



Society of Operations Engineers

## SOE – Position Statement: Governance and Transparency Update

### September 2024

#### Introduction

Following significant changes in personnel on the SOE Trustee Board and Head Office, we believe this is an opportune moment to update you on our progress over the past year. Effective governance and transparency are the cornerstones of any successful organisation and are essential to maintaining the integrity of our Society.

This position statement outlines our approach to governance and transparency within the SOE, it details the steps we have already taken to enhance our governance structures, ensure greater transparency in our operations, and engage more effectively with our members. Additionally, it highlights the steps we are committed to taking as we continue to evolve.

#### Recent progress

Over the preceding months, the SOE has undertaken a series of strategic initiatives aimed at bolstering our governance practices. These efforts are part of our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of accountability and transparency within our organisation and reflect our dedication to addressing the needs and expectations of our members.

#### SOE Trustee Board

- Implementation of an Interim Chair, Governance Lead, and Interim Honorary Treasurer
- Improvement plan established and completed within the timeframe
- Refresh of relationships established with Engineering Council and Engineering UK
- Senior staff appointments
- Sector Chairs committee set up, establishing cross-sector relationships and initiatives
- Strategy 2030 – focusing on growth, Governance Board meeting monthly
- Governance and Nominations Committee reestablished
- Budget, Audit, and Risk Management Committee reestablished
- Updating the Board constitution
- Successful EGM, new Articles of Association adopted in September 2024
- Companies House filings up to date
- Undertaken GDPR Training (which has been implemented to take every 12 months), kept up to date with guidance issued to Trustees by the Charity Commission, as well as the SOE being a member of the Civil Society, ACEVO and NCVO where information on governance and other topics is shared
- We have voluntarily informed the Charities Commission about procedural errors related to the 2022 EGM and some delays in our governance filings.

#### SOE Head Office infrastructure and communications

- Re-establishing staff appraisals and training requirements, as well as full team reviews
- Updating staff policies and procedures
- Staff morale has lifted significantly, thanks to creating an internal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, making changes to the office environment, lunch and learn sessions, and regular team meetings
- Improvement to management information

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Professional Sectors of the SOE

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- IT structure functionality updated and streamlined
- Trustee board self-appraisals and training
- Monthly staff newsletter
- Implementation of a Trustee Board pack

### SOE General

- Stakeholder relationships rebuilt with Traffic Commissioners, DfT, DVSA, Logistics UK, RHA, and SMMT after a period of inactivity
- New Corporate Partners onboarded
- Establishing the STEM Ambassador working group
- PEI relationships re-established
- Navigating engineering launch guide and event
- Highly proactive in industry areas we represent
- Skills Challenge, increased participation for 2024 and a successful awards event
- Brought back the SOE Awards event
- Marketing plan established
- CPD Platform and mentoring scheme work started
- Updating the SOE website, this will be done in phases, with the first phase already underway
- Audit of all Centres' and Regions of SOE, streamlining and ensuring consistency throughout

### Looking ahead

As part of the SOE's ongoing commitment to effective governance and transparency, we have committed to implementing further improvements in the coming months. Effective governance is an ongoing process that requires continuous evaluation and adaptation therefore this list is not exhaustive.

- **Independent governance review:** We are commissioning an independent review of our governance practices. The findings and recommendations from this review will be published on the SOE's website to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Governance refresher for the Board of Trustees and senior staff:** All Trustees and senior staff members will participate in a governance refresher session. This session will help us ensure that our practices are aligned with the best standards in governance and that all of our leadership is well-equipped to continually uphold the highest ethical and operational standards.
- **Enhanced reporting systems:** We are introducing new internal systems to ensure timely and accurate reporting to the Charity Commission and Companies House. These systems will streamline our reporting processes, enhance compliance, and improve overall transparency. Our forward action plan has been developed to ensure succession within the team.
- **Member consultation on SOE Rules:** We will consult our members on the proposed new Rules of the SOE. The consultation will provide a feedback mechanism for members to voice their opinions and contribute to the shaping of our governance framework, ensuring it reflects the collective interests of our community.

Our future actions are designed to build on the progress we have already made and to address any remaining gaps in our governance framework.

If you wish to discuss any aspects of this statement further, please contact the Executive Director at SOE, Emma Thompson via email on [emma.thompson@soe.org.uk](mailto:emma.thompson@soe.org.uk).

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