

Minutes

Date	2 March 2011
Subject	<i>the information authority board</i>
Location	St. Mary's Guildhall, Bayley Lane, Coventry CV1 5RN
Time	10.00am to 1.00pm
Security classification	PUBLIC

Present	Board members and alternates: Jon Collis (ALP); Ruth Curry (BIS); Sue Davies (DfE) (alternate); Mario Ferelli (HEFCE); Julian Gravatt (AoC); Geoff Hall (Chairman); Helen Jones (Ofqual) (alternate) Caroline Kempner (YPLA); Caroline Miller (Newcastle City Learning); Paul Moore (Ofsted) (alternate); David Pye (LGA); Robert Spano (GoSkills); Stuart Vickers (Skills Funding Agency) (alternate) Presenters: Pete Ashton (<i>the information authority</i>); Leighton Ernsberger (Skills Funding Agency); John Perks (<i>the information authority</i>); Rich Williams (The Data Service) Others: Anne Fessi (<i>the information authority</i>); Selvy Kasparis (<i>the information authority</i>); Ian Thomson (BIS)
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Apologies	Apologies were received from: Emma Cochrane (Ofqual); Jude Hillary (DfE); Julie Nugent (Skills Funding Agency); Rob Pike (Ofsted); Ian Pryce (Bedford College)
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Item 1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 Geoff Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed those who had sent their apologies.

Item 2. Minutes of the last two board meetings and action log

- 2.1 The board approved the minutes of the 01 December 2010 meeting.
- 2.2 The board also approved the minutes of the 28 January 2011 meeting.

2.3 John Perks provided updates on the action log, which was amended accordingly.

Item 3. Matters arising

3.1 There were no matters arising.

Item 4. Update on the strategic replatforming of data collection systems project

4.1 Rich Williams, Head of the Data Service, presented the report and summarised the following points:

- a. The project is currently in two phases to maximise success at different stages
- b. In 2011/12 the flat file format will still be available for training providers who are not ready for XML
- c. The importance of communicating to training providers that the On Line Data Collection (OLDC) portal will not collect information in flat file and therefore all providers will use the desktop LIS conversion tool
- d. The move from the Learning Aim Database (LAD) to the Learning Aim Reference Application (LARA) is because the LAD cannot support the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).

4.2 The board was asked to note progress on this project.

4.3 Rich Williams also reported that the project is being closely managed to ensure timescales are met and contingency plans have also been considered. For example, the LAD can be modified for short-term use.

4.4 The board made the following observations:

- a. This project is on the YPLA's risk register and contingency plans have been considered
- b. There needed to be more visibility of the project milestones and reassurance that project will meet its anticipated deadlines and timescales as we reach critical stages
- c. Partners and end users of the project need to be kept involved and /or informed
- d. Communications are currently being targeted at MIS managers and whether there should be communications targeted at other levels in training providers
- e. It would be useful to have a better understanding of the 'chain of dependency' for the project in order to assess its impact
- f. A monthly summary to the board to outline progress and to highlight any concerns that should arise will be useful.

4.5 The board **noted** the developments of the strategic replatforming project and requested regular updates, particularly if there is project slippage so it can monitor progress against plan. The regularity and method will be agreed internally.

Action 03/11-01: Rich Williams to provide a regular summary to the board of progress and any risks to the timescales of this project.

Item 5. Update on the single ILR in XML

5.1 Pete Ashton presented an update on the single ILR in XML project and informed the board that the secretariat published Version 1 of the new single ILR, Version 2 of the old flat file ILR and the business rules on 28 February 2011.

5.2 Advisory groups, especially software suppliers and own software writers, have been kept abreast of developments and have been invited to various meetings for this purpose. Pete Ashton also highlighted the various communication activities being planned to inform providers of the impact of the single ILR for them.

- 5.3 The secretariat has also worked closely with the Data Service to ensure the success of both projects.
- 5.4 John Perks reported that he was pleased that the team had worked to, and met, very tight deadlines and thanked the team for doing so.
- 5.5 The board was asked to comment on these projects.
- 5.6 The board made the following observations:
 - a. Consistency of approach between *the information authority* and the Data Service is important
 - b. Training will be available for end-users on interrogating systems when project implemented.
- 5.7 BIS colleagues requested sight of the single ILR in XML and the Strategic Replatforming Project communications plans.

Action 03/11-02: Anne Fessi to circulate the communications plans for the single ILR and Strategic Replatforming Project to BIS colleagues.

