



**Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru
National Academy for
Educational Leadership Wales**

Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 25th March 2021 via Teams

In Attendance:

Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
Kirsty Payne (KP)
Claire Williams (CW)
Mike James (MJ)
Martin Price (MP)
Davina Payne (DP)
Rosemary Jones OBE (RJ)
Paul Marshall (PM)
John Graystone (JG)
Kate Lewis (KL)
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

Also in Attendance outside the main business:

Professor David Egan (DE) (WG)
Jeremy Griffiths (JeG) (Associate)
Lloyd Hopkins (LH) (WG)
Sonny Singh (SS)

1. Welcome, confirmation of minutes and actions from previous meeting

RJ chaired the start of the meeting due to SD having technical issues and welcomed KL to the Board. Apologies had been received from Michaela Renkes. There were no conflicts of interest to report.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. RJ referred to the Action Log from the previous Board meeting and noted that most of the actions had now been completed.

With reference to ongoing actions:

- Action 153 – Due to be completed by September 2021
- Action 157 – SD had attended both sub committees as an observer this month which was deemed a useful way forward for this action
- Actions 159/166 – Ongoing actions
- Action 167 - Carried forward to July which will be Meilyr Rowlands' leaving date.

RJ handed the Chair over to SD. SD thanked both Chairs of the sub-committees for welcoming her as an observer to the recent meetings. She updated the Board on some recent training sessions she had attended such as the EWC conference and also a session on cyber resilience which, as was later confirmed by PM, is included on the National Academy for Educational Leadership (Leadership Academy) risk register.

2. Finance/HR Committee Report

JG provided a report on the last Finance/HR committee meeting held on 12th March 2021.

The main focus of this meeting had been the reduction of the Leadership Academy's budget allocation for the forthcoming year. Initially a reduction of £400,000 had been proposed by Welsh Government (WG) but following a meeting with TE and KP, WG had agreed to consider a reduction of £200,000 instead. The committee had considered the impact of the planned budget cuts on the various work streams and ways of working. TE detailed areas affected as innovation, strategic workforce planning and face to face working which had taken a big hit. There would also be no funding to allow for a physical office space over the next 12 months.

It had been agreed that to cut back any further than this would have severely affected the running of the Leadership Academy as a whole – as a ‘growing’ organisation its aim would be to develop not just to sustain. The committee had then, after much discussion, approved the revised budget prepared by KP.

Matters have moved on since this meeting as a grant letter was received from WG yesterday now offering an extra £65,000 which had not been reflected in the revised budget. WG have also agreed quite explicitly to fund any new projects they propose. It was hoped that this would work both ways in allowing the Leadership Academy to also identify any relevant project designs to WG for funding purposes.

A management meeting will be convened this afternoon to consider how best to allocate this extra funding. **MP proposed holding an extraordinary Finance & HR committee meeting following this meeting** to agree a further revised budget reflecting the new allocation. All were in agreement with this proposal.

JG expressed thanks to TE and the team for their work in negotiating this more favourable settlement and also for producing revised budgets to reflect. SD thanked JG for his report.

3. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report

PM presented the report from the Audit and Risk Assurance committee meeting held on 4th March 2021.

PM outlined the primary purpose of this committee as being to review the risk register which was now in challenge position. The committee had agreed to hold ‘deep dives’ into individual risks to promote a better understanding of the nature of the risks and to ensure that robust and appropriate mitigants were in place. The

committee could then provide overall assurances to the Board that all risks and mitigants were accurately reflected on the risk register.

This exercise commenced with a deep dive into system leadership and will continue in the May meeting with an in-depth consideration of the endorsement process.

The Risk Assurance Framework included three lines of defence where risks had been identified to better reflect who or what is undertaking risk control. The Academy also relies on external validation to ensure that the systems in place are appropriate. PM was aware that there are still some gaps in that framework but is working with management to address this. He referred to a recent audit on cyber security where this was deemed as very low risk for the Leadership Academy. This will also be validated by internal audit.

Internal audit had made a number of recommendations to be implemented and monitored by committee. Most actions have already been carried out but just a small number remain for various reasons such as the impact of Covid. The committee received a 'gold star' report from Internal Audit.

PM referred to the Audit plan which is a rolling plan covering a number of years. This is where priorities are set but can be revised as and when necessary to reflect current conditions. Current priorities, as agreed with management, are as follows: marketing, ICT/cyber security, recruitment and development of Associates and governance.

The counter fraud policy had already been agreed by the Board who had previously requested a flow chart for clarity. PM confirmed that this has now been added to the policy.

The Annual Report details all the work and activities undertaken by the Audit committee over the past year. On the basis of all evidence, PM was confident that audit and risk are being properly undertaken by committee and that the Leadership Academy has very good assurance.

SD was happy to approve the Audit plan on behalf of the Board and congratulated the committee on receiving such a good audit report. SD was very keen to see the 'deep dive' approach followed through as this should prove very useful. SD thanked PM for his report.

4. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan

TE presented her Chief Executive report reflecting on how far the Leadership Academy has developed over the past year in moving all its work online. In some ways the increased digital presence can be seen as a very positive move. TE also acknowledged some of the challenges in working this way especially in considering the well-being of staff which was more difficult to monitor remotely. Building and sustaining relationships can also be more challenging and TE looked forward to achieving a better balance going forward in ways of working.

TE updated the Board on progress with her PHd - her research proposal has now been accepted by the university and the ethics approval has been received. She thanked everyone for their support in going forwards with this.

Stage 1 of quality assurance/endorsement has now been completed and 6 providers have gone forward to stage 2. All provisions that were put forward had been deemed promising but completion of application forms were not as clear in every case. TE was hopeful that the remaining providers will resubmit in the Autumn call. Work with the tri nations continues to grow and this was deemed a useful addition to the QA process.

There has been increased engagement with key stakeholders including the post 16 sector. Secondees have been able to play a useful role in this process. The Leadership Academy is looking to establish partnership agreements with key stakeholders; this would help identify areas where collaboration would be beneficial and also prevent duplication. TE was also mindful of the importance of monitoring in the QA process and has been keen to ensure that Associates play a key role in this process.

TE was very pleased with the way the area of innovation is being developed and promoted whilst being mindful of the cut to the innovation budget. This will require the Leadership Academy to work in a more competitive way now to ensure that the best value for money is achieved here.

System leadership is currently under evaluation and **TE will share the report (expected by the end of May) with the Board**. It is hoped that this evaluation will reflect decisions on how the Leadership Academy recruits candidates for Cohort 4, possibly expanding beyond the school sector.

TE reminded the Board that Cohort 1 will have their final term this summer so consideration will need to be given as to how the Leadership Academy can maintain them under the alumni model to support the work of the organisation going forwards.

It is hoped that 'Leading Professional Learning Guidance' will be available by the end of April; this will be an interactive e-document and will remain as live as possible to accurately reflect what is happening in the sector. This will be continually evaluated to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The recent 'in conversation' event on the asymmetric week in schools had been very well received proving that holding live events in this format generates a lot of interest. The paper on middle leadership has now been completed but needs to be translated before being published.

TE updated the Board on the well-being aspect of work. The Head to Head forum continues to grow weekly so consideration will need to be given as to how the Leadership Academy continues to support this initiative. Associates are currently being given facilitation training to this end.

A position paper detailing the strategy for well-being is currently being circulated around Wales.

On the corporate front, the budget has already been discussed under Para 2 above. The Academy's visibility is greatly improving as social media data statistics demonstrate. This should be further enhanced by the launch of the new website after Easter.

A series of roadshows is also planned for after Easter which will go out to all regions and be carried out at a local Authority level. Take-up for all events and road shows has been very promising.

SD thanked TE for a very comprehensive report and was very impressed at how much the team had achieved during such challenging times. Both SD and JG were pleased with the national approach to well-being. In response to JG's query regarding timescales for the well-being report, TE confirmed that it was planned to have the document ready for July to be presented to the new minister for approval.

5. Presentation on the National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry

SD welcomed Professor David Egan (DE) to the meeting who was pleased to have this opportunity to present to the Board.

DE outlined the work of the last 3 years since the WG Minister for Education committed to developing the first national strategy. The main objectives for this work were as follows:

- To support evidence informed policy
- To develop educational research capacity within higher education
- To develop an evidence based education profession.

The priorities for the national strategy were agreed to be: curriculum and pedagogy, leadership and professional learning, Welsh language and bilingual education, equity and inclusion and post Covid recovery.

DE referred to the challenges in developing an evidence based education profession, making comparisons with the health profession where this has been embedded for a long time. Education on the other hand has not got as strong an evidence base and academic research has generally had a very small influence on teachers' decision making. DE looked towards using more international evidence as the way forward and stressed the need for more high quality research in an accessible format for teachers. As well as making new teacher education programmes more research based, additional government funding would be required in this area to make this approach viable.

DE outlined work currently being undertaken in Wales which included the National Professional Enquiry Programme (NPEP), Initial Teacher Education (ITE), other enquiry work, professional learning and work at school level. At the moment however this work is very much on the margins as the majority of schools are not taking part in this research.

DE stressed the need to develop a model for an evidence based profession identifying the following as key players in this drive: WG, HEI, Hub schools, all other

schools, LA and consortia and the Leadership Academy. Cohort 3 has been working with DE in looking at other professions and considering what is currently happening in Wales.

DE concluded by referring to his visit to Huntington Research School where evidence based teaching has achieved amazingly good results.

MJ expressed some surprise that education was not currently being run as a professional service and also queried the link between educational policy and economic policy. In response DE saw this as strengthening and moving forward the profession as has happened with the nursing profession. He also confirmed the link with economic policy.

CW spoke of her current school's involvement in this project but also referred to her previous school which was in a very different situation. DE agreed the importance of enabling all schools to take part in this in order to realise the benefits.

JG asked what an evidence based school would actually look like and how this culture change could be brought about. DE deemed this a very important question which generally comes back to leadership which would be instrumental in this approach to the way of working in a school. WG also has to create an environment which enables an evidence based profession to be developed.

