

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

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BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 27 MAY 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1pm on Thursday 31 March 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], Interim Corporate Office Support
- Ms M McKerrell, Head of QA (NQ)
- [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director
- Mr R Quinn, Head of English, Languages & Business
- Mr A MacRae, Head of Business Development and Customer Support
- Ms T McCorkell, Head of Service Delivery

* Indicates present on the call

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including:

- Ms McKerrell, Head of QA (NQ); and
- Mr Quinn, Head of English, Languages & Business
- [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director
- Ms McCorkell, Head of Service Delivery
- Mr MacRae. Head of Business Development and Customer Support

The Chair noted that apologies had been received from Mr Smith and that Ms Craig would be joining the meeting around 1.30pm.

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 Mr Hagney and Dr Thomson held an interest through their positions as Heads of Centre. Furthermore, it was noted that Ms Davis and Mr Hagney had children studying at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels.

The Chair noted that members of the Board would never be put in a position directly to affect the outcomes relating to their centres or family members.

1.12 Matters Arising

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

1.2 Chief Executive's Update

The Chair passed to the Chief Executive to provide a brief update, noting that most schools were now on their Easter break, but with a return to face-to-face learning expected thereafter. The Chief Executive noted that Education Scotland had been commissioned by the Deputy First Minister to undertake an inspection of local authority quality assurance processes in order to provide further assurances and support to the alternative certification model. The Board agreed that this would form an important part of the assurance around the model, including roles and responsibilities.

The Chief Executive expressed her gratitude to communications colleagues, who had been working hard on the programme of communications issued to the system during the past weeks. She highlighted that work was ongoing with teachers on understanding standards and she had personally been involved in an NPFS event with parents of learners the previous week.

In closing, she reported that the final submission had been made in response to questions from the Education and Skills Committee, including around SQA's international work. Board members had been advised separately.

1.3 Procurement Recommendation

The Board welcomed Ms McCorkell, Head of Service Delivery, who presented a procurement recommendation report for the Openroad Application and Ingres Database Licences and Support, for systems underpinning awarding processing.

Ms McCorkell provided assurance to the Board that SQA had undertaken due diligence as to the suppliers of the required products and reported that the service offered included engagement with Actian over the three-year period to review performance and ensure optimum efficiency and suitability for organisational need.

The Board thanked Ms McCorkell for the presentation, noting the significant risks without renewal of the contract and notable savings over the recommended three-year period and were content to approve the contract as recommended.

The Board requested that an annual plan for procurement and expenditure be brought to the Board for review and discussion, highlighting that awareness of timelines in this space would be valuable. The Chair highlighted that the Board's agreement was required for only a small number of contracts, given the scheme of delegation in place.

1.4 Awarding 2021

1.41 ACM Update

Ms Blair introduced the update on the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) for 2021, noting the successful publication of the ACM along with the five-stage model. Ms Blair reported continued engagement with the NQ2021 and

steering group on roles and responsibilities throughout the system in order to support the model.

Ms McKerrell led the Board through a short presentation providing an overview of key dates and processes for the ACM and quality assurance activity up to the certification date on 10 August, noting that local authorities would receive bespoke quality assurance reports in addition to the national reports provided to all centres.

The Board welcomed the update, acknowledging that it reflected the considerable ongoing workload across the system at the current time, and supporting the programme of quality assurance and communications being undertaken, in particular noting engagement with learners, parents and local authorities.

1.42 **Delivery Assurance Report**

The Board welcomed [REDACTED], Awarding 2021 Programme Director, to the meeting to provide an overview of current status of the programme, key dates, issues and risks.

[REDACTED] noted that the programme was currently at an overall status of amber, with scope, resource, and governance at a status of green. [REDACTED] reported that colleagues would continue to review and assess risks and issues across the programme on an ongoing basis to report into the Board.

Board thanked [REDACTED] for the clear and useful presentation and discussed the management of risks included on the risk register, including ownership and best source of mitigation.

1.5 **Appeals Update**

Mr Baxter provided a brief verbal report to the Board on the appeals consultation which had closed at the end of the previous week. He reported that, although the vast majority of responses received had come from teachers, the consultation had also seen response from learners, parents, and representatives of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Mr Baxter reported that responses were now to be reviewed and recorded, with regular updating to the Board and a draft appeals model would be brought back to the Board through the Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee for discussion before publication and implementation.

The Board noted the updated and agree the importance of care in managing expectations of the appeals process.

The Chair thanked members for their time and input to discussions and noted that the Board would meet again on Thursday 15 April 2021 at 1pm.