

# MINUTES

## INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

Meeting title:	Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board
Meeting date:	10 May 2023
Protective marking:	Official
Board members present:	Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE (the Chair); Dr Kate Barclay; Dayle Bayliss; John Cope; Jennifer Coupland (JCou); Jessica Leigh Jones MBE; Dame Fiona Kendrick; Sir Robin Millar CBE; Neil Morrison; Malcolm Press CBE; Bev Robinson CBE (via teleconference).
IfATE officials present:	Beth Chaudhary, Strategy Director (BC); Dr Rachel Cooper, Strategy Director (RC); Rob Nitsch CBE, Delivery Director (RN); Kristofer McGhee, General Counsel and Board Secretary (KM); Avril Cooper, HR Director (AC); David Wilson, Chief Financial Officer (DW); Jonathan Mitchell, Deputy Director Portfolio & Partnerships (JMi) (items 7 and 8); Head of Communications (item 7); Senior Portfolio Manager (item 7); Anna West, Deputy Director Simpler Skills System (AW) (item 9); Paul Dowse, Deputy Director Digital & Analytical Services (PD) (item 10); Head of Strategy and Quality Assurance (item 10); Head of Governance.
Other stakeholders present:	Peter Mucklow, DfE Director of Apprenticeships (PM); Kiera Harper, DfE Director of Professional and Technical Education (KH) (via teleconference). Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) student (item 4).
Apologies:	Sir Peter Estlin, board member.

### **Item 1. Welcome and declarations of conflict of interest**

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed board members and participating officials to the meeting.
2. The Chair asked board members whether they had any new declarations of conflict of interest to make. All board members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests) then it must be raised at the outset of the relevant meeting which deals with the issue giving rise to the actual or potential conflict. No new declarations were made.

### **Item 2. Minutes and actions from the last meeting**

3. The board agreed the minutes from the last meeting, held on 23 March 2023 and the minor amendments made to the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023. The board reviewed the action log, noting the 8 actions which remained open, and the progress made.

### **Item 3. CEO report**

4. Jennifer Coupland (JCou) presented the CEO report and highlighted six apprenticeships which had been given royal endorsement for their sustainability credentials and contribution towards creating a low carbon economy in the context of the coronation. The board welcomed this positive announcement and that IfATE is continuing to seek opportunities to raise its profile.
5. JCou also highlighted the ongoing work regarding Level 3 qualifications. Awarding organisations have been asked to register their interest through a series of engagement exercises. Following this engagement, IfATE expects to receive a significant number of submissions for approval. The board sought confirmation that this development continues to align to the qualification reform agenda. JCou explained that, in time, this approach will lead to a more streamlined qualification offer, reducing proliferation and better coverage of the skills needed across all sectors and routes.
6. The board requested further detail on apprenticeship numbers. PM gave details of the number of starts for apprenticeships. PM clarified DfE's focus is shifting to the number of apprenticeships completed to evidence value for money.

### **Item 4. Learner story**

7. The board welcomed a student completing a L4 Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in Applied Computing. The student provided an account of how he came to be studying the HTQ and explained some of the challenges of being in employment whilst studying. The student also emphasised the benefits to both him and his employer regarding the connectivity between his job and the qualification.
8. In response to a question on how IfATE could assist, he suggested making careers information and guidance more generally available and clearer information on how to gain skills to get into the workplace through on the job learning and development. The board thanked the student for sharing his experiences and wished him success with his future career.

## **Item 5. Corporate risk update**

9. Jennifer Coupland (JCo) presented the corporate risk update setting out strategic risks and the underlying subsidiary risks. The board requested that the risk relating to employer confidence be widened to include employee/learner confidence. The board also asked for officials to consider including a risk regarding the awarding organisation market.
10. The board requested minor changes to the corporate risk update for the next quarterly update to the board at its July meeting.

## **Item 6. Finance update**

11. David Wilson (DW) summarised IfATE's year to date financial performance and re-confirmed IfATE's 2023-24 budget. The board questioned what impact any potential pay award would have on the budget. DW explained no decision had been made regarding the staff pay award yet. DW acknowledged that if the actual pay award exceeds the forecasted pay award, this will have an impact on IfATE's budget.
12. DW confirmed the Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) project remains on track to meet the required timescales. The Governance team has organised a call for board members to raise any questions they may have ahead of the ARA being laid before Parliament.

