

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 5 NOVEMBER 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1pm on Thursday 10 September 2020 by video conference.

Members

- * Mr D Middleton (Chair)
- * Ms F Robertson (Chief Executive)
- * Ms E Craig
- * Ms A Davis
- * Mr S Hagney
- * Mrs J Handley
- * Dr W Mayne
- * Mr H McKay
- * Mr G Smith (from 2pm)
- * Mr R Stewart
- * Dr K Thomson

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr M Baxter
- * Mr L Downie
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Ms J Ross
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mrs D Mahmoud

Observers

Ms A Kerr, Committee Manager

* Indicates present on the call

The Chair welcomed members and thanked them for accommodating the request to convene at short notice, noting that there may be a further need to meet in such circumstances over the coming weeks as matters progress and develop.

The Chair opened the meeting by providing a brief update on the meetings of the Advisory Council, which had met on 20 August to discuss the consultations on modifications to qualifications and the examination timetable for 2021 and the Qualifications Committee, which had met on 4 September to review and discuss the proposals coming out of those consultations. He referred Board members to the report discussed by the Qualifications Committee that had been circulated to them ahead of the meeting.

The Chair then passed to the Chief Executive to provide an update on recent developments with regards to diet 2021. Discussions were continuing between Ministers and SQA, and there was broad agreement that an early decision would be advantageous to the wider system. The Chief Executive updated that colleagues were concluding work on modifications to assessment in 2021 on the basis of a central and agreed position that an exam diet would take place if at all possible. SQA had listened to the feedback from the two consultations in making changes. Any further decisions about the exam diet would be for Scottish Ministers drawing on advice, including from SQA and the forthcoming Priestley Review.

The Board thanked the Chief Executive for the update, highlighting the importance of continuity to learning and teaching and the development of contingencies for 2021. Members acknowledged the complexities of the issues being discussed and emphasised the requirement for a whole system approach.

The Board went on to discuss the resourcing and capacity implications on the organisation, noting the importance of clarity across the piece on the distinct responsibilities that lie within SQA's remit and those that lie with others.

The Chief Executive thanked the Board for their input and valuable discussion, noting that she would circulate the paper submitted to the Deputy First Minister on alternative certification arrangements which could be in place if there were an early decision to cancel the exam diet in 2021.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for her update and closed the meeting, requesting that any further comments from Board members on the papers that had been circulated should be submitted to the Corporate Office by Monday 14 September.