

# SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

B139/1.12 iv


## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 1 SEPTEMBER 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 11am on Thursday 1 July 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
- 
- Dr G Stewart
- \* Mrs D Mahmoud
- \* Ms B Black
- \* Mr J Booth

### Observers



Ms N Crowley, Head of Chief Executive's Office

\* Indicates present on the call

#### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, including:

- 

The Chair noted that apologies had been received from:

- Seán Hagney; and
- Ken Thomson.

### **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 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 Minutes of previous meetings**

#### **i 29 April 2021**

The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **ii 12 May 2021**

The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **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's Update**

Since the last meeting of the Board, it had been announced that SQA was to be replaced following the publication of the OECD Review. The Chief Executive updated the Board on the meeting she and the Chair had attended with Ms Somerville, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills on the day of the announcement and subsequent staff briefings and communications. Ms Somerville had also participated in a virtual live event with staff earlier in the week. The Chief Executive expressed concern that no assurances had been given to staff on job security and intimated that further discussions would take place urgently on this.

Conscious of the significant impact of the Cabinet Secretary's announcement on staff, the primary focus of the Executive Team had been one of support to staff and the organisation, with a number of communication channels being set up to share all available information.

Mr Baxter would be chairing a Project Team reporting to the Chief Executive and Executive Team exploring provision of SQA support to the review being undertaken by Ken Muir. The Chief Executive added that she had had a discussion with Ken Muir earlier in the week, to seek assurances on SQA's engagement in the review process.

With regards to Awarding 2021, the Chief Executive reported that entries had been submitted to SQA by the deadline. The appeals registration service had gone live as planned and registrations, including priority candidates, were being monitored on an ongoing basis.

The Board welcomed the update and discussed the situation in depth, agreeing that the next two years would be very challenging for the organisation as it continued to deliver.

### **1.3 Awarding 2021 – Delivery Assurance Report**

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

[REDACTED] reported that the overall project status remained amber, with a number of major milestones having been achieved over the previous two weeks.

He reported that an independent assurance review of the Awarding 2021 Programme was underway with internal audit partners, and these results would be shared with the Board when available.

[REDACTED] gave an overview of the programme risk register, noting that an additional risk had been raised following the Cabinet Secretary's announcement in relation to the impact on staff. The Programme Board would continue to monitor the risk register and report to the Board at its next meeting.

The Board welcomed the update.

The Chair thanked the Board for its valuable input to these discussions, acknowledging the stress of the last week for the organisation, and noted that the Board would stand ready to support the Executive Team and all staff throughout. The Board would meet again on 2 August 2021, ahead of results day.