Paper 3: EdTech Leadership Group: Proposed work plan

<u>**Purpose**</u>

The EdTech Leadership Group (ELG) met for the first time on 3rd June. The group agreed that their work should focus on <u>specific</u> EdTech issues in order to drive tangible progress.

This note seeks to take account of the discussion and proposes areas where the group can either lead or advise on and acknowledges key themes which should run throughout the work led by both the DfE and the ELG. It also notes areas that we have currently 'parked' – either because there is already activity being undertaken in the DfE or because of capacity constraints, in which case we propose that these are revisited at a later date.

It's proposed, as suggested in the Strategy, that the ELG will produce a pact/agreement by the end of year which includes commitments to support the work that DfE and the ELG are leading on.

<u>**Central Themes:**</u>

1) **Focus on improving education**: all work undertaken by the group should have the ultimate goal of supporting educators and improving education.

2) **Accessibility and inclusion**: all work undertaken by the group should have a focus on accessibility and inclusion and should ensure they are factored in from the start.

   To support the 'accessibility and inclusion' theme we have formed an advisory subgroup that will help consult on work strands and key issues. They are also working to shape the work for Challenge 6 (that focuses on accessibility and inclusion) and they will feedback their work into future meetings.

3) **The educator's perspective**: all work undertaken by the group should reflect the views of a diverse range of practicing educators.

   To support 'the educator's perspective' theme, DfE will form an 'educator forum' made up of a diverse range of educators. A representative from that group will sit in the ELG to input their perspective and views.

At a minimum, working groups arising from this ELG are expected to consult with both advisory groups mentioned above and take their views and recommendations into account.

We also encourage the ELG working groups to engage with a broad range of

other users and stakeholders. When consulting with others outside of those groups, we expect ELG members to follow 'terms of engagement' that we will send out in due course.

We are also grateful to note that the following groups have welcomed engagement with us on this work:

- The Emerge convened schools and FE/HE groups focused on EdTech, chaired by Mary Curnock-Cook and Lauren Thorpe from ARK
- The Northern Alliance of Trusts, covering 8 MATs and over 160 schools

Proposed work strands:

This note splits the work strands into three areas:

1) Where the ELG are expected to lead and develop projects

2) Where the ELG are asked to input and advise on projects being led by the DfE

3) Topics to 'park' for now

Proposed areas for the ELG to lead

There are three topics where the ELG are asked to take forward specific projects – where we believe theE LG can make tangible progress to support the aims of the EdTech strategy and where industry, educators and government can deliver greater impact by collaborating.

(1) Developing plans to improve the use of technology in education settings

We frequently hear from schools that it can be difficult to know how to improve their use of technology (this is one of the messages that has come out strongly from the recent BESA roadshows, for example). There are a range of products and services in the market that help support schools, colleges and universities through this journey – from evaluation to engaging with suppliers and implementation. Feedback from establishments, however, often suggests that they don't know how to navigate what's on offer.

For example, organisations such as Jisc, SMART and ThinkIT offer advisory services; evaluation and audit tools, such as UCL Educate's, Naace Self-Review Framework, ImpactED and SELFIE, help teachers audit and evaluate the impact and use of technology.

The ELG are asked to lead a project to consider:
- What do schools/colleges/universities need to assist them with developing/continuing their tech journey (and to embed this within their strategic planning?)

- How far do existing self-evaluation/change management products/services (and those in development), go towards meeting these needs?
- How far do existing tools help schools/colleges/universities to engage with EdTech companies and the procurement journey? i.e. What should they expect from an EdTech company, in terms of accessibility, interoperability, service support etc.
- Is there commonality between all good self-evaluation/change tools? What are the essentials for effective tools?
- What types of services exist? Who are they affiliated to? What do they cost?
- What impact do existing products/services have for education providers?
- Is there a role for government/others in helping education providers understand the types of change management tools out there in order to help them to make informed choices about where they go for support?

The outcome we would like to aim towards is building a full understanding of tools and services available, a pool of evidence about need and impact, and potentially a resource for education providers to help them understand their options for how to best review their own tech needs and begin/continue their tech journey (in a way which is embedded within their broader strategic planning).

We expect this to be led by representatives from the education sector.

(3) Furthering our understanding of <u>international support models and use of EdTech</u>

Around the world countries have adopted different support models to spread effective use of EdTech and to realise its full potential.

