

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 17 JUNE 2015

For approval

Minutes of the ninety-fifth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10 am on Wednesday, 19 May 2015 in the Radisson Blue Hotel Glasgow.

Members

- * Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- * Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- Mr J Edgar
- * Mr K McKay
- * Mr R O'Hare
- * Mr R Stewart
- * Dr P Thomson
- * Mrs S Walsh
- * Ms C Wilkinson

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Ms M Cahill
- * Mr S Davidson
- * Ms L Ellison
- Mr J McMorris
- Ms J Ross
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mr A MacRae

- * indicates present

It was recorded that Board members had convened for a private session in advance of the formal meeting of the Board.

95/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting including Mr MacRae, Head of Business Development and Customer Support who was attending in Mr McMorris's absence.

Apologies had been received from Mr J Edgar and Mr McMorris. There was no representation from the Scottish Government.

95/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

95/3 PREVIOUS MEETING**i Minutes of meeting held on 25 March 2015**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

ii Action Grid

The contents of the action were noted.

iii Workplan

The contents of the workplan for 2015 were noted.

95/4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

95/5 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman advised the Board of his recent activities. He and the Chief Executive had attended the Scottish Government Pay Forum for Chairs and Chief Executives. Mr Houston noted the challenges faced by SQA and other public bodies in terms of recruitment and retention of staff.

95/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The SSLN had been completed and the results indicated that there was no evidence of improvements. This was likely to generate significant interest. It was noted that the survey followed Scottish Government methodology, but was managed by SQA.

The Chief Executive highlighted that Cybersecurity qualifications were being developed by SQA as National Progression Awards and that this was widely welcomed at both Scottish and UK Government levels.

Social media was playing an increasingly important role in the nature of both media and public attention on the activities of SQA. Trends were being closely monitored and appropriate actions being taken. It was noted that the volume of social media traffic could escalate rapidly but that this did not necessarily correlate to the severity of the issue raised.

The visit to Malaysia had been very positive. Meetings had been held with all Centres and it was clear that SQA's quality was the main factor in winning this business from other Awarding Bodies. This was echoed in India, Brunei and Myanmar.

A meeting had been held with the Consular General of Japan who wanted to discuss the development of a Higher in Japanese. He had been advised on, and understood, the requirements of establishing a modern language that extended into the wider Education System, notably the availability of qualified teachers and demand from centres.

The Chief Executive also reported in detail on her recent engagements.

95/7 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Ms Cahill, Director of Corporate Services, presented the current status of the risk register. Ms Ellison advised of a new risk relating to the tax implications associated with contracts in Saudi and Oman that was being separately identified and escalated for consideration by the Audit Committee.

The Board noted the contents of the risk register, and looked forward to further discussion as part of the CPG Report considerations.

97/8 DELIVERING SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

i CfE Update

Dr Stewart, Director of Qualifications, presented the CfE Update, reporting on recent milestone achievements and forthcoming activities. The overall programme status remained at amber due to continued challenges with

multiple concurrent demands on staff and appointees. Internal activities were being re-prioritised internally to ensure external milestones were protected.

New assessment areas and dual running demanded additional quality checks, and Quality Assurance activities (which had focussed on December, January and May) meant that this was a particularly challenging time for staff. She highlighted that staff were routinely working long hours and at weekends to ensure milestones were met.

Dr Stewart also provided a full report on the key achievements and planned activities for May and June, and referred to the close working that was in place with Education Scotland and other partners to identify any areas where more support could be offered to teachers.

It was noted that it would be important to provide a context for the upcoming results, given the introduction of the new Higher and dual running of the current Higher. It was noted that there would be an overview provided on the SQA web site on results day in a similar manner to last year.

After discussion, the Board noted the contents of the report

ii **Report from the Certification Programme Group**

Ms Blair presented a full update on the Certification Programme Group (CPG) report, and expanded on the particular matters reported at amber status. In discussion, she drew attention to the entries profile, which had brought challenges around appointee recruitment.

It was noted that there would be a focus on improving communication channels around appointee recruitment to ensure all teachers who wished to work with SQA were contacted earlier in the academic year.

The Board was informed of the timing of next year's examination schedule and of activities underway to maximise appointee availability.

The Board was reassured that SQA was taking a very proactive approach in planning for the future.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

95/9 **FINANCE UPDATE**

i **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 31 MARCH 2015**

Ms Ellison, Director of Finance tabled and presented the current financial report to the end of March 2015.

She was pleased to report that the draft full year outturn position indicated a surplus of £0.5m, which was £0.1m adverse to the Quarter 3 forecast and was in line with the original budget position for 2014-15.

ii **QUARTER 0 FORECAST UPDATE 2015/16**

Ms Ellison presented the Quarter 0 budget position for the financial year 2015-16. The budget had been set following a similar process to 2014-15

with the organisation being challenged to deliver against a lower outturn than the bid submissions returned by the business. This approach had been successful in the previous year.

The Q0 budget reflected the latest information on candidate entry numbers and indicated that additional grant of £4.9m would be required. The Programme Grant requirement to fund specific activities requested by the Scottish Government was £14.1m. If agreed by the Board, the budget and the associated funding requirement would be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval.

Following discussion the Board approved the approach and the submission of the budget to Scottish Government.

95/10 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mr MacRae, Head of Business Development and Customer Support, provided the Board with a full and comprehensive update on the performance of business development in all key markets to the end of March 2015 and outlined the draft targets for 2015-16.

The Board noted the encouraging progress.

95/11 COMMITTEE REPORTS

i Audit Committee - 23 February

The Board noted the contents.

ii Qualifications Committee - 4 March

The Board noted the contents.

iii Accreditation Committee - 10 March

The Board noted the contents.

iv Advisory Council - 30 March

The Board noted the contents.

95/12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters raised.

95/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on Wednesday 17 June 2015.