Item 6. Timetable for 2011/12 ILR collections

- 6.1 Pete Ashton stated that after issuing the report, he reconsidered his approach to the returns timetable. The timetable as presented to the board in the report's appendix is a composite picture and, despite appearances, no more complex than before. Some of the return dates can be rationalised through closer consultation with YPLA and Skills Funding Agency.
- 6.2 Pete Ashton therefore suggested the following approach:
 - a. Providers who send a monthly return will continue do so on the fourth working day of every month followed by a final year end return
 - b. Colleges funded by the Skills Funding Agency return data quarterly (four times a year plus a final return)
 - c. Training providers funded by the YPLA training make four returns annually
 - d. Adult and Community Learning providers align with colleges
 - e. One final hard close date for all providers. This means little change for most providers except for Adult and Community Learning providers who will send their final return two months earlier than present
 - f. OLASS return dates are still being discussed, but could be aligned with those training providers that return data monthly.
- 6.3 The board made the following observations:
 - a. Care must be taken to ensure that the new terminology is used in the new timetable
 - b. YPLA reviewed the returns timetable and now only require four returns per annum rather than the previous five returns. The Skills Funding Agency will consider whether it can also reduce the number of returns required
 - c. The Skills Funding Agency has stated that 2011/12 will be an interim year while it considers the larger scale changes needed for 2012/13
 - d. Certain organisations, like Ofsted, will want data on particular dates rather than conform to returns dates and this will need to be taken into account. There should be clarity over the status of the data used in these situations so training providers are not disadvantaged
 - e. The new timetable should be made easier to understand for the different training providers and only changes to existing arrangements need to be emphasised

- f. The different timetables should be presented in such a way so as to avoid confusion
 - g. The proposal means very little change for most providers and will be aligned with a more simplified funding stream
 - h. November final hard close dates will be useful so HEFCE can use the data
 - i. Consider student loan arrangements if rationalising data returns so as to avoid 'reinstating' the same data returns in the future
 - j. Consider 2011/12 as an interim year and 12/13 may be different.
- 6.4 The board **approved** the proposed approach at 6.2 and **agreed** the secretariat should negotiate minor changes to dates with the YPLA and Skills Funding Agency to result in a coherent and integrated timetable that avoided return dates only a few days apart.
- 6.5 The board **agreed** to approve the timetable via email as it will be disseminated to the sector by 31 March 2011.

Action 03/11-03: Secretariat to liaise with the YPLA and Skills Funding Agency to agree a rationalised data returns timetable, which will be disseminated to the sector by 31 March 2011.

Item 7. Update on the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF)

- 7.1 Leighton Ernsberger presented an update of the QCF and stated that its aims are to simplify the system for confirming qualifications available for public funding, simplify the funding system, enable greater flexibilities at provider level to determine priorities and meet demand, increase emphasis on co-funding by learners and employers and continuing to work on the Personal Learning Record (PLR) information, advice and guidance.
- 7.2 The board was asked to comment on the update and proposed future plans.
- 7.3 The board made the following observations:
- a. Awarding organisations will be more engaged when the QCF can be shown to be an effective tool when used by awarding organisations already engaged in the process
 - b. Time-based categorisation is not useful for learners, only training providers, and therefore not part of the PLR
 - c. The single set of rules will mean that there is no additional burden on providers
 - d. QCF is also working with Ofsted on some aspects such as information, advice and guidance
 - e. The number of fields on the funding calculation will be limited.
- 7.4 The board **noted** the update on the QCF.

Item 8. Secretariat report

- 8.1 John Perks presented the secretariat report and highlighted the following items:
- a. The revised work plan and performance criteria, which have been updated to reflect current government priorities
 - b. The board supported the secretariat's recommendation to add two new codes to the Programme Entry Route field subject to a robust definition for pre-apprenticeship training being provided. This definition (now called Access to Apprenticeships) has been received and these progression routes can now be monitored via the addition of a new code to Field A16

- c. It was agreed at the extraordinary board meeting on the 28 January 2011 that a high-level meeting should be arranged between NAS and *the information authority* in order to clarify processes and to assist NAS with future engagement. This meeting will be initiated at *the information authority* Chairman's convenience
 - d. The change request to monitor learners undertaking Foundation Learning as a progression route to full Level 2 or similar has not been progressed as the secretariat is awaiting policy confirmation from BIS
 - e. 704 of 705 providers returned their F05 return by the deadline. The remaining provider informed the Data Service that they would not be returning an F05. Although the data quality appears to have dropped from F03 and F04 standards, this is because the year-end standards are more stringent than in-year returns
 - f. Terms of reference for the Data Quality Board have been approved and adopted by the Data Quality Board. The Data Quality Board has also asked for additional work to be undertaken on the validation of the ULN
 - g. The secretariat aims to adopt Information Standards Board (ISB) standards where possible.
- 8.2 The board is asked to comment on and approve the new work plan and performance criteria and note the updated terms of reference for the Data Quality Board. As the report was circulated late, the board did not have an opportunity to properly review the documents.
- 8.3 Board members will comment on the work plan and Data Quality Board terms of reference directly with the secretariat and they will be considered at the next board meeting.
- 8.4 The board **noted** the developments in Access to Apprenticeships, the intention to meet with NAS to discuss engagement, the way forward on foundation learning, the successful hard close of F05 for learner responsive returns, the updated terms of reference of, and work requested by, the Data Quality Board, and the ISB update.

Action 03/11-04: Board to comment on the terms of the reference of the Data Quality Board and feed back to the secretariat.

Action 03/11-05: Board to comment on the secretariat's work plan and the performance criteria and feed back to the secretariat for discussion at the next board meeting in June.

Item 9. Date of next meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting of the board will take place on Wednesday 15 June 2011, with further details to follow.

Meeting chair	Geoff Hall
Minute taker	Selvy Kasparis
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