The ELG are asked to lead a project to consider:
- What the rest of the world is doing?
- What aspects work well? What are the drawbacks / risks?
- Are there any common themes / approaches?
- What is being driven by educators, by industry and researchers?
- What can we learn? Inferences and conclusions will need to recognise any differences in school systems (e.g. the level of autonomy), though there may be some areas where we can draw more direct comparisons (e.g. use of assistive tech, infrastructure and devices, development of teachers and leaders' skills etc.).

The outcome would be a report, drawing conclusions on what can be learned from international practice, which should feed into EdTech policy development and delivery.

Proposed areas for the ELG to advise and support

There are five areas where the ELG are asked to provide advice and / or support to help ensure that the following DFE programmes achieve the best possible impact. We propose that this would involve updates on the work at ELG meetings by DfE officials to provide the opportunity to comment and influence.

(1) Demonstrator schools and colleges

The EdTech Strategy (April 2019) stated that the Department for Education would establish leading 'demonstrator' schools and colleges to exemplify how EdTech can be used to best effect, to build on existing practice within the sector and to encourage a network of peer-to-peer support.

The programme will be designed and implemented by the DfE EdTech Policy team, with the policy direction set by Ministers. The EdTech Policy team will consult regularly with the ELG on the design and implementation of this programme. Proposals will reflect feedback already provided by the ELG, including that the demonstrator programme:

1) should explore how schools and colleges are already helping other institutions well in this space
2) should link into existing support networks
3) should focus on a holistic approach to supporting change and implementation strategies (by sharing lessons learnt from their tech

journey rather than proposing others follow their exact approach)
4) could have particular areas of focus (e.g. workload, efficiency etc.) to spark interest in the overall change programme
5) should include focus on improving the use of basic tech that is already in schools as well as more innovative tech use
6) should not focus on the training of specific products or services should ensure that any 'demonstrator label' allows an institution to be badged for a defined period of (project-related) time, rather than becoming an indefinite badge.

Although Ministers will have final say on the development of the Demonstrator programme, there will be further opportunity to input into policy thinking and advice to ministers about:

   a. The selection criteria for demonstrator schools/colleges
   b. The requirements of a demonstrator school/college
   c. How to learn from and leverage existing support networks

We will also work with the group to implement the programme, including seeking the groups assistance to champion the programme and support expressions of interest from across the country.

(2) The EdTech Challenges

The EdTech strategy launched 10 EdTech challenges – a series of statements for industry and educators designed to prompt innovation and to help build the evidence base on the role tech can play in certain challenges facing the education system. The 10 challenges will be delivered through a mix of:

   a. Innovation Funds (competitions for funds) which promote tech innovation.
   b. 'Test Bed schools and colleges' – where EdTech products/services are matched with schools/colleges who wish to trial tech approaches and are supported by tailored evaluations (building the evidence base).
   c. Further research/projects to determine market and user needs and evidence of impact.

NESTA are leading on four of the EdTech challenges (formative assessment, essay marking, parental engagement and timetabling). The remaining 6 challenges will be delivered via a range of routes.

The DfE will share progress on the delivery of the challenges and will seek feedback on next steps at regular ELG meetings. NESTA will also be invited to share progress on the 4 challenges they are leading on. The ELG are asked to provide an advisory and support role to help the delivery of the challenges, including through raising awareness and championing the opportunities with tech companies, schools and colleges.

(3) An EdTech landscape analysis

The group are asked to scope a research bid to better understand the current use and state of EdTech and assistive technology in schools, colleges and universities in England. The Department has some funding to support and commission a high-quality bid, although any bid would have to first be passed by the DfE Research Board.

Currently our understanding on the use of EdTech in schools, colleges and universities is based on limited evidence.

- Our understanding on broadband availability is from Ofcom's Connected Nations Data
- BESA's annual ICT and EdTech surveys provide an overview of views, trends, spend, use and barriers in schools.
- Association of College's IT and Digital Technology Survey provides similar insights for colleges
- Jisc's Digital experience insights survey provides insights on students' expectations, experiences and use of technology in UK further and higher education
- Limited qualitative user research from internal projects in the DfE

The aim would be to develop an up-to-date picture of the state and use of EdTech and assistive technology so that we can agree a shared understanding of what the landscape looks like.