## **Item 7. IfATE brand strategy plan**

13. JCo introduced the item, joined by Jonathan Mitchell (JMi) and Phil Scullion, and set out how officials had worked on the brand strategy following the direction the board had given previously. IfATE had commissioned research activity which had evidenced some positive data on employers' awareness of IfATE and its role. The proposal is to procure external consultants to deliver the aspiration that stakeholders understand IfATE's role and that they feel able to trust IfATE and its products.
14. The board discussed how IfATE can ensure its brand message effectively reaches its wide range of stakeholders, from learners and employers to awarding organisations and training providers. The board also considered the success metrics to determine the success of a brand awareness campaign and asked officials to consider on a practical level how an increased brand awareness could impact IfATE.
15. The board were keen for whichever external consultants were appointed to truly understand IfATE and its unique position in the skills landscape. The board approved the requests in the paper and asked for the project be treated as a priority. They requested an update at the July board meeting. The board asked for a full outcome to go to the September meeting, so they could consider the output, enabling this to contribute to November's strategy event.

## **Item 8. Performance scorecard and measures**

16. Jonathan Mitchell (JMi) introduced the item, presenting the proposed performance measures as set out in the paper for the financial year 2023-24. The board welcomed the proposed measures. The board questioned how 'net zero' and sustainability would be embedded and asked for a roadmap and proposed pipeline. Beth Chaudhary (BC) confirmed IfATE's published Innovation Strategy set out clear and measurable actions and

these could be included within the performance measures. The board were keen to ensure IfATE garnered employer support in this area. Rachel Cooper (RC) suggested, and the board agreed, for a deep dive session on IfATE's work on 'net zero'.

17. The board approved the measures and the Chair asked for any additional feedback to be given to officials directly.

#### **Item 9. Simpler skills system draft publication and launch plans**

18. Anna West (AW) presented the item and talked the board through the key content. AW confirmed there would be a launch event at the House of Lords on 13 June.
19. The board highlighted the need for key deliverables and for officials to have a clear view of what success would look like, and for the report to reach and be understood by its intended audiences. The board sought assurances that SMEs would be appropriately represented in the report. AW confirmed that the content regarding SMEs would be reviewed ahead of publication.
20. The board were keen to impress on officials the need for the report to be clear and succinct to maximise its impact. A key outcome of the report was to ensure employers and learners understand IfATE's offer. This should be explicitly drawn out so all stakeholders can recognise IfATE's role in developing high-quality products. The board expressed an appetite to include learner journeys within the report to show how IfATE's products dovetail to support progression and career paths.
21. This led the board to discuss other products and initiatives such as skills bootcamps and funding for skills, more generally. PM offered to hold a session on skills funding and the levy for board members which board members welcomed.

#### **Item 10. Digital strategy update**

22. Paul Dowse (PD) gave an update on progress regarding IfATE's digital strategy since the board's November meeting.
23. The board requested and received assurance that IfATE's proposed strategy aligns with DfE's digital strategy. The board agreed with the recommendation to progress the digital strategy with the preferred option given in the paper as being the correct approach for IfATE. The board recognised the scale of the project and the associated risks and asked for digital strategy to be a standing item at IfATE's Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) with an accompanying 'roadmap'.
24. The board also welcomed a recommendation for IfATE to establish a programme board to have oversight of the implementation of the strategy. The board requested two board members to sit on the programme board to provide independence and agreed which two members this would be. PD confirmed he would develop the programme board and share details with the board.

#### **Item 11. Annual refresh of governance framework and committee Terms of Reference**

25. Kristofer McGhee (KM) presented the paper and sought the board's response to the

questions posed in the paper regarding minor changes to the schemes of delegation and the terms of reference for the board committees. KM explained that in all cases the changes were proposed to reduce any potential administrative burden on the board. The board agreed with all proposals put forward in the paper. The board discussed the importance of environmental, social and governance (ESG) matters and asked that thought be given as to how ESG could be incorporated into the board and its committees.

#### **Item 12. Matters arising from the papers for information**

26. The board requested a document which set out future committee meeting agenda items to give increased sight to board members who do not sit on those committees.
27. The Chair confirmed that IfATE's strategy event would be held on 14 and 15 November. Board members should expect an invitation imminently.

#### **Item 13. Any other business**

28. The board asked for changes to the format of data shared with the board. RN confirmed that this was possible and board members could expect to see changes at the next meeting in July.
29. The Chair requested whether it was possible for the board to learn more regarding the awarding organisation and provider markets. PM confirmed he would speak with DfE's provider unit to establish how information could be shared with board members.

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