

## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 6 OCTOBER 2010

For approval

Minutes of the sixty-fourth meeting of the Board of Management held at 11.00am on Wednesday 18 August 2010 in the Boardroom, Ironmills Road, Dalkeith.

**Members**

- \* Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- \* Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- \* Mr J Edgar
- \* Mr W Gallagher
- \* Prof A MacLennan
- \* Mr K McKay
- \* Mr R O'Hare
- \* Prof J Simmons
- \* Dr P Thomson
- \* Mrs S Walsh
- \* Ms C Wilkinson

\* 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 D Douglas (item B64/8 only)

The Board meeting was preceded by a meeting with Mr Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning (recorded separately).

**64/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr McVicar from the Scottish Government.

A formal welcome was also extended to the three new members of the Board: Mr Raymond O'Hare, Mr Paul Thomson, and Ms Carole Wilkinson.

Apologies were received from Ms Cahill.

**64/2 SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION WITH MR RUSSELL, CABINET SECRETARY**

The Cabinet Secretary expressed support for the work of SQA and was particularly pleased with the fact that SQA was on schedule to develop the qualifications for curriculum for excellence.

Mr Russell gave an overview of the economic environment and the challenges being faced by the public sector. He indicated that his focus was on investing in Young people, Research excellence and protecting the most vulnerable.

It was agreed to have been a very useful and positive discussion, welcomed by all members of the Board. In terms of generating real added value, there was backing for the proposal to keep the momentum of this dialogue, and to extend an invitation to Mr Keith Brown for a future meeting of the Board.

**64/3 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**64/4 PREVIOUS MEETING**

**i Minutes of meeting held on 9 June 2010**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**ii Action Grid**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

**64/5 MATTERS ARISING**

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

**64/6 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman and Chief Executive had recently met with their counterparts at LTS to discuss how best to establish common ground on the shared service agenda. At this point, the Board was advised that it was likely that the meeting of the two Boards would take place on 22 November, and that Janice Ross would confirm within the week.

Recent SQA engagements had also included attendance at the Shawfair Ground Breaking Ceremony on 23 June. This PR event had received very positive media coverage and an update on progress with the relocation project was provided as a paper for noting.

**64/7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

Dr Brown referred to the contents of her report and highlighted specific areas of interest and progress. She went on to present consideration of the award of SQA's Honorary Fellowship, which recognised sustained outstanding work and commitment to education and training in Scotland. It was proposed to award the fellowship to Mr Hugh McCafferty, a committed supporter of SQA, whose work had been instrumental in driving forward SQA qualifications in the construction sector. The proposal received the unanimous endorsement of the Board.

**64/8 2010 NQ CERTIFICATION**

Derek Douglas was welcomed to the meeting.

Ms McCallum opened the discussion by outlining the complexities involved in delivering NQ certification, and commenting on the scale of activity across a number of business areas. A note of thanks was passed to all involved in the successful delivery of certification that year. She went on to provide an overview of the delivery processes, including an update on Electronic Marking Capture (EMC), data processing and MySQA.

Dr Stewart went on to provide a summary of the year's uptake figures and pass rates, followed by Mr Douglas who concluded with a summary of the media arrangements that had been in place to manage press communications and coverage throughout the examination diet.

The following was raised and noted in the course of the presentation:

- There had been a slight increase in uptake for MySQA. Work would continue in the year ahead to promote this facility to candidates and to investigate the opportunities to expand the functionality of this service.
- Discussion took place around the timing of stage 1 Appeals submissions and the Board was assured that schools were provided with the appeals processing timetable well in advance.

The Board welcomed the presentation, and found reassurance in the rigorous processes in place to support certification.

Mr Douglas left the meeting at this point.

i        **Report from Certificate Planning Group**

The Board noted the contents of the report.

