



Date 17 October 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
David Withey (DW)	Chief Executive Officer, ESFA
Andrew Thomas (AT)	Director, ESFA
Gemma Peck (GP)	Director, ESFA

Others in attendance

Jane Cunliffe (JC)	DfE Senior Sponsor
Tika Khan (TK)	ESFA
Rachel Hansford (RHa)	ESFA
Tabatha Wincote (TW)	ESFA, Secretariat
Harry Warren (HW)	ESFA
Ruth Humphreys (RHu)	ESFA

Apologies

Paul Woodgates (PW)

1. Welcome and introductions – MS

- 1.1. MS opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.
- 1.2. No new declarations of interest were made.
- 1.3. The minutes of 15 July 2024 Management Board meeting were agreed. The 7 July 2024 combined ARC/Management Board minutes were agreed, noting that ARC had cleared.
- 1.4. The action log was reviewed. Action 25 was agreed to close. All other actions were agreed to be paused pending review following the announcement of the closure of the ESFA.

ACTION: All action logs from ESFA formal boards to be reviewed pre-closure to ensure they are passed onto the relevant boards in DfE as appropriate.

2. Chief Executive's update – DW

- 2.1. DW provided the CEO update highlighting that there was now narrowing of focus to ensuring a smooth transition to ESFA closure.
- 2.2. DW thanked ESFA leadership team for the great work they had done on leading their teams through the change and to AT for leading the Transition Board. He also put on record his thanks to ESFA colleagues who are working on the project and the professionalism they have shown.
- 2.3. DW provided an update on preparation work for the 30 October 2024 budget and spending review processes.
- 2.4. DW confirmed that the Civil Service People Survey had now closed with results expected at the end of November.

3. Sponsorship update - JC

- 3.1. JC presented the sponsorship update and was pleased to report that the good working relationships between DfE and ESFA teams on the transition.
- 3.2. JC provided an update on the work that was taking place in DfE to prepare for the spending review.

4. Finance & Budgets update - TK

- 4.1. TK presented the Finance & Budget update for P5 including a briefing on the transfer of SFSO budgets to Regions Group and processes now being followed.
- 4.2. TK briefed Management Board on the discussions taking place in relation to the P6 forecast.

5. Audit & Risk Committee update - HS

- 5.1. HS provided an update on ESFA ARC which included a deep dive into counter fraud functional standards. HS was pleased to advise that the ESFA counter fraud team had the significant achievement of the 2nd highest performance in Government.
- 5.2. Conversations are continuing with NAO to agree an audit plan up to agency closure.
- 5.3. The risk exceptions report is now only reporting 1 risk outside of tolerance.. Discussion on the plan for action to lower this risk.

6. Transition update - AT

- 6.1. AT provided a detailed update on the transition and closure of the ESFA.
- 6.2. AT was pleased to report the successful transition of SFSO into Regions Group. The focus now moves to phase 2 to ensure a

successful move into OIG.

- 6.3. HMT have confirmed ARA will be required. Management Board agreed with the proposal on end dates of ESFA NED contracts to ensure this piece of work is completed.
- 6.4. RHa presented the update on people transition.
- 6.5. The plans for internal and external comms leading up to closure were discussed.
- 6.6. RHu briefed Management Board on the critical questions log to be reviewed at the monthly transition board. Discussion was held on the risks and opportunities following the transition and how these were being highlighted to DfE Leadership Team.

ACTION: ARC secretariat to include the transition risk register as part of ARC meeting papers

- 6.7. A set of priorities for Management Board up to closure were agreed:
 - 6.7.1. Ensure Management Board do the very best for ESFA staff wherever they are transferring into OIG, another directorate or outside of department
 - 6.7.2. Support the work of the ESFA to ensure continuation of successful delivery within the sector and performance is maintained at the highest level.
 - 6.7.3. Use appropriate opportunities to articulate the legacy of the ESFA both internally and externally.
 - 6.7.4. Explore opportunities from the transition to make things even better for the sector.
 - 6.7.5. Ensure processes continue and ownership of work is maintained up 31 March 2025.
- 6.8. MS thanked everyone for the transition update.

7. AOB/below the line papers – MS

- 7.1. No questions or comments were raised on the below the line papers
- 7.2. No other business was raised

Meeting closed 15:53