

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 20 JUNE 2018

For approval

Minutes of the one hundred and sixteenth meeting of the Board of Management held at 9.45 am on Wednesday 9 May 2018 in Esk/Forth, the Optima building.

Members

- * Mr D Middleton (Chair)
- * 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

* indicates present

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr S Borley Item 116/14 only
- * Ms M Cahill
- * Mr L Downie
- * Ms L Ellison
- * Ms F MacGregor
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Dr G Stewart

Observer

- * Ms F Robertson, Scottish Government
- * Ms A Stansfield, Scottish Government

116/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair extended a welcome to members of the SQA Board of Management and welcomed Ms Robertson, Director of Learning, Scottish Government
No apologies were received for the meeting.

116/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest raised.

116/3 PREVIOUS MEETING**i Minutes of meeting held on 27 March 2018**

Mr Downie requested a slight clarification to item 115/10; this was approved by the Board. Subject to this addition, the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

ii Action Grid

The contents of the action grid were noted, no actions were outstanding.

iii Workplan

The Board noted the workplan for 2018. Ms Ellison advised that a Financial Performance report would not be presented to the Board that day; as a rule, Q12 reports were not generated due to the work associated with finalising the Year End Accounts. The Board workplan would be updated for future years.

116/4 MATTERS ARISING

Any matters arising would be dealt with in the course of the agenda.

116/5 CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair reported that he continued to meet regularly with the Chief Executive and Deputy First Minister (DfM). He had met also with Fiona Robertson, Director of Learning at Scottish Government.

In his capacity as Chair of SQA, he had attended the Colleges Scotland Chairs and Principals Dinner event with the Chief Executive.

The Chair advised that Board recruitment was progressing well and that he expected the new appointments to be confirmed by the end of June.

The Chair had continued to meet with SQA staff, notably NQ Assessment and Data Services in Lowden when he had toured the facility to observe the operational aspect of producing the 2018 diet.

The Chair thanked Board colleagues who had been able to attend the recent Who Cares? Scotland events that had been attended by SQA staff and two young people with care experience.

The Board noted the update.

116/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive presented a full update on her activities since the last meeting of the Board. She advised that the 2018 Exam Diet had begun on 30 April 2018 and would conclude on Monday 4 June. To date, all was progressing smoothly.

The Chief Executive advised the Board that SQA had noticed a significant number of Unit Entries at SQCF level 5 being submitted during March 2018. The Chief Executive reassured the Board that SQA was undertaking additional evidence gathering to ensure the continued integrity of certification.

The Chief Executive updated the Board on the launch of a new Work Based Award, the '*Complete Childminding Pathway*' developed in association with the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA). This award would provide recognition for learning and credit towards and a clear progression pathway for Childminders into other qualifications such as SVQs. James Dornan MSP, Convener of the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee spoke at the launch event in SQA offices in Glasgow, which was well attended by Child Minders from across Scotland.

The Chief Executive updated the Board discussions with SDS on pre Foundation Apprenticeships and their role within the Learner Journey.

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

116/7 QUALIFICATIONS

i Revised National Qualifications (RNQ) Update

Dr Stewart, Director of Qualifications Development, presented an update on the RNQ Programme, and was pleased to report that the status of the overall programme remained at green.

She drew attention to the formal publication of the revised course specifications for Higher Courses for session 2018-19, which had taken place from mid to end April. Dr Stewart advised that stakeholders had received communications both prior to and post publication with social media and Centre News being used to highlight their publication. To date very little feedback had been received on these publications.

Dr Stewart further advised the Board that the next phase of documents, Specimen Question Papers and Tasks, for new and revised Higher courses would be published between May and the end of September. She clarified the timescale took into account the activities associated with delivery of the 2018 Diet.

The Board noted the update.

Visit of John Swinney MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Educations and Skills

Mr Swinney was welcomed to the Board meeting by the Chair. The Board and the Cabinet Secretary discussed matters relating to education and skills and the SQA.

Mr Swinney then left the Board meeting and took the opportunity to meet members of SQA staff from across the organisation. The Chief Executive and Dr Stewart also left the meeting to support the Minister on his visit.

116/7 QUALIFICATIONS (contd)

ii Report from 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 the majority of key tasks leading to the certification of National Qualifications in 2018 were on track.

Actions at Amber were as the result of dependencies and were being monitored.

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

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

The Board noted the content of this report.

