

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B142/1.41

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 27 JANUARY 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 10am on Wednesday 8 September 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
- * Dr K Thomson

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr M Baxter
- * Mr L Downie
- * Mr J McMorris
- ██████████
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Ms B Black
- * Mrs D Mahmoud
- * Mr J Booth

Observers

- ██████████
- * Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office

* Indicates present on the call

1 OPENING REMARKS

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted that apologies had been received from Dr Wendy Mayne.

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 matters arising that would not be covered in the course of the agenda.

2 PAPERS FOR APPROVAL

2.1 Standing Orders

2.11 Audit Committee

Mr McKay noted that the minor changes made to the standing orders had been discussed at the Audit Committee meeting and the current version reflected this discussion. The Board approved the changes.

2.12 Appeals Sub-Committee

Dr Thomson noted that the Appeals Sub-Committee standing orders had been considered and approved by the Qualifications Committee. On this basis, the Board were content to approve.

2.13 Performance Committee

Ms Craig noted that the minor changes made to the standing orders had been discussed at the Performance Committee meeting and the current version reflected this discussion. The Board approved the changes.

3 PAPERS FOR INFORMATION

3.1 Qualifications Delivery

3.11 National Qualifications Certification Programme

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

3.12 Higher National and Vocational Qualifications Certification Programme

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

3.2 Cash Position

The Board noted the position for the year based on the 2021-22 Period 1 and 2 accruals forecast, accepting it as an assurance on the current position.

Mr Baxter assured the Board that finance colleagues continued to keep the position under close review with Scottish Government colleagues.

3.3 Modern Slavery Statement 2020-21

Mr Baxter presented the Modern Slavery Statement for the year 2021, noting that there were no issues to highlight and SQA remained fully compliant with

obligations, largely unchanged from previous years. The Board noted that the report would be signed off by the Chief Executive and published on the SQA website.

3.4 Committee Reports

3.41 Performance Committee – 17 May 2021

Ms Craig reported that the Performance Committee had met on 17 May. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

3.42 Audit Committee – 14 June 2021

Mr McKay reported that the Audit Committee had met on 14 June. The Board noted the minutes of the meeting in the papers.

Mr McKay reported that the Audit Committee had met again subsequently and provided a verbal update on the meeting including the review of the annual assurance statement and cyber security policies. It was noted that the minutes of the meeting would come to the Board in due course.

4 PAPERS FOR DISCUSSION

4.1 Financial Performance Report

Mr Baxter presented the in-year position for 2021-22, noting that a formal Q1 review had been undertaken at which point the position on awarding and appeals was still emerging. Given decisions that had been taken over course of the year, this would have to be examined in the round and contingency planning for 2022 taken into account.

The Board welcomed the reported financial reserve provision and noted that, in terms of income, the financial position was considered stable with work being undertaken reassure existing clients.

4.2 Board Discussion: Muir Review & Stobart Report

The Executive Management Team led on a presentation providing an overview of the work and engagement that SQA had been undertaking with the Muir Review. A Review team had been established and there were regular discussions between Professor Ken Muir, his secretariat and the Scottish Government team overseeing the reform work.

Professor Muir's consultation was expected to go live week beginning 20 September 2021 and the review team would be leading the development of the 'Book of SQA' which would accompany the consultation document published on the Scottish Government website. The team were also encouraging the development of a commissioning model, to ensure information flows were optimal and the Review was evidence-based.

It was noted that the Chief Executive had been invited to meet with the Expert Panel on 9 September to contribute to a discussion on alignment between qualifications, assessment and Curriculum for Excellence. There was also a meeting of the Advisory Group planned for the following week, involving fifty

stakeholders across two sessions, with two attendees from SQA at each meeting.

The Board discussed the opportunities, challenges and risks which could emerge from the review.

Ms Black delivered a brief presentation on progress with the Stobart Review recommendations, which was noted.

The Board welcomed the detailed presentations, noting the range of issues and risks to consider and discussed the importance of awareness of these key risks, both for the Board and the Scottish Government. In particular, the Board highlighted ongoing concern that no firm commitments on job security for staff had been made by the Scottish Government.

The Board acknowledged the range and depth of issues currently being actively managed by the organisation, recognising that this would be a long-term process, and discussed potential additional funding requirements to ensure that all strands remain adequately resourced.

The Chair noted the strength of feeling from the Board to engage with Ministers and committed to continue to press for a meeting to be arranged between the Board and the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills.

The Chair thanked the Executive Management Team for their presentations and Board members for their inputs to discussion.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business raised.

6 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chair noted that the next meeting of Board would be communicated to members by the Corporate Office in due course.