

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 21 JUNE 2017

For approval

Minutes of the one hundred and ninth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10am on Wednesday 10 May 2017 in Esk/Forth, Optima.

**Members**

- \* Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- \* Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- \* Ms E Craig
- \* Mr S Hagney
- \* Mrs J Handley
- \* Dr W Mayne
- \* Mr H McKay
- \* Mr R O'Hare
- \* Mr R Stewart
- \* Dr P Thomson
- \* Ms C Wilkinson

**Officers**

- \* Ms J Blair
- \* Ms M Cahill
- \* Mr S Davidson
- \* Ms L Ellison
- \* Mr J McMorris
- \* Ms J Ross
- \* Dr G Stewart

**Observers**

- \* Mr M McVicar, Scottish Government

\* indicates present

109/1 **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting, including Mr McVicar from the Scottish Government. There were no apologies.

109/2 **DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest raised.

109/3 **PREVIOUS MEETING**

i **Minutes of meeting held on 17 March 2017**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

ii **Action Grid**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

109/4 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

109/5 **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman reported on his recent and positive meeting with Fiona Robertson, Director of Learning. He also updated the Board on developments with recruiting to the SQA Chair vacancy, and that it was hoped to conduct interviews at the end of

May, with an appointment in place soon after. The Board was pleased to see progress being made.

## 109/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive presented an update on her recent engagements. In particular, she drew attention to the ANQ Policy Statement on changes to National Qualifications, which had been issued shortly after the latest meeting of the ANQ and was now available in the public domain.

It was noted that Recognition of Positive Achievement (RPA) would remain available as an exceptional measure and for an interim period only until the review of National 4 had taken place. At the end of session, a review of unit and course entry data would be undertaken by schools, Local Authorities and Education Scotland in order to gain an understanding of presentation patterns. SQA would provide that intelligence and, work was underway internally to identify a mechanism by which to gather this data.

On the matter of National 4, the ANQ Group intended that a consultation exercise take place; the timing of which had yet to be agreed with the Scottish Government. The Board was reminded that during the current revisions of National Qualifications, SQA continued to develop and refresh other non-NQ qualifications used in other sectors.

The Chief Executive also provided the Board with an update on recent social media activity relating to the Diet.

The Board noted the content of the Chief Executive's Report.

## 109/7 QUALIFICATIONS

### i Revised National Qualifications (RNQ) Update

Dr Stewart, Director of Qualifications, presented an update on the RNQ Programme reporting that the status of the overall programme was reported at RED. SQA continued to work through the detailed impact of the changes and was currently working to identify, test and operationalise the required new business requirements.

Presenting the report in detail, Dr Stewart provided updates on work completed in the period since the last meeting:

- As a result of the tight timelines for the additional round on quality checks, there had been a slight delay in publications, resulting in a phased release having taken place during the end of April, completing on 5 May.
- Recent activity had also involved finalising and publishing the programme of RNQ N5 webinars, involving the relevant subject specialists and quality assuring materials. Face to face events would be arranged later in the year for those subjects whose assessments had encountered major change.
- SQA Liaison Teams were meeting with Headteacher groups at all Local Authorities to discuss the changes to national assessments and bring back intelligence to assist in developing targeted comms with teachers.

- NQ website user research had been undertaken with teachers and markers to capture usability issues.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

## ii **Report from the NQ Certification Programme Group**

Ms Blair, Director of Operations, presented a full update on the National Qualifications Certification Programme Group and was pleased to report, that overall the programme for certification 2017 was on track. Referring to the one success factor reported at amber, she reported that the Websphere project had been implemented and the small number of transitional issues were being addressed.

Discussion took place around the potential industrial action by teachers that could impact on both NQ and HN delivery. SQA had taken mitigating actions to engage with Colleges and to discuss local challenges; close monitoring of the situation would remain in place.

The Board noted the contents of the report, and was reassured that arrangements were in place to manage areas of risk.

## iii **Report from HN, Vocational and International (HNV/Int) Certification Programme Group**

Ms Blair, Director of Operations, presented the report in detail, providing updates on those factors rated at amber. Overall, the programme was progressing well.

The Board noted the contents of the report and mitigating actions in place.

## 109/8 **CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

Ms Cahill, Director of Corporate Services, presented the status of the Corporate Risk Register, highlighting those changes as a result of changes in status and deliberations of the Executive Management Team.

