

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 11 JUNE 2020

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1.45 pm on Thursday 4 June 2020 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 (from 2pm)
- * Mr R Stewart
- * Dr K Thomson

* Indicates present on the call

Officers

- * Ms J Blair
- * Mr M Baxter
- * Mr L Downie
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Ms J Ross
- Dr G Stewart
- * Mrs D Mahmoud

Observers

Ms A Kerr, Committee Manager
Ms L McGrath, Head of Qualifications Portfolio Management

1 OPENING REMARKS**1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He noted that apologies had been received from Dr Stewart and that Ms Liz McGrath would deputise in her absence.

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 Craig, Ms Davis and Mr Hagney had children studying at National 5 and 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 the previous meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting on 28 May 2020 were approved as an accurate record.

1.13 Matters Arising

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

2 CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair provided a brief update on the intention to shift to fortnightly pattern of meetings following the next meeting on 11 June. This would continue with the caveat that the Board would convene exceptionally if any issues were to arise requiring immediate Board attention.

3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE

The Chief Executive provided an update following the estimation deadline, reporting that the system had successfully delivered in terms of the required volume of estimates. She acknowledged the considerable work of the education sector to deliver to the deadline in these very difficult circumstances and had issued a message of thanks to that effect. The initial reconciliation exercise had been completed and delivery of the ACM would now move into the crucial Awarding phase.

A communication had been issued to schools and colleges the day before and had included an update on progress against the four strands of the ACM, including further information on the post certification results service.

The Chief Executive also reported that constructive discussions continued with the Equality and Human Rights Commission in relation to the Equality Impact Assessment.

Alongside the work on Diet 2020, the Chief Executive reported that Diet 2021 was emerging as a significant subject of focus. Recognising the challenges presented for next year's diet, work had begun to consider a range of options that would ensure the integrity of certification in 2021. The Board noted SQA's responsibility here to safeguard the maintenance of standards and credibility of Scotland's qualifications.

The Board welcomed this update, noting particular thanks from the wider system to SQA on the all their work, including the development of systems and processes - and at great speed.

In discussion, it was noted that SQA continued to work in partnership with SDS to provide certainty on Foundation Apprenticeships. Discussion with Colleges Scotland and Universities Scotland was ongoing. It was noted that there were important issues in relation to regulated qualifications, and the Chief Executive acknowledged the strong partnership working and engagement across the sector.

4 DIET 2020

4.1 Delivery Assurance

Ms Blair presented an update to the Board detailing SQA's capacity and capability to deliver the alternative certification model for August 2020. In accordance with the three lines of defence assurance model agreed by the Board on 9 April, the delivery plan referenced mechanisms in place to develop, deliver and monitor progress towards certification on 4 August 2020. It was noted that the critical operational path beyond 4 August remained under development.

Ms Blair provided a detailed overview of the programme plan in place to support the 2020 awarding programme, including an end-to-end view across four key strands of activity.

The Board was assured by the detailed planning that sat beneath the programme, supported by robust tried and tested mechanisms to track delivery. The Board also commented positively on the cross-directorate collaborative work that had helped to develop plans to this stage.

The recommendation that progress would be reported to the Board on a monthly basis until conclusion of the Post Certification Review was supported and agreed.

4.2 Report from NQ Certification Programme Group

The Board noted the report and the assurances that the report accurately reflected the expected position at that point in time.

4.3 Report from HN, Vocational and International Certification Programme Group

The Board noted the report and the assurances that the report accurately reflected the expected position at that point in time.

The Chair thanked members for their time and contribution to the discussions, noting that the Board would meet again on Thursday 11 June 2020.