SD thanked DE for a very interesting and thought provoking presentation which is a good example of how effective pan Wales collaboration can be in driving forward change.

6. Associate Update

SD welcomed Jeremy Griffiths (JeG) to the meeting who gave a presentation to the Board on his experiences as an Associate over the last 3 years.

JeG spoke of the wonderful opportunities this role had afforded him which had helped him gain his recent part time appointment as Executive Director of Caban. He particularly welcomed the networking opportunities of this role which had assisted him in his development as a system leader.

JeG stressed that the role of Associate does require a lot of commitment to get the most out of it. He has been keen to take up every opportunity that has been offered to him. Highlights included the opportunity to present at a conference in Morocco and also to meet with many influential people that he has previously admired from afar.

He has been approached by 3 other Associates to act as their mentor and has welcomed this opportunity to share some of his knowledge and experience to assist them with their development.

JeG spoke of how the strength of the Academy lies in the collective strength of its employees and Associates and felt gratified that he had been able to make a contribution to this success. He deemed the Associate program a win/win situation for this reason.

In response to JG's query as to how the Associate programme could be improved, JeG suggested consideration be given to developing the alumni model and to possibly utilising former Associates on a consultancy basis.

SD confirmed that the alumni role was currently under discussion. She thanked JeG for his presentation and for the passion and enthusiasm he had shown in his work throughout the last few years.

7. Presentation on New Curriculum for Wales

SD welcomed Lloyd Hopkins (LH) and Sonny Singh (SS) from WG who had come to give a presentation on the new curriculum for Wales.

LH provided a brief overview of progress with the curriculum stressing that schools were being asked to become much more involved in curriculum design and in making decisions as to what their learners should take on board.

He referred to the National Mission statement which sets out expectations and details the steps that schools will be expected to take. This has led to the development of the curriculum implementation plan ('Journey to 2022') which makes links to the overarching policy context and sign posts the long term vision and aspirations. LH also referred to the support that would be available to schools and the flexible implementation timelines which recognise the impact of Covid.

The plan will help schools plan their approach and sequence their activities. They will need to:

- Adapt the current curriculum
- Develop their own plan to enable learners to progress
- Underpin all the curriculum with excellent teaching and learning and
- Raise expectations for learners.

It also sets out how this will be achieved through a process of co-construction involving WG, regional consortia and Estyn. There will need to be a clear understanding of 'why' things are learnt and also a clear commitment from leadership at all levels of the education system.

SS reported that practitioner led discussions have been very useful in defining criteria and feedback has been very positive so far regarding aspects of the curriculum that have been trialled. The implementation plan will also need to look at wider issues and take into account government directives to make it more effective.

LH was very conscious of the need to support schools and the system as a whole, bearing in mind the huge impact of Covid over the past year. In particular there may be a need to balance the conflicting demands on staff, provide support to develop secure foundations and reshape the system.

SD thanked LH and SS for a very informative presentation and asked for comments and question from Board members.

CW found the new curriculum an exciting prospect but expressed concern that the middle tier was often missed out in Wales. She also stressed the importance of getting all schools involved and on board with this. CW underlined the fact that the success of the curriculum will depend a lot on educational leadership and would like to see the role of the National Academy more clearly defined. SD agreed that the Leadership Academy would like to be closely involved with this.

SS thanked CW for raising such interesting points but felt that WG understood the roles and responsibilities of the middle tier although certain aspects of their role might overlap. He agreed on the importance of engaging with all schools and other stakeholders as well.

RJ referred to the end of the 3-16 continuum and enquired about the future of final school leaving qualifications in Wales which drive behaviours and learning styles in the current system.

'Qualified for the Future' has been considering this in their survey but RJ queried whether the right questions were being asked here. LH agreed that curriculum design at secondary schools should not be geared totally towards exam qualifications but should also include different and varied experiences to enable effective learning to take place. LH would expect his colleagues from WG to discuss this with Qualifications Wales at the end of their consultation period. SS added that ongoing work on school performance will impact on secondary schools and more help and clarity will be provided for schools going forward.

8. Date of Next Meeting, Any Other Business and Close

SD congratulated RJ on her new role on the Welsh Language Partnership Committee. She thanked KP for all her work and wished her all the best when she starts her maternity leave on April 14th.

RJ reminded Board members to take a look at the questionnaire from 'Qualifications Wales' as referred to in Para 7 above and to consider how best to respond. SD thanked RJ for flagging this and agreed that linking performance and qualifications to curriculum design could be a red flag.

The next Board meeting will take place on 20th May.

This meeting was closed at 1pm.

Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
153	Annual review of terms of reference	All	September 2021	
157	Set up meetings between SD and committee chairs prior to future Board meetings	KP	March 2021	
159	Invite risk owners to attend future committee meetings	KP	Ongoing	
166	Carry out appraisals on Board members	SD	Ongoing	
167	Thank Meilyr Rowlands for his support	SD	July 2021	
168	Convene extraordinary HR & Finance committee meeting to agree revised budget	JG	April 2021	
169	Share report on system leadership with Board members	TE	May 2021	