

MINUTES OF THE DE BOARD MEETING
Thursday 23 May 2024
Conference Room, Rathgael House

Attendees:

Mark Browne (Chair)
Ronnie Armour
Faustina Graham
Linsey Farrell
Paul Corrigan
Anna Carragher
Ann Moore
Kim Martin
Karen McCullough (Item 3)
Clem Athansiou (Department for the Economy - DfE) (Item 3)
Gareth Edge (Item 3)
Stephen Van Houten (Item 5)

Apologies:

Heather Cousins
Suzanne Kingon
Neil Palmer
Bryan Laverty
Marcella Phillips

In attendance:

Catherine Service (deputising Board secretary)
Andrew Craig (Observer)

14-19 (Careers) Joint DE/DfE Update

Karen McCullough, Director of Qualifications, 14-19 Strategy & Youth Work Policy provided an overview of the current position in relation to careers and the work being planned as part of the 14-19 Strategy Work Programme.

Karen provided an overview of:

- Joint responsibility for careers education and guidance in schools for DE and DfE;
- Overview of the current delivery model;
- Quality of careers provision in schools;
- Evaluation, Reviews & Research Reports, and their common themes; and
- Next steps.

Clem Athansiou, Director of Apprenticeships, Careers and Vocational Education within DfE provided an update on the work being carried forward by his Department and the cross-collaboration with DE regarding 14-19 (Careers). This included:

- Careers Service provided in schools;
- Inclusion;

- Economy trends & change in demand for skills, labour information; and
- Ongoing work on Careers portal.

The Board noted the request from the Education Minister and Economy Minister for a joint careers action plan.

Final draft DE Governance Statement

Kim presented provided the Board with an update on the draft DE Accounting Officer's Governance Statement and the NDPB's Governance Statements for 2023-24.

The Board:

- Noted the position subject to further consideration of ARAC next week; and
- Noted that it gives a sense of the range of the Department's work.

Director of Finance Report

Stephen spoke to his paper which included an update on the current key financial issues.

An update to the Board was provided on the 2023/24 Resource Provisional Outturn.

The agreed Executive Budget for 2024-25 provides the Department with a Resource Budget of £2,874.4m. This allocation includes £0.7m in respect of Peace Funding and an additional resource allocation of £296.3m, over and above the anticipated, flat-cash budget.

Further to the above funding, £25m has been set aside for a Childcare Strategy as agreed by the Executive.

The Budget strategy was submitted to the Minister. At the request of DoF the Department is carrying out an exercise to realise savings of 10% which will be put to the Minister at the start of June.

Stephen also provided an update on:

- Capital Budget;
- Earmarked budgets;
- Annual reports and accounts;
- High Risk EA IT projects; and Prompt payments.

HR Report

Ann provided an update to the Board on the HR report. She provided an update on resourcing including:

- G6 and G7 competition to launch late Q2
- DP interviews planned for end of Q1/beginning of Q2
- EO2 interviews planned for beginning of Q2
- Non-general service positions within DE to fill include 5 x Staff Officer Accountants, 4 X G6 Inspectors and 1 x Assistant Economist (SO)
- AO interviews planned the end of Q1

Ann also provided an update on Performance management. The Board were advised that as of end of April 38.5% of End Year Reviews have been agreed and 19.3% are in progress. The Board noted the need to remind colleagues to complete the reviews.

Strule Update

The Board were provided with an update on the Strule Shared Education Campus.

The update contained information relating to contracts and therefore carried a Sensitive (Commercial) protective marking.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies

Ronnie advised that:

- Richard Pengelly, the new EA Chief Executive, has settled in and is working closely with the Department on a range of issues; and
- CCMS are remaining in their current accommodation.

Linsey advised that:

- Meeting CCEA weekly around exams as we are now into the exam season;
- CCEA also recently ran a director competition with more competitions anticipated; and
- NICIE have appointed a new Chief Executive