

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 5 NOVEMBER 2020**

Minutes of the Board of Management meeting held at 12.45pm on Thursday 8 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
- \* Mrs D Mahmoud
- \* Mr L Downie
- \* Mr M Baxter
- \* Mr J McMorris
- \* Ms J Ross
- Dr G Stewart

**Observers**

- \* Ms A Kerr, SQA
- \* Mr R Quinn, SQA

\* indicates present

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies from Grahame Smith. He acknowledged the change to the scheduled meeting of the Board the previous day, highlighting that related reports would be circulated to the Board by the Corporate Office for comment, approval and noting by email.

The Chair went on to summarise the purpose of the meeting, noting the materials that had been circulated to the Board from the Chief Executive preceding the meeting. Before handing over to the Chief Executive, the Chair referred to the contract recommendation for the Business World licence that had been issued for Board approval by email at the start of the week and invited Mr Downie to briefly address the points that Board members had raised prior to approving the contract award.

Mr Downie reported that a four-year agreement had been arranged with clear exit points included. During investigations into the various changes reflected in the pricing structure in comparison to the previous contract, Mr Downie highlighted that SQA had discussed with the Scottish Government who had been unable to achieve a lower price. Noting the discussion that had already taken place over email, the Board approved the contract as recommended.

The Chief Executive then provided an overview of the developments of the week and the Deputy First Minister's Statement to Parliament on National Qualifications on 7 October. An exchange of letters had taken place between the Scottish Government and the SQA, detailing arrangements. The Chief Executive highlighted the function of SQA as Scotland's national awarding body in ensuring fairness across and between schools/colleges. Further detailed planning work on the quality assurance model was underway, together with supporting guidance.

Moving on to the Priestley review, the Chief Executive drew the Board's attention to the paper circulated on 7 October and noted that the final report had been published and had informed decision making for 2021. SQA would consider the recommendations carefully and provide a response to the Scottish Government. Detailed planning was already underway on some elements, in collaboration with the system. The Scottish Government had accepted all but one recommendation.

The Review was critical of SQA across a number of areas and, while SQA would reflect on these points, the Chief Executive highlighted that a number of the report's findings were not supported by the evidence – and discussions between the Review team and SQA had been limited.

The Board thanked the Chief Executive for her update and all the work going on. It highlighted the ongoing need to communicate SQA's work effectively. It was noted that the review of the appeals system could have significant implications for SQA and the wider system.

The Chair thanked the Board for their time and for accommodating the reschedule of the meeting. Before closing, the Chair briefly noted his intention for the frequency of meetings looking forward to the end of the year and that these would be communicated to the Board by the Corporate Office when a plan had been confirmed.