116/8 CORPORATE AND FINANCE

i Cash Position

Mrs Ellison Director of Finance, presented the cashflow, and advised that SQA had met its closing cash balance obligations as at 31st March.

The Board noted the cash position as presented.

ii **Quarter 0 Forecast Update**

Mrs Ellison, Director of Finance, presented the Quarter 0 forecast in detail. The forecast included updated submissions from the business as well as a challenge to all areas of the organisation to identify where any savings could be made.

Mrs Ellison also highlighted the impact of the proposed Scottish Government pay award for staff on the changes to the draft budget and a risk of increased costs arising from quality assurance on additional units.

The Board noted the budget for Accreditation activities and that the Scottish Government funding was being held at £1.025m.

116/9 **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Mr McMorris, Director of Business Development, presented the year end (P12) business development activity in all key markets against Q2 forecasts.

Mr McMorris was pleased to advise both the Awarding and Contracts side were performing well with Awarding showing the highest ever billed income figure for a year.

The Board noted the contents of the report and the overall positive performance.

116/10 **SQA CHANGE PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

Mr Downie, Director of Business Systems, presented the report on progress of the SQA Change Programme, providing an update progress since the last meeting of the Board.

Mr Downie was pleased to advise that the '*Design Milestone*' for CBS Phase 3 had been met and the build phase was well underway and in line with the project plan.

He was also pleased to note the progress on Enabling Platforms (Technology and Data) with the scope and high level cost estimates having being completed.

In response to the Board, Mr Downie advised that in order to ensure staff were kept informed and remained supportive of the Change Programme, a holistic, proactive communications and engagement Plan had been developed; the Manager responsible reported directly to Mr Downie.

The Board emphasised the importance of supporting any required cultural change among staff as critical to the success of the project; Mr Downie concurred.

The Board noted the contents of the report.

116/11 **CORPORATE**

i **Risk Register**

Ms Cahill, Director of Corporate Services, presented the current status of the Corporate Risk Register, detailing those risks that the Executive Management

Team would recommend to the Audit Committee for review.

The Board noted the contents of the Corporate Risk Register.

116/12 COMMITTEE REPORTS

i **Qualifications Committee – 21 February**

The Board noted the minutes. A verbal update had been provided to the last meeting of the Board.

ii **Qualifications Committee – 25 April**

Dr Thomson provided a verbal update of the meeting of the Qualifications Committee.

Dr Thomson advised that the Qualifications Committee had considered in some detail the work being undertaken to review and pilot 'Next Generation' Higher National Certificates and Diplomas and had strongly supported the proposed direction of travel.

Dr Thomson also welcomed research that had been presented to the Committee on factor analysis techniques and their value as a tool to aid further understanding of how candidates understood, approached and answered questions; there would also be potential benefits in setting future assessment items.

The Board noted the update and that the minutes would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

The Chair noted that the meeting had been Dr Thomson's last as Convenor of the Qualification Committee and thanked Dr Thomson for his valuable contribution to the Committee.

iii **Accreditation Committee – 27 March**

Ms Wilkinson had no further information to the verbal update she had provided at the last Board meeting. The Board noted the enclosed minutes.

PROCUREMENT CONTRACT FOR ELECTRONIC MARKING

In line with the Scheme of Delegation, the Board was presented with and invited to consider a Contract Recommendation Report for the award of the electronic marking contract.

Mr Downie presented the Board with a Contract Recommendation Report for the procurement of Electronic Marking services. The Board had a discussion around the approval of the proposed contract and each agreed to consider it further offline and revert back to the Executive should there be any queries.

The members of the Board were asked to confirm their position by email by Friday 11 May 2018.

116/14 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Chair welcomed Mr Borley to the meeting. Mr Borley provided the Board with a comprehensive presentation on SQA's Risk Management procedures and Risk Register.

The Board discussed the rationale and mechanics of the Risk Management procedures and clarified queries with Mr Borley.

The Chair thanked Mr Borley for his attendance.

Mr Borley left the meeting

116/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- i The Chair advised that he planned to meet with the departing Board Members whose tenure finishes at the end of June, within the next 4-6 weeks.
- ii The Board discussed the Annual Fraud Return that was submitted to Scottish Government on an annual basis.

116/14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would take place on Wednesday 20 June 2018, at 10:30am in Lowden. Members were asked to note the later starting time of 10:30am