

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT – 14 MAY 2020**

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Management held at 1 pm on Thursday 7 May 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
- \* Mr R Stewart
- \* Dr K Thomson

**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

\* Indicates present on the call

**1 OPENING REMARKS****1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members and noted apologies from Mr Smith.

**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 meeting held on 23 April**

The minutes of the Board meeting on 23 April 2020 had been circulated to the Board on 28 April 2020 and were approved as an accurate record.

**1.13 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**Chair's Remarks**

The Chair thanked those Board members who had attended the meetings of the Advisory Council and/or the Qualifications Committee, which had taken place on the preceding day to consider the proposals for the Alternative Certification Model and Post Certification Review

process. An update on the outputs of those discussions would be provided later in the meeting.

#### Chief Executive's Update

The Chief Executive opened with an update on her appearance at the Education and Skills Committee on 1 May, paying credit to Mr Robert Quinn, who had joined her on the panel. She provided a summary of the main points raised, noting that there had been a particular focus on fairness to learners, transparency and communications. In response to the media coverage about SQA's Alternative Certification Model approach and whether it had the potential for unconscious bias, the Chief Executive reported that SQA had developed a draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the whole process shortly after it had been announced that there would be no exam diet in 2020. Work on this would continue to completion once the Alternative Certification Model had been finalised.

The Board thanked the Chief Executive for the update.

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

## **1.2 MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND QUALIFICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Dr Stewart provided an update to the Board on the business covered by the Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee, who had met the previous day to review and discuss the proposed approaches to the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) and Post Certification Review of Results. It was noted that the related papers had been circulated to all Board members for information ahead of the Board meeting.

Dr Stewart reported that there had been agreement to the three-step high-level process, and appreciation from Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee on the work done to date.

The Qualifications Committee also approved a recommendation in relation to the inclusion of an escalated right of appeal model within the post certification review service.

Following Dr Stewart's update, Ms Handley and Dr Thomson, as Convenors of the Advisory Council and Qualifications Committee respectively, provided brief remarks, both commenting on the constructive dialogue, and support for the direction of travel under very difficult circumstances. Ms Handley noted that some members of the Advisory Council had specifically thanked the SQA for the work achieved so far in developing an alternative model. Dr Thomson noted that the bolstered membership of the Qualifications Committee had added valuable insight and enhanced the quality of discussion.

The Board appreciated the level of support being given to teachers on producing estimates, noting that the feedback from each meeting showed as a positive reflection of the work being undertaken across the organisation.

The Board noted that the papers discussed would be brought to the Board for decision next week.

### 1.3 **STAFF WELFARE**

The Chair invited Mrs Mahmoud, Director of People, to provide a brief verbal update to the Board on initiatives in place with regards to staff welfare in response to the current conditions.

Mrs Mahmoud outlined that support had been set up and delivered through three key approaches:

- Provision of learning support materials through various channels.
- Practical support through changes in policy and approaches to create further flexibility and accommodate individual needs.
- Ensuring that social contact and interaction continued to take place.

The Board expressed its support of the work in hand to ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of all staff at this time.

The Chair thanked members for their time and input and noted the Board would meet again on 14 May 2020.