

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 5 NOVEMBER 2020

Minutes of the Board of Management meeting held at 12.45pm on Thursday 1 October 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
- * Mr R Stewart
- * Dr K Thomson

Officers

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

Observers

- * Ms A Kerr, SQA

* indicates present

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noting apologies from Grahame Smith and explained that the meeting had been called to allow the Chief Executive an opportunity to update the Board regarding the evolving picture around awarding 2021.

The Chair passed over to the Chief Executive who opened with an update on 2021, reporting that, following a recent meeting of CERG she had been asked by the Deputy First Minister to convene discussions with colleagues from across the system in EIS, SLS, ADES, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government to formulate a collaborative proposition for 2021. It was noted that final decisions by Scottish Ministers around 2021 would also be informed by the forthcoming Priestley Review.

The Chief Executive highlighted that a number of options were being discussed but there was growing support from stakeholders for the cancellation of the National 5 diet, to be replaced with an alternative model of certification, with support for a model of teacher estimates subject to quality assurance and a range of support and guidance. There was support for Highers and Advanced Highers to go ahead, with developed contingencies.

The position remained fluid and final decisions were for Ministers. She acknowledged that 2021 remained challenging.

The Board noted the update and agreed on the importance of remaining cognisant and clear on the core role of SQA in the Scottish Education system, with a collaborative approach from all essential stakeholders, including a key role for Education Scotland in providing senior phase support. The Chief Executive highlighted that she was in discussions with the Chief Inspector and the Scottish Government on these issues.

The Board agreed that strong communications would be important, both on the release of the Priestly review and throughout 2021.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the update, noting that the Deputy First Minister would be making an announcement in Parliament in week beginning 6 October regarding 2021 and the Board would meet again following the announcement to discuss any development and updates.