

Date 14 December 2011
Subject Young People's Learning Agency Board Minutes
Location MWB Business Exchange, London
Time 09.00 - 12.30
Publication intent NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Present

- Les Walton (Chair)
- Peter Box
- Gareth Dawkins
- Dexter Hutt
- Peter Lauener
- David Pearmain
- Emma Pearson-Winstone
- Mark Sanders
- Michele Sutton
- David Wooton

Observers

- Lesley Davies
- Ian Ferguson
- David Igoe
- Donald Rae
- Jo Thomas
- Malcolm Trobe

Executive

- Sue Baldwin
- Neil Flint
- Sophie Hume-Wright
- Ruth Medlock (Clerk)
- Jane Cowell
- Bob Walding (Item 9 only)

Apologies

- Pete Birkett
- John Merry
- Helen Sexton

Item 1. Welcome and opening comments

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the evening session for the Board members not present. It was agreed that the session had reinforced the Board's view that there needs to be clarity on the way the education and training system would work after the completion of the reform process for Arm's Length Bodies.

Item 2. Declaration of interests

- 2.1 There were no declarations of any interests specifically relating to the meeting agenda.

Item 3. Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 These were agreed as an accurate record.

Item 4. Matters arising

- 4.1 There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

Item 5. Updates

Chair (Paper YPLA 79a/2011)

- 5.1 The Chair reported on recent meetings held with Directors of Children's Services and a telekit which had taken place with Matt Dunkley, the President of The Association of Directors of Children's Services, to discuss the critical issues facing children's services and the link to the work of the YPLA and in future the EFA.
- 5.2 A consistent message is the importance of engagement in local partnerships to address the impact of the socio-economic climate on some of the most vulnerable children and young people.
- 5.3 It was agreed that clarity of the role of Local Authorities in regard to relationships with all education and training providers would be helpful, not least since LAs had the statutory duties for all children and young people.
- 5.4 The Chair updated the Board on discussions that he and Peter Lauener had had about the process for setting up the EFA Advisory Group:
 - Peter Lauener will talk to all Board members in January/February for their views on their personal roles and whether they were interested in serving on the EFA Advisory Group. After this and other informal discussions, the terms of reference and membership will be finalised.
 - They will be unpaid roles and members would be expected to interface with other stakeholders to ensure all views are represented.
 - Les Walton had agreed to be interim chair to July.

- Peter felt very strongly that the group should be made up of strong members who will have an impact and that it should not be seen as a 'talking shop'.

Chief Executive (Paper YPLA 79b/2011)

- 5.5 Peter Lauener reported on the two Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearings he had attended with Sir David Bell since the last Board meeting.
- 5.6 PAC members had strongly supported the NAO report on special education for young people aged 16-25 and particularly the need for greater transparency on the range of opportunities, their costs and outcomes. On schools funding, the initial focus of the NAO report had been on local authority maintained schools funding but the PAC had shown considerable interest in how responsibilities and accountability for securing value for money would change as the number of Academies grew.
- 5.7 It had been noted that LAs had received some criticism from PAC members in the hearing on special education. Peter stressed the commitment within the DfE and YPLA to co-create with LAs systems for learners with learning difficulties and/or difficulties. The LGA has since responded to the Committee on the views expressed.
- 5.8 Peter gave a brief update on transition and reported that he was in his final week of carrying out site visits. These had been well received by staff and had given them the opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns. He is also starting to spend more time in Partnerships for Schools to understand the business so that he is ready to take on responsibilities from 1 April 2012.
- 5.9 Neil Flint updated the Board on Academies issues. This was debated further in the Audit and Risk Management Committee item.