The Board endorsed the proposal for the Audit Committee to consider closure of Risk 6. Discussion took place around the financial risk rating associated with one contract. Mr McMorris, Director of Business Development provided a factual picture of the position and it was agreed to retain the current rating.

The Chief Executive also apprised the Board on the status of two other risks where mitigating actions were being progressed.

The Board noted the contents of the Corporate Risk Register.

## 109/9 **FINANCE**

### i **Financial Performance Report**

Mrs Ellison, Director of Finance, presented in detail the Quarter 0 forecast, which reflected the amalgamation of recent submissions from the business and any impact of finalised candidate entry numbers for NQs.

It was noted that without the additional costs required to support RNQ implementation, total programme funding requirement for SQA Awarding had in fact somewhat reduced since the position at Q2.

The Board noted the financial position as presented.

ii **Cash Position**

Mrs Ellison Director of Finance, presented the cashflow position, commenting that SQA had met its closing cash balance obligations.

The Board noted the position for the year based on the 2016-17 Q2 accruals forecast adjusted to recognise the deferral of cash funding that had been received from the Scottish Government in 2015-16.

**109/10 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Mr McMorris, Director of Business Development, presented the business development activity in all key markets at the year end position against Q2 forecasts.

Providing a full and comprehensive résumé, he was pleased to report an overall positive position, in the main due to strong performances in the HN and VQ areas. It was noted with caution however, that given the fluidity of the awarding and contracts markets, SQA was entering into a challenging period. The Board was assured that this had been taken account of in the 2017-18 forecast.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

**109/11 SQA CHANGE PROGRAMME REPORT**

Mr Davidson, Director of Business Systems, presented the update on progress against the various workstreams of the SQA Change Programme.

He was pleased to report that overall the programme was on track, and continued to present an update on each strand. It was noted that the go-live of Websphere and replacement of Cognos would complete the decommissioning of IBM, and Mr Davidson took the opportunity to thank his team for all their efforts in reaching this milestone.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

**109/12 STAFF SURVEY RESULTS 2017**

Ms Cahill, Director of Corporate Services, presented the high level findings and messages coming out the recently completed staff survey.

Overall impressed by the results, the Board engaged in discussion around the findings, during which it was suggested worthwhile to unpick the leadership question.

The Board noted that the Organisational Development and Change Management teams would work with Directors and Heads of Service to address areas of particular concern. There was a reassurance provided to the Board, that the small number of issues identified would be focused on to achieve optimum positive results.

## 109/13 COMMITTEE REPORTS

### i **Accreditation Committee – 28 March 2017**

Ms Wilkinson, Convenor of the Accreditation Committee, provided a summary of the matters covered, which had included a discussion on the Apprenticeship Levy, the plans for implementation that April, and in particular, the implications of this for SMEs and rural areas. Considerations at the meeting had also highlighted a common theme around the lack of a co-ordinated collaboration approach between Skills Development Scotland, Funding Councils and Sector Skills Councils.

The Board noted the update and the minutes enclosed. It was noted that SQA Accreditation would hold its Stakeholder event on 13 June 2017.

### ii **Qualifications Committee – 1 February 2017**

Dr Thomson had referred to the business of the meeting at the last meeting of the Board, and members now noted the approved minutes

### iii **Audit Committee – 1 March 2017**

Mr McKay had provided a summary of the business covered at the last meeting of the Board, and members now noted the minutes.

### iv **International and Commercial Committee – 1 March 2017**

Ms Craig had provided an update on the considerations of the Committee at the last meeting of the Board, and members now noted the minutes.

### v **Advisory Council - 13 March 2017**

Mr Stewart had updated members on the business of the Advisory Council at the last meeting of the Board. The minutes were now available and would be included in the next bound set of Board papers.

### vi **Qualifications Committee – 3 May 2017**

Dr Thomson advised on the business covered, which had included an extensive discussion on the revised National Qualifications.

## 109/14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman passed words of thanks to both Mr McVicar and Mr Davidson for contributions to the Board. There were no further matters raised.

The Board also noted the two enclosed reports as tabled to the last meeting of the Board.

## 109/15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 21 June 2017. Following the formal meeting, the Board reconvened for an afternoon strategy session.