

Minutes of the fifty-ninth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10.00am on Wednesday 4 November 2009 in the Boardroom, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith.

Members

- * Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- * Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- * Mr A Cassidy
- * Mr J Edgar
- * Mr W Gallagher
- * Prof A MacLennan
- * Mr K McKay
- * Mrs M Nicol
- * Mr G Rodgers
- Prof J Simmons
- * Mrs S Walsh

* indicates present

Officers

- * Ms M Cahill
- * Mr R Gibson
- * Ms K McCallum
- Mr J McDonald
- * Mr G Moodie
- * Ms J Ross
- * Dr G Stewart

Observers

- * Mr M McVicar, Scottish Government
- * Mr J McMorris, Head of Marketing, SQA

59/1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr McVicar from the Scottish Government and John McMorris, Head of Marketing, who was in attendance on behalf of John McDonald.

Apologies were received from Professor Simmons and Mr McDonald.

The Chairman reminded Board members that input was invited from members of the Executive on any issues that required clarification or comment in the course of the meeting.

59/2 **DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

59/3 **PREVIOUS MEETING**

i **Minutes of meeting held on 30 September 2009**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting subject to two minor typographical errors under Committee reports.

ii **Action Grid**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

59/4 **MATTERS ARISING**

58/9 iii **Trading Subsidiary Business case**

Mr Moodie reported that a meeting was scheduled with Scottish Government officials at the end of November.

Any further matters arising would be covered in the course of the agenda.

59/5 **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman opened his report to advise that future Board meetings would include dedicated timeslots to focus on important and strategic topics for SQA. He went on to update the Board on his recent SQA related engagements, which included:

- the Long Service Awards;
- a NDPB networking event on 9 October attended by non-Executive Directors from across the public sector. The focus had been to share views and experience of best practice in improving the effectiveness of boards of public bodies;
- the Star Awards, which had been a tremendously successful event that showcased the talents of candidates in every part of Scottish society;
- a meeting with Colin MacLean, where discussion took place around the Board's concerns in relation to the accountabilities of stakeholders and partners and their readiness to deliver in the implementation of CfE. Mr MacLean had recorded his appreciation of the rigorous steps SQA had taken to demonstrate its commitment to deliver on the development of the new qualifications.

59/6 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

Dr Brown referred to the contents of her report, and in supporting the success of the Star Awards, recorded a note of thanks to the SQA teams involved in organising the event.

Further to her report, she also updated the Board on:

- The recent All Staff Briefings, where she had updated staff inter alia, on the current position with Dalkeith accommodation.
- A positive meeting around vocational qualifications with the vice-Minister for Human Resources and Social Security in China.
- The forthcoming SQA Charity Ball in aid of the Yorkhill Children's Foundation. Further detail would be issued when available.

In the course of discussion, it was suggested that SQA should consider engagement with Scotland's Colleges International around work in California.

59/7 **DALKEITH ACCOMMODATION PROJECT: GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

Ms McCallum presented an update on progress with the Dalkeith Accommodation Project. This included an overview of the programme planning arrangements in place to manage delivery. The Board welcomed the update and in the course of the presentation, it was noted and confirmed that:

- Urgent and immediate works had commenced at the Ironmills Road site to restore the offices to a good condition. This was scheduled for completion by end March 2010.
- Project governance arrangements had been established and progress against milestones would be monitored by the Corporate Programme Office, and reported to the Project Board. Ms McCallum would chair the Project Board, which included representation from the Scottish Government. Contingency plans were in place to support any possible slippages.
- Robust space planning was fundamental to the project, and a questionnaire had been issued to business areas to gain an understanding of SQA's future requirements. A dedicated and experienced external appointment had been made to lead and advise on this work.
- Staff engagement continued to take place, and the Board was assured that interface with staff would be managed closely to ensure immediate communication of any decision taken by the Scottish Government.

There was some discussion around ensuring an appropriate reporting mechanism, which it was agreed would be defined as part of the overall programme planning arrangements.

59/8 **COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE: CO-OPTION POLICY**

Further to discussions at the previous meeting of the Board to formalise and establish procedures for co-opting members onto Committees, a proposed mechanism had been circulated electronically to Board members. A copy of the policy was distributed at the meeting.

Feedback had shown collective agreement and the Board approved the policy with immediate effect.

59/9 **CfE UPDATE**

i **Programme Status**

The members of the Executive Management Team presented an overview of the arrangements being put in place to manage implementation and delivery of the new qualifications. This included programme planning arrangements within SQA and those being progressed at the overall CfE Programme Board level. An update was also given on current activity within the Business Systems, Operations and Qualifications Development business areas.

It was understood that the CfE Management Board would monitor progress against an over-arching, high level programme plan. This was in the process of development and would encompass all aspects of the programme from the different partners involved.

Headed up by Mr Colin MacLean, Programme Director, the CfE Management Board would be responsible and accountable for the implementation and evaluation of the programme, identifying and ensuring actions were put in place to address any critical issues. The Board found reassurance in this and welcomed the clarity around monitoring and governance arrangements to ensure programme effectiveness.

A wide-ranging discussion took place, during which it was agreed that the existing strengths of Critical Success Factor reporting should be developed to facilitate a reporting mechanism to the SQA Board. There was also a recognition that effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was of central importance, and as part of the overall programme plan, SQA was in early dialogue with LTS around the development of high level CPD plans.

In summary of the discussion, the Board:

- Strongly recommended that SQA clearly articulate and communicate its role in the delivery of CfE.
- Believed it was essential for the overall programme to evaluate and appreciate the current economic climate and environment where this work would be delivered.
- Agreed that the development and integration of IS systems was critical to the success of CfE implementation.

The Board also suggested that an independent audit of the overall programme should be undertaken and that this recommendation should be communicated to the Scottish Government.

The Board requested an update on progress for the next meeting.

ii **Deloitte Report**

Dr Brown advised that the feedback from Board members had been communicated to Deloitte and that the revised version of the report was awaited. This would be issued to the Board on receipt.

The Board endorsed the proposal to provide the Scottish Government with the final report for information.

59/10 **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Board noted the business development report for international and UK-based commercial and development activities for the period September 2009.

59/11 **QUALIFICATIONS DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Dr Stewart outlined the programme of work currently underway in qualifications, detailing those under development, and actions that had been taken where any slippages had occurred. This was noted by the Board.

59/12 **REPORT FROM CERTIFICATION PLANNING GROUP**

The Board noted the update on certification planning, and that activity was progressing on schedule. Ms McCallum advised that SQA had detailed contingency plans to deal with disruption to normal procedures in the event of a swine flu pandemic. Together with the Scottish Government, a Contingencies Planning Group had been recently established and was closely monitoring the ongoing swine flu situation. To date, the group had published and issued advice and guidance on best practice to support Centres and parents.

59/13 **FINANCIAL REPORT 6 MONTHS YTD**

Mr Moodie presented a summary of the income and expenditure accounts for the year to 30 September 2009 and provided the Board with an assurance that the full year financial plan was on track. It was noted that the delay in a substantial cash receipt was attributable to timing issues, and work was underway to address and resolve this.

59/14 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i **Qualifications Committee held on 25 September 2009**

The draft minutes of the last meeting of the Qualifications Committee were enclosed and noted.

ii **Advisory Council held on 9 October 2009**

The minutes had not been available for inclusion in the Board papers. Prof MacLennan provided an overview of the business covered.

59/15 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was agreed that the Chairman would invite the Cabinet Secretary to a meeting of the Board in early 2010.

59/16 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 9 December in Esk/Forth, the Optima Building, Glasgow