Item 6. 2012-13 Funding Statement (Paper YPLA 80/2011)

- 6.1 The Statement was published on 13 December after clearance from Ministers. Sue Baldwin recapped on the process the executive had taken to develop the Statement and commended YPLA staff and DfE colleagues for their effort in producing it.
- 6.2 Members agreed that the tone and clarity of the document were much improved from last year.
- 6.3 The significant headline for providers is the additional year of transitional protection which was welcomed by all members. Also well received are:
- additional numbers to allow for raising the participation age;
 - additional protection for success rates turbulence;
 - protection of funding for the disadvantaged

Item 7. Simplification (Paper YPLA 81/2011)

- 7.1 The paper detailed the early action agreed by Lord Hill to reduce the audit burden on colleges. The Board welcomed the approach and discussed the risks involved in stripping out too much audit. They advised the executive to develop the action plan within a framework of principles that would mitigate such risks.
- 7.2 Members also asked the executive to consider the question “how will we measure success?” and build into the plan any feedback process to answer this question that would involve work with providers.

Action: Sue Baldwin

Item 8. 2011-12 Bursary Allocations (Paper YPLA 82/2011)

- 8.1 The Board received an update on the 2011/12 process and implications for 2012/13 and considered what could be achieved before its final meeting in March 2011.
- 8.2 The DfE are planning to carry out an evaluation of the bursary scheme and the contract will be issued in January 2012. A meeting will be set up with the contractor, DfE and YPLA prior to the 31 March and the EFA will be represented on the steering group from 1 April.
- 8.3 The Board supported the suggestion that the successful candidate might be invited to come to the March Board meeting if the agenda permitted.

Action: Sophie Hume-Wright

- 8.4 Board members also offered support for the evaluation process including using the online panel and accessing groups of young people who are not in education, employment or training.

Item 9. Audit and Risk Management Committee (Paper YPLA 83/2011)

- 9.1 The Committee had noted the NAO management letter which had followed the unqualified accounts for 2010/11 and commended the executive for this significant achievement.
- 9.2 The Committee reported however that the number of red or amber/red risks remains high and highlighted concern that some advised actions from previous audits were still outstanding with no action taken by the relevant SRO. The Committee has asked for these to be urgently reviewed and either dropped if overtaken or implemented in due order, with the SRO attending the Committee to explain any reason why there was delay in implementing changes that were needed.
- 9.3 The Board discussed the update given on the Academies calculation process and in particular the action taken to support the programme as a whole. This includes reshaping the YPLA and a significant amount of investment in systems development to increase the amount of automated activity in funding Academies.

- 9.4 The Committee will hold a one topic session on the Academies programme at their meeting in January that will document what issues have been successfully dealt with, what issues are in hand and what issues may be expected in the future, so that all pressures on this programme are considered.
- 9.5 The Board discussed the reputational risks to both the YPLA and the Government if this programme is not perceived to be successful and discussed the positive impact that better communications would have on the programme.
- 9.6 The Board agreed that more resource would be helpful to:
- work with partners to co-create the systems;
 - seek Academy feedback;
 - increase consultation/communication flow with membership bodies; and
 - support the distribution of messages from the centre.
- This was an area where Board members would also be happy to assist.
- 9.7 The Board agreed that it would be useful to include an item on the agenda at the full Board meeting in January to look at the communications capacity within the YPLA, customer service and feedback.

Action: Sophie Hume-Wright

Item 10. Organisational Development and Remuneration Committee (Paper YPLA 84/2011)

- 10.1 A paper was tabled for information.

Item 11. Any other business and meeting review

- 11.1 There was no other business.
- 11.2 The Chair stressed the importance of focusing on our capacity, communications and customer service in the next three months to ensure a smooth transition to the EFA.
- 11.3 Thanks were again given to the Board for their offers of help for communication and engagement.

Actions from the December Board Meeting

Item	Action	Lead	Status
7	Include in the simplification plan a framework of basic principles. Build in action for providers to collect data if required for the evaluation.	Sue Baldwin	

8	Invite the successful bursary evaluation contractor to the March meeting to discuss the evaluation.	Sophie Hume-Wright	
9	Include an item at the January Board for communications.	Sophie Hume-Wright	January meeting