 Report No: SLAB/2021/43

Agenda Item: **09**

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| **Report to:** | The Board |
| **Meeting Date:** | 6 December 2021 |
| **Report Title** | Board Effectiveness |
| **Report Category** | For Discussion |
| **Issue status:** | Business as usual |

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| **Written by:** | Sarah Lynchehaun, Corporate Policy Officer and Andrew McIntosh, Corporate Support Manager |
| **Director responsible:** | Graeme Hill |
| **Presented by:** | Andrew McIntosh |
| **Contact details:** | McIntoshan@slab.org.uk |

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| **Link to Board or Committee Remit** |
| The Board has responsibility for assessing its own performance. |

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| **Delivery of Strategic Objectives** | |
| Select the Strategic Objective(s) relevant to the issues | 1. We deliver a high quality user focussed service 2. We embed ways of working across the organisation that enhance the quality, consistency and transparency of our decisions and delivery 3. We engage with users and delivery partners across the legal aid and justice system to inform good design of our system and services |

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| **Publication of the Paper** |
| This paper is suitable for publication. |

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| **Previous Consideration** | |
| **Meeting** | **Detail** |
| 14 December 2020 | The Board considered its effectiveness against set performance indicators and further action required.  Members **noted** and supported the action points proposed in the paper. |

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| **Report** |

**Background**

1. An important part of Board and Committee governance is for a Board to assess its effectiveness. The effectiveness tool presented here should enable the Board to identify areas where there is scope for SLAB to improve support to Board Members, and to explore Board Members’ perceptions of the effectiveness of SLAB, the Board as a body and their own role within the Board.
2. This paper presents the board effectiveness tool that has been completed following an assessment of comments made by members in discussions with the Executive or trough performance appraisals. It also relies on an assessment of board support activity by the Chief Executive’s Office.

**The Board Effectiveness Tool**

1. The Board effectiveness tool, categorises the Board’s performance in accordance with the following performance areas:

* Purpose and Strategic Direction
* Appointments
* Knowledge development
* Understanding the role
* Working Together
* Constructive and Effective Scrutiny
* Developing Capability;
* Continuous Improvement
* Administration

1. The above performance categories have each been assigned key performance indicators which are used to measure the functioning of the Board against each of these performance categories. Evidence is then collated to demonstrate how the KPIs have been achieved against each of the performance categories and then the appropriate actions are determined and taken forward to be discussed and implemented.
2. This year’s assessment tool is at **Appendix 1**.

**Proposed action**

1. The assessment tool shows that the operation of the Board and its membership continues to be of a good standard.
2. They key area for improvement, and which is an outstanding action point from the last assessment, is how to improve the ongoing training of board members and ensure that they are kept up to speed with relevant issues to ensure they can contribute to the fullest extent.
3. Induction level training is easily resourced from within the CEO office and has been reviewed in the past 12 months, based on feedback from members, to make it less intensive. However, board members have requested, on a number of occasions, more specific training/insight in relation to finance, operational processes, and justice sector developments and would welcome briefings in relation to changes in the law and parliamentary updates which directly impact on the work of SLAB.
4. Attached at **Appendix 2** are proposals for how a training plan might look. This is based on a range of different models of delivery. It proposes utilising technology to deliver briefings online and through the use of pre-recorded material. This is something we have used infrequently up until now.
5. Key new features would include a monthly bulletin which CEO could manage. It would also involve the highlighting of key issues that might be appropriate to provide briefings on. These could be done via a number of different methods – from a traditional pre-board presentation or written briefing to drop in Teams meetings and pre-recorded video briefings.

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|  | **Governance Links** |
| 1 | **Finance and Resources**  n/a |
| 2 | **Risk**  This work contributes to mitigating a functional risk we have of there being a failure in board and committee governance. |
| 3 | **Legal and Compliance**  N/A |
| 4 | **Performance**  This is directly linked to the measurement of performance. |
| 5 | **Equalities Impact**  Diversity of the Board is a performance measure in the effectiveness tool. |
| 6 | **Privacy Impact and Data Protection**  N/A |
| 7 | **Communications and Engagement**  N/A |

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| **Conclusion and next steps** |
| Members are asked to note and comment on the report as necessary. |

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| **Appendices/Further Reading** |
| Appendix 1: Board effectiveness tool  Appendix 2: Proposed training plan |