9.2. A GIAA review has been timetabled for later in the year to look at end to end debt recovery.
- 9.3. Discussion was held on the publication of the Academy Trust Handbook.

10. Certainty update – PK & GP

- **10.1.** GP briefed Management Board on the Certainty Performance Board and that using the 4 objectives in the funding strategy had led to meaningful discussions at the meeting.
- **10.2.** PK echoed that a positive discussion had been had which struck a good balance between delivery and strategy.

11. AOB

11.1. Discussion was held on the latest on the new NED replacing JL

ACTION 25 – RHu to keep MS updated on progress on recruitment of new NED

- 11.2. MS & DW put on record their thanks to JL for his work on Management Board
- 11.3. MS closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.