



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

**Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 18th March 2022**

In Attendance: Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)  
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)  
Mike James (MJ)  
Martin Price (MP)  
Davina Payne (DP)  
Paul Marshall (PM) via Zoom link  
John Graystone (JG)  
Rosemary Jones OBE (RJ) via Zoom link  
Michaela Renkes (MK) (WG) via Zoom link  
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

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

SD opened the session and welcomed everyone to the first face to face Board meeting in two years.

No apologies had been received and there were no conflicts of interest to report.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. SD pointed out that there was some repetition at the start of Para 2 so the sentence commencing with 'SD thanked both sub committees...' will be removed.

SD 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:

- 188 – will be carried forward;
- 194 – will be discussed in the deep dive on endorsement at the next AARAC committee meeting;
- 195 – meeting scheduled for Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March;
- 196 – meeting to be arranged.

## *2. Finance/HR Committee Report*

MP provided a summary report on the last Finance/HR committee meeting held earlier this month.

Committee minutes had been circulated together with 2 papers on current budget workings. The report on staff/HR issues was self-explanatory but MP highlighted the decision to appoint an extra fulltime member of staff to work on digital marketing.

The budget was on track to end this year within normal limits. MP thanked KL for her excellent work in managing the budget. Quarter end issues with budget carry overs have now been resolved.

MP referred to current negotiations with WG regarding the budget for the next financial year. The base budget currently stands at 1.28 million (including some agreed project funding) but the 2<sup>nd</sup> budget paper outlines what could be achieved if an aspirational budget figure of 1.6 million was to be agreed by WG. This paper will be modified when the actual budget is set.

MP also informed the Board that there had been some concern at committee as to whether next year's budget would be agreed in time for the April payment to be made. MR confirmed that once the Minister has agreed the remit letter then a grant offer letter would be sent out. As the next payment is not due until mid April there should be no issues with receipt of funds.

MP queried whether the remit letter would span 3 years. MR confirmed that it would cover the full term of government and would be refreshed annually.

SD thanked MP for his report and also took the opportunity to remind all directors to send in claims as soon as possible this month.

## *3. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report*

MJ presented the report from the Audit and Risk Assurance committee meeting also held earlier this month.

This committee had considered updates to the Risk Register, a copy of which has been circulated to the Board. A discussion had been held regarding assurance levels within the Board Assurance Framework and it was acknowledged that this was a dynamic document that should reflect any changes to risk levels.

The internal audit plan for the next year was agreed. The focus and scope of this audit will be more strategic with the more detailed analysis being carried out through deep dives. MJ pointed out that the number of audits will be reduced from 4 to 3 due to a satisfactory level of assurance.

This meeting carried out a deep dive on cyber security. MJ is the nominated Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO.) KL took the committee through the systems and

processes in place whilst Sean Gaffney (SG) of Qualifications Wales provided more technical information regarding the system architecture. SG provided reassurances that the cloud based nature of this IT system should place it a lower risk of cyber attack and would also facilitate easier isolation if it were compromised.

The generic IT recovery plan was considered with roles and responsibilities outlined in case it needed to be invoked.

It was agreed that the next deep dive would focus on the endorsement process. TE requested that a programme of deep dives be set out and MJ noted that this was a sign of process maturity.

JG queried whether the current situation with the war in Ukraine and also issues such as the cost of living crisis in the UK should be considered as additional risks. MJ thanked JG for these useful suggestions and agreed that the situation in Ukraine could potentially increase risks of cyber attacks. TE confirmed that the organisation was in close contact with Qual Wales to continually re-evaluate risks.

MJ reported that consideration had been given to the costs of recovery from any cyber incidents. This had not been budgeted for but there is an element of insurance included with Cyber Essentials Plus in case of any breach.

MR informed the meeting that the Public Bodies Unit would be undertaking a tailored independent review on every public body. This included a scrutiny of governance structures and would also involve interviews with Board members and staff.

SD queried the timescales for this review. MR anticipated that this would take place in 2023 with a 3 month set-up period. Organisations will be contacted in advance regarding start times and to agree the next steps.

SD thanked MJ for the committee report.

#### *4. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan*

TE was really pleased that this Board meeting could be held in person whilst acknowledging that the pandemic had helped fast track the delivery of comprehensive online services. TE thanked all Board members for their support through this academic year and paid specific tribute to DP and RJ who would now be leaving the Board. TE had very much enjoyed working with them and thanked them both for their valuable contribution to the Board.

TE then went through her report considering each programme of work in turn.

Para 1.1 Quality Assurance – two applications had been received from the last endorsement call, one was a WG funded programme and the other had come through the Innovation Pathway. TE was pleased to announce that both applications would be moving forward to the second panel stage. It is planned to hold a providers' event in May which will be an opportunity to showcase endorsement.

