



Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Company number: 2693163

Minutes of Meeting of Board of Governors of Westminster Foundation for Democracy Committee Room Q, Portcullis House on 29 November 2018

Present: Richard Graham MP (Chair)
Rushanara Ali MP (Vice Chair)
Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Patrick Grady MP
Andrew Rosindell MP
Sue English
Simon Walker
Mark Babington
Anthony Smith (CEO)

In attendance: Romana Janku (Board Secretary), Tom Warwick and Jennifer Upton (Project Consultants, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Task Force leading Tailored Review of WFD), Shannon O'Connell, WFD Senior Gender Advisor

1. Apologies

- Thomas Hughes
- Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, MP
- Louise Collings, WFD Head of Finance

2. Declarations of interest

No declarations of conflict of interest

3. Matters arising

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were approved without amendment.

Anthony clarified that Richard Graham, Margaret Hodge and Jeffrey Donaldson will not be joined by Rushanara Ali for the visit to Bahrain and that the final confirmation is subject of the outcome of the internal review after the elections in Bahrain.

4. CEO's Report

Anthony noted the outstanding success of the conference of women MP's held in the House of Commons on 8 November. Rushanara said that this was exactly the kind of activity that WFD should be supporting. We should consider how to sustain the relationships made at the event, and the possibility of repeating the event in another country. She asked for the video of the event to be made available and used in WFD communications materials.

Anthony presented the paper on a WFD Reserves Policy. The Board noted that this issue was under discussion with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

On the question of political party engagement with the Board, Governors agreed with the proposed approach. This led to discussion of the specific role of PPOs when they attend meetings, including the PQC. The Board agreed with Sue that the mandate of the Board Committees should be reviewed in order to clarify this.

Action Point 1: Anthony to clarify the Terms of Reference of Programme Quality Committee (PQC) and in particular the role of Political Party Officers

Action Point 2: WFD Communications team to develop short video clip of the Women's conference

5. Report of Programme Quality Committee (PQC) meetings

Sue English presented the report of the last two Programme and Quality Committee meetings held on 13 September and 19 November 2018. The Board agreed the following action points:

Action point 3: Anthony to compile note for Richard Graham to use with Ministers with examples explaining the difficulty in obtaining visas for participants in WFD programme activities.

Action point 4: Anthony to outline the process for opening programmes in the new countries for discussion by the Board.

Action point 5: Once developed, Anthony to present the Value for Money Framework and how WFD evaluates VFM in relation to DFID and FCO

6. Programmes:

WFD Gender Mainstreaming

Shannon O'Connell, WFD Senior Gender Adviser, presented the Report that she had prepared on gender mainstreaming within WFD. This included material on the gender pay gap in WFD. The Board warmly welcomed the report and the findings on the gender pay gap, which is significantly below the average level in the civil service. The Board asked Anthony to provide annual reports on this covering country office staff if possible, and to provide information on the pay gap in terms of ethnicity of WFD staff.

Action Point 6: WFD to provide annual reports on the gender pay gap and, if possible, to include also country offices level and analysis regarding ethnicity.

Myanmar

Anthony updated the Board on recent developments and introduced the confidential paper that described possible scenarios and programme options. He proposed that WFD should remain engaged in Myanmar given the long-term nature of the democratic transition. If the Board agreed, then he also proposed that the future programme

should be shaped in consultation with the FCO and DFID in order to reflect lessons learned so far and opportunities to accelerate change.

Richard noted that he and Rushanara had reviewed the position with the FCO, including efforts to ensure accountability of all concerned for the atrocities committed. Following discussion, the Board decided that WFD should remain engaged in Myanmar in order to maximise the chances of transition to democracy. The Board also agreed that WFD should complete the present programme while discussing a possible future programme with the FCO and DFID. In completing the present programme, the Board decided that WFD should avoid the deployment of active parliamentarians to Myanmar.

Action point 7: Anthony to keep the Board informed of significant events related to the Myanmar programme including plans for the future programme.

DRC: the Board took note of the written update provided. Majda El Bied, Deputy Regional Director had been deployed to the DRC to lead on delivery of an EU-funded programme implemented in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and NDI, and the completion of a DFID- funded programme.

7. Report on Audit and Risk Committee (ARC)

The Board welcomed Mark Babington's appointment as the new Chair of the ARC, and thanked Thomas Hughes for his service in that role. Mark reported on the last meeting, held on 29 October 2018. The highlights included the review of the internal audit plan, routine review of the management accounts, and progress on the Corporate Risk register and related Sub Risk Registers. In conclusion, Mark reported that there were no issues that needed to be escalated.

Mark then noted that the government's preparations for the next spending review and suggested that WFD should be providing input to help provide clarity about future funding.

8. Quarterly Progress Report

Anthony introduced the quarterly progress report. The Board welcomed the improvements in presentation of the information covering the overview of Resources, Impact and Staffing and Operations.

Anthony presented the Reputational Risk paper, which had been discussed in draft by the ARC. Sue English suggested greater attention be given to safeguarding, and Mark Babington suggested reviewing WFD's crisis management capabilities.

Action Point 8: Anthony to ensure that the Reputational Risk paper includes specific reference to safeguarding and to send the reviewed version in advance of the next meeting for update.

9. Relations with FCO

Anthony presented the paper on Relations with the FCO, noting the need to refresh our strategic relationship. The Board agreed and asked him to propose some objectives for taking forward in 2019.

Action Point 9: Anthony to propose an approach to updating WFD’s strategic relationship with the FCO.

Tom and Jennifer presented the emerging findings of the Tailored review and thanked WFD Governors for their contributions to the process. The headline from the review was that there continued to be a strong need for the work that WFD does – arguably the need was stronger than ever. The review was also concluding that the political party support also remained important. The report would make recommendations on the relationship with the FCO, and on some relatively minor management issues.

Governors gave feedback on a range of points, including the importance of political engagement in order to promote political change, and FCO management of Board recruitment and induction.

Tom welcomed the feedback and outlined the likely next steps before publication of the report, probably in the new Year.

10. Any Other Business

Anthony informed the Board of the appointment of Chris Lane, Director of Operations and the Board approved Antony’s intention to appoint Chris as WFD’s Company Secretary.
