

**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**B137/1.12 i**

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 18 MARCH 2021**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 10am on Wednesday 17 February 2021 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 M Baxter
- \* Mr L Downie
- \* Mr J McMorris
- \* [REDACTED]
- \* Dr G Stewart
- \* Mrs D Mahmoud

**Observers**

- \* [REDACTED], Committee Manager
- \* [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director

\* Indicates present on the call

**1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, noting no apologies had been received.

**1.11 Declaration of Any Conflicts of Interest**

There were no conflicts of interest raised in relation to the agenda.

Whilst not a conflict of interest, it was acknowledged that Dr Thomson and Mr Hagney held an interest through their positions as Heads of Centre.

**1.12 Minute of the previous meeting**

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting following the requested amendment.

**1.13 Matters Arising**

There were no other matters arising that would not be covered in the course of the agenda.

**1.2 Chief Executive Update**

The Chief Executive provided the Board with an update on the Alternative Certification Model (ACM), reporting that guidance and support materials had been published and issued to centres on 16 February.

She went on to provide an overview of next steps including the development of a sampling strategy and the approach to appeals, noting the intention to issue a consultation on the appeals process at the beginning of March.

The Chief Executive reported on ongoing engagement with the College sector, including meetings with Principals and the HNVQ working group. She noted that in addition to this, a Ministerial taskforce had been set up to address discussions around deferrals and learner journeys.

Finally, the Chief Executive reported progress on the recruitment of the two Director posts, expressing thanks to Board member Mr Stewart, who would be assisting the interview panel for the Director for Policy, Analysis and Standards.

The Board noted the update with approval and support on the position that had been reached. Members acknowledged that the Board would have the opportunity to review and discuss the appeals consultation at a future meeting ahead of its publication.

## **2 PAPERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 ACM Update**

Taken as discussed under the Chief Executive's update.

### **2.2 Awarding 2021 Delivery Assurance Update**

The Board welcomed [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director, to the meeting to present the Delivery Assurance report, noting that the position reflected in the report was accurate as of Monday 15 February and, as such, did not reflect the Parliamentary update on 16 February.

[REDACTED] reported the progress updates on the status of the project with focus on the return to green actions and was pleased to report that the overall status had improved, including the scope plan, risk status and governance rollout model.

The Board thanked [REDACTED] for the clear and concise update and discussed the benefit of collating a forward-looking timeline of the project, working back from certification. [REDACTED] agreed to develop such a timeline to include with the next delivery assurance update to the Board.

Mr Cronin left the meeting.

### **2.3 Financial Performance Report**

Mr Baxter, Director of Finance and Corporate Service, presented the Financial Performance Report, noting that a Q3 forecast had been undertaken since the last financial update to the board and the report presented showed the movement from the updated Q2 position previously reported to the Board.

Mr Baxter reported that the Q3 position had shown a further significant reduction in forecast expenditure, relating in main to the cancellation of Higher and Advanced Higher examinations confirmed in December 2020, the continued impact of school closures on anticipated quality assurance work

within the Alternative Certification Model and other associated costs and the continued impact of Covid-19 on SQA's operations.

Mr Baxter reported that finance colleagues continued to engage positively with Scottish Government and noted that the 2021-22 Budget would be brought to the Board for approval on 18 March 2021.

The Board noted the update.

## 2.4 **2021-22 Draft Business Plan**

Mr Baxter went on to present the draft 2021-22 Business Plan. Following on from the SQA Corporate Plan and Performance Framework, Mr Baxter noted that the business plan was required to include key objectives, targets, milestones, and indicators for the year immediately ahead, aligned to the National Performance Framework, and be linked to budgeting information so that, where possible, resources allocated to achieve specific objectives can be identified. The Board noted that a copy of SQA's business plan would also be provided to the Scottish Government, via the sponsor unit, prior to the start of the next financial year.

The Board welcomed the outcome driven, systems thinking direction of the plan and discussed the inclusion of some broad context around opportunities arising from the recent period and aligning the plan with the Scottish Government plan and direction of travel for recovery.

The Board discussed the importance of highlighting continued organisational progression throughout the plan and agreed that the ongoing work and delivery around fair working environment was critical in achieving other outcomes.

The Board noted that the final iteration of the document would be brought back before the Board for approval on 18 March 2021.

## **3 PAPERS FOR APPROVAL**

The Board noted that there were no papers for approval at the meeting.

## **4 PAPERS FOR INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Qualifications Delivery**

#### **4.11 National Qualifications Certification Programme Group**

The Board noted the contents of the National Qualifications Certification Programme Group report.

#### **4.12 Higher National & Vocational Qualification Certification Programme Group**

The Board noted the contents of the HN, Vocational and International Certification Programme Group report.

## 4.2 Annual Complaints Handling Report

██████████ and ██████████ from the Malpractice and Complaints team joined the meeting to present the Annual Complaints Handling Report, as per the revised format of the SPSO.

The Board welcomed the report and presentation, commenting on the critical importance of there being mechanisms in place to support colleagues who are positioned to handle complaints. The Board noted that quarterly internal reviews would be undertaken to review trends and improve processes.

The Board noted the update with approval and endorsed all the work being taken forward.

## 4.3 Cash Position

The Board noted the position for the year based on the 2020-21 Period 10 accruals forecast, accepting it as an assurance on the current position.

## 4.5 Committee Reports

### 4.51 Audit Committee - 2 November 2020

The Audit Committee had met on 2 November. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

Mr McKay updated the Board that three new risks had been identified and added to the Corporate Risk Register for monitoring and reporting. In addition to this, an additional audit on Cyber Security had been added to the internal audit plan.

The Board noted the update.

### 4.52 Qualifications Committee - 7 December 2020

Dr Thomson provided a verbal update to the Board on the Qualifications Committee meeting on 7 December, noting that, due to the dynamic aspect of the committee currently, work had developed at pace and regular updates had been provided to the Board.

### 4.53 Advisory Council - 7 December 2020

Ms Handley provided a verbal update to the Board on the Advisory Council meeting on 7 December, echoing Dr Thomson's comments on the pace of developments since the meeting.

## 5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

## 6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the Board would meet again on Thursday 25 February 2021.