TE referred to the possibility of fast tracking some provision where providers already had a good track record of delivery. This had been originally discussed by the AARAC Committee.

MJ was in favour of holding the event for providers and suggested reaching outside the existing pool of providers.

Para 1.2 Innovation – three applications have been funded from the Innovation Pathway and it is hoped that these will come forward for endorsement. These include support for coaching and mentoring of youth work leaders.

MR queried how this coaching and mentoring would fit in with programmes being developed by the regions.

TE confirmed that there had been no collaboration with the regions to date but this one included working with another independent company.

The third series of innovation was now underway which focuses on digital innovation in conjunction with Apple. This has not had as good a take up as anticipated which could be due with timing. Schools are currently struggling to get supply teachers to cover staff absences which causes difficulty in releasing staff to take part. Head teachers have also tended to delegate this to IT and digital leaders which means it does lack the strategic overview of previous series.

MP had received some feedback regarding the timing of these online sessions. School staff would have preferred these to take place during the school day rather than at the end of the day. TE appreciated this as the workforce was very tired at the moment. Feedback will be requested at the end of this series.

MJ asked how digital excellence, which was one of the Minister's priorities, would be defined in this instance. MR will make some enquiries and will feed back on this point.

RJ stressed the importance of innovation in terms of the new school curriculum which has a very clear framework in terms of progress.

Para 1.3 System Leadership – now building rapport with Cohorts 3 and 4 who will be picking up commissions when the remit letter has been agreed. It was pleasing to note that existing commissions have been influencing policy at government level. Associates are receiving lots of requests for attendance and participation at forums.

It is planned to increase the number of Associates in Cohort 5 to include the youth work sector and Post 16. JG queried whether there are any ongoing links with Cohort 1 and 2 and whether their participation in the programme has benefited their career. TE reported that Cohort 1, now known as alumni, are engaged on a daily rate to support events and will also participate in the annual stakeholder event. TE confirmed that there are clear examples of how Associates have benefited personally and career wise. MR also pointed out that WG often approaches the organisation to request the use of Associates for a point of reference.

Para 1.4 Leadership Development - the Middle Leadership conference will be held on March 30<sup>th</sup>. Registration for this event was already over 100.

Work with the tri nations continues with the Blether providing a good example of the collaborative work here. Scotland and Ireland are fulfilling useful roles of being additional critical friends.

Para 2.1 details the evidence base for resources. The Leading Professional Learning web based resource will be launched next week – this is currently being tested by staff and the editorial group. This resource will be there to support all schools and will be regularly refreshed to ensure case studies etc are still up to date and relevant.

The EIE project has now concluded apart from case studies which will form part of that resource. This will sit in Hallmark 6 of the LPL resource.

Para 2.2 Insight series – The Compassionate Leadership paper by Dr Ali Davies is currently in translation. It is planned to launch this by the end of this academic year. Proposals to improve the wellbeing of leaders are being considered. A Heads Up paper has gone to senior officials at WG and a meeting has been held with unions this week. TE was pleased to confirm that wellbeing has now been included in the remit letter.

TE invited any Board member who would like to attend the Middle Leadership conference on March 31<sup>st</sup> to let the office know and a place will be reserved.

2.3 Well-being – this has already been covered above.

2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning – still in discussions with LAs around this work with positive feedback from those already consulted. The organisation has been contacted by Head Teachers who are retiring and now want to get involved in this work. RJ queried the possible role they could play. It is early days yet but TE plans to work with LAs to get a better idea of retirees and to consider the type of work they could carry out.

JG said that not all headteachers would be able to offer a high level of input and that caution should be exercised.

On the corporate front, SD confirmed that the recruitment process for new Board members is now complete. The Minister has agreed recommendations and references are now being secured.

3.2 Executive Function – performance development and improvement reviews have now been carried out with all team members. This area is currently going through internal audit to identify any areas for improvement.

TE was pleased to welcome back Kirsty Payne (KP) following her maternity leave. TE thanked KL for doing a tremendous job in KP's absence and was very pleased at the seamless transition on KP's return. KL has now been successful in securing a new job and all Board members offered their congratulations and wished her well for the future.

3.3 Comms and Marketing – this area is doing very well. The top downloads for February were the paper by Prof Alma Harris on system leadership, the asymmetric

week by Gareth Evans and the middle leadership by Prof Christine Forde and Kathleen Keegan

More face to face events are planned including the Eisteddfod in Denbighshire where a stand will be shared with Estyn and Qual Wales, the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Tregaron, Ceredigion and the National Education Show in Cardiff.

The organisation is currently advertising for a digital comms executive to provide technical support to Charlotte Thomas Communications Manager. This will be a graduate appointment for a period of 2 years.