64/9    **CFE UPDATE**

Dr Brown presented the update on CfE planning, including progress against milestones and the All Partner programme. The following was raised in the course of discussion:

- Following the delayed decision around Literacy and Numeracy, SQA was in the process of re-assessing its programme plans and budget forecasting.
- There was a shared concern around the issues relating to the National Assessment Resource (NAR) infrastructure and the Board was assured that this work was being monitored through a carefully managed delivery plan, which included regular testing and robust contingency plans. It was noted that the delivery of the NAR service was being taken forward in partnership between LTS, the Scottish Government and SQA. Updates were also provided in the Highlight Reports considered by the CfE Management Board. NAR would contain assessment materials developed and quality assured by SQA.
- Publication of the Curriculum Area Review Group (CARG) reports had been completed behind schedule as a result of discussion with the Scottish Government around subjects in low uptake categories. There had been no impact on the overall programme plans.
- Quality Assurance (QA) models were being developed to support the introduction of the new qualifications and engagement with stakeholders had been taking place for some time. The QA principles to underpin this work would be submitted to the Qualifications Committee in September for approval.
- Agreement for £3m funding had been given by the Scottish Government in July 2010, to support the implementation of quality assurance and moderation of assessment activities within schools and authorities.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

## 64/10 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mr McDonald presented the report for the period to 30 June 2010, highlighting the areas of slippage and objectives at red status. He also provided the Board with an overview of current activity in China, and assured members that SQA was working closely with Ministries in China and the Scottish Government to address the situation.

The Board noted the update.

## 64/11 FINANCE & CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### i Annual statement of assurance to the Board

Mr Edgar presented the annual statement of assurance, which was offered to the Board in support of its consideration of the Annual Accounts.

The statement demonstrated to the Board the close scrutiny and rigour of the auditing function, which was paramount in governance terms, and detailed the various reports and assurances that had been considered by the Audit Committee. It was noted that Audit Scotland had provided an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements of SQA for year ending 31 March 2009.

The Board noted that the internal control systems operated during the financial year had been adequate and effective, and endorsed the recommendation to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010.

### ii Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2009-10

Mr Moodie presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2009-10. This had been considered by the Audit Committee and fully endorsed for submission to the Board.

The Board formally endorsed the Annual Report and Financial Accounts for remit to the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament. The Chief Executive signed the Accounts in the presence of the Board

### iii Draft Strategic Goals for 2011-14 Corporate Plan

Mr Moodie presented the draft strategic goals for 2011-14. Last year's strategic goals had been carefully reviewed by the Executive in the light of the current economic environment and focus of Government and were considered to reflect the direction SQA should be taking to fulfil its commitments.

The Board commented that the plan should capture:

- the priorities around implementation of the new qualifications under CfE;
- the short and longer term activity that will be taken on board to address the resourcing challenges as a result of the public sector reform;
- the new Skills Strategy; and
- the proposed Green Paper on Further and Higher Education that was mentioned by the Cabinet Secretary.

It was noted that the usual engagement process with SQA's internal management team, SQA committees and the Advisory Council would commence in September, with the resultant draft coming back to the Board in October for review and comment.

iv **Financial Report to 30 June 2010**

The Board noted the Financial Report to 30 June 2010.

It was noted that the format for financial reporting had been reviewed to incorporate wider financial performance. This approach had been endorsed at the last meeting of the Audit Committee and would be implemented from the October meeting of the Board.

64/12 **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

i **Audit Committee – 11 May 2010**

A verbal update had been provided at the last meeting of the Board. The Board noted the enclosed minutes that had been approved by the Audit Committee.

ii **Advisory Council – 14 May 2010**

A verbal update had been provided at the last meeting of the Board. The Board noted the enclosed minutes that had been approved Advisory Council.

iii **Qualifications Committee – 22 June 2010**

The Board noted the draft minutes, which would be approved at the next meeting of the Qualifications Committee in September.

iv **International and Commercial Committee – 23 June 2010**

The Board noted the draft minutes, which would be approved at the next meeting of the International and Commercial Committee in September.

v **Audit Committee – 30 July 2010**

The Board noted the draft minutes, which would be approved at the next meeting of the Audit Committee in November.

vi **Advisory Council – 9 August 2010**

Prof MacLennan advised that the Advisory Council had met in the previous week, and that the minutes would be enclosed in the next set of Board papers.

64/13 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no matters raised for consideration.

## **PAPERS FOR NOTING**

The Board considered the following papers:

1      **Highlight Report on the Shawfair Relocation project**

Noted.

2      **Audit Scotland – Draft Report to those charged with Governance on the 2009-10 audit**

Noted.

## **64/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board of Management would be held on Wednesday 6 October 2010, in the Optima Building, Glasgow.