Any research bid should consider:

- What should the research cover? (e.g. infrastructure, skills, support services, spend etc.)
- What phases of education should the focus be?
- Who should the research target? What user group?
- Who should we engage?
- What methodologies should we propose?
- What scale would this have to be?
- What data and information can the LG, or other partners, contribute to this?

The bid should delve into a greater level of granularity than is currently available. We would like to ask the group to lead on development of a research bid for this research.

We would expect the group to play a role in the research by, for example, facilitating roundtables with educationalists and industry to contribute to the research.

(4) A market analysis

The group are asked to scope a research bid to better understand the current state of the UK EdTech market. The Department has some funding to support and commission a high-quality bid, although any bid would have to first be

passed by the DfE Research Board.

We would expect this project to be of interest predominantly to the ELG industry representatives.

Currently our understanding of the scale of EdTech market is based on limited evidence.

- Our understanding of the total value of the UK EdTech sector based on evidence from a sole investment firm - Benjamin Vedrenne-Cloquet, co-founder of London EdTech Week and EdTechXGlobal, and partner in IBIS Capital, an EdTech investment firm projected the value of the UK EdTech Sector to be worth £3.4bn by 2021
- Our estimates on the total value of the UK EdTech sector are based solely on information from BESA's 2018 'Member Reported Turnover 2017 and 2018; BESA EdTech Market Map': The total export value of the UK education technology sector is estimated to be around £170 million·

The aim would be to develop an up-to-date picture of the EdTech market so that we can agree a shared understanding of what the EdTech Market looks like. It would include understanding sources and magnitude of investment, where people are investing (in what areas of products/services), and employment in EdTech, at a greater level of granularity than is currently available. This would facilitate more sophisticated consideration of how the UK ecosystem could better support a growing EdTech market.

We would expect the group to play a role in leading the development of a research specification and assuming a successful research bid which is agreed by the DE research board, facilitating roundtables with industry to contribute to the research.

(5) Pursuing movement to the 'Cloud'

The DfE is interested in gaining a better understanding of the potential costs and benefits for schools in moving to the cloud and is undertaking an internal project, led by our commercial colleagues, to explore this in greater depth.

The ELG are asked to help us build the evidence base around the pros/cons/costs/benefits of moving to the cloud and to help comment on and influence the department's work in this area. The group should also help the DfE engage other individuals, outside of the ELG, particularly those in schools and colleges, who can provide a diverse range of views. Progress on the work is due to be shared with the ELG by September/October and the group will be asked to comment on next steps at this stage.

Broader issues currently beyond the scope of the group

Recognising resource constraints and the need to ensure the group can make a tangible impact, we propose focusing on the areas outlined in this paper

above. Inevitably there are other issues which are of interest, although we propose that these are currently 'parked' to enable progress on the other areas identified. Some of these issues are also already being considered by others or are likely to be considered by the department in the future. These include:

- **Interoperability, particularly in the context of Management Information Systems** - DfE are interested in exploring this issue separately.
- **Data and data ethics** – the DfE is working with the new government Centre for Data Ethics chaired by Roger Taylor (Ofqual) on this agenda.
- **Access to broadband** – The DfE is working with DCMS to accelerate the roll-out of ultra-fast, full fibre connections to schools.
- **General evidence around the impact of technology in education** - The EEF and the Chartered College have already undertaken significant work in this space. Several organisations represented on the LG are working with the EdTech industry to promote higher standards of evidence and there was general agreement that evidence of impact is highly related to context, making generic evidence in this field problematic.
- **Artificial intelligence** – where the DfE has convened an internal group to begin understanding the further opportunities that AI technology could bring in education.

Where and when appropriate, key issues from the areas above will be brought to the group for discussion.

For discussion:

1) Does the ELG agree with the following?

    (a) The Central Themes (page 1)
    (b) The proposed work strands:
        a. for the ELG to lead:
            I.   Developing plans to improve the use of technology in education settings

            III.   Furthering our understanding of international support models and use of EdTech

        b. for the ELG to advise and support:
            I.   Demonstrator schools and colleges
            II.   The EdTech Challenges
            III.   An EdTech landscape analysis
            IV. A market analysis
            V.   Pursuing movement to the 'Cloud'

2) How would the leadership group like to take projects forwards?