MJ and DP supported this appointment and TE confirmed that there was already sufficient funding for this post.

DP suggested that it might be useful for Charlotte to explain in lay person's terms what is meant by terms like bounce rates etc to ensure that the Board has full understanding. All agreed that this would be useful as a future agenda item, especially with new Board members soon to take up their appointments.

3.4 Stakeholders and Partnership Work – a first meeting of the reconstituted stakeholder group was held last month. Since that meeting Owain Gethin Davies was appointed as chair with Helen Ridout as vice chair. This group will meet formally on a termly basis but will also work on smaller projects. SD will work closely with the group's chair to build relationships. It is planned to hold an annual stakeholder event which will include more people.

JG queried whether these stakeholder meetings would be minuted. TE confirmed that GA will produce minutes which will be shared for information. TE will also bring back bullet points from any meetings held with the union group.

RJ was pleased to hear of the progress with stakeholders and highlighted the fact that TE's role as Chief Executive would be different to that of Board members here. RJ stressed the importance of ensuring that the Board does not become disconnected from stakeholders. This was acknowledged as being a very good point.

In response to JG's query on governors, TE was able to confirm that school governors have been included in the remit letter. Estyn are also currently carrying out a thematic review on school governors.

SD thanked TE for a very comprehensive report and was pleased to see good progress in so many areas of work.

## *5. Associate Update*

SD was pleased to welcome back Claire Williams (CW) who gave an update on her role as Associate which she took up in September 2021. CW has enjoyed this role so far and was looking forward to her first residential next month as this will be her first in person meeting.

CW spoke of the many opportunities her new role afforded and of the support and enthusiasm of fellow members of her cohort. This has enabled her to network more widely across Wales including with leaders from the youth sector.

CW's experiences so far have all been very positive and she has enjoyed seeing how things work practically after seeing them through the eyes of a Board member. One learning point has been how much preparation work goes into something like a Bletter to ensure it all runs smoothly.

In response to a query from MJ, CW felt that the reputation of the National Academy for Educational Leadership was growing but that the organisation could still work on improving its 'reach'. CW also commented on the many differences across Wales and the disparity in terms of professional leadership. MJ reported that the organisation was having more mentions in governor meetings he was attending.

CW was pleased to confirm that the Middle Leadership Conference was promoting the organisation to more leaders who had not previously been aware of its remit.

SD thanked CW for her presentation and asked her to keep in touch on a regular basis going forwards.

#### *6. Board Considerations*

SD raised the issue of quoracy at sub-committee meetings which could sometimes be an issue due to the relatively small number of members. SD suggested looking at duplicating membership on both committees or holding a register of substitute members but JG and PM raised some concerns regarding potential conflict of interest. SD agreed to seek advice from the Public Bodies Committee before reaching any decision.

SD had started looking at relevant Board training for the three new Board members who would soon be joining the Board. It was also agreed to plan an Away Day for all Board members and staff.

MJ referred to a note he has sent to SD for consideration of all Board members. As the organisation was at inflection point at the moment in moving from start up to maturity, this could sometimes be construed as a risk. It is therefore a good point in time to reset the organisation and MJ agreed that an Away Day would be an excellent forum for this.

SD was sorry to be losing DP and RJ who had been directors from the start. SD thanked both for all their hard work and support for the organisation and hoped that they would stay in touch. MR also added her thanks and appreciation from WG.

RJ thanked everyone for their support over the last 4 years and felt it had been a real privilege to be part of the start-up. RJ was very pleased that the organisation was now reaching maturity and was having a serious impact on policy and leadership in Wales. RJ also reminded Board members to keep the Welsh language uppermost in their thoughts.

DP endorsed RJ's comments, thanked everyone for their support in what had been a very enjoyable and interesting 4 year period. DP felt she had benefited greatly in

learning from veterans on the educational landscape in Wales and will continue to watch the organisation grow from strength to strength.

*7. Date of Next Meeting, Any Other Business and Close*

SD thanked all for their participation in today's meeting and wished all the best to departing members. The meeting concluded at 12.45pm.

It is planned to arrange another face to face meeting with the new Board members at an appropriate time.

The next Board meeting will take place on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May.

**Action Log**

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
188	Consider collaboration on well-being	NM	Ongoing	
195	Discuss Pisa programme	RJ and TE	April 2022	
196	Discuss pay and conditions of leaders	JG and TE	May 2022	
197	Modify budget document when remit agreed	KP	April 2022	
198	Send in expenses claims	All directors	End March 2022	
199	Prepare programme of deep dives	MJ	May 2022	
200	Book places for Middle Leadership conference	All	End March 2022	
201	Explain comms terms	CT	May 2022	