

Minutes of the seventy-fifth meeting of the Board of Management held at 10 am on Wednesday 25 April 2012 in Arrol, Lowden

**Members**

- \* Mr G Houston (Chairman)
- \* Dr J Brown (Chief Executive)
- \* Mr J Edgar
- \* Mr W Gallagher
- \* Mr K McKay
- \* Mr R O'Hare
- \* Prof J Simmons
- \* Dr P Thomson
- \* Mrs S Walsh
- \* Ms C Wilkinson

**Officers**

- \* Ms M Cahill
- \* Ms L Ellison
- \* Mr R Gibson
- \* Ms K McCallum
- \* Mr J McMorris
- \* Ms J Ross
- \* Dr G Stewart

**Observers**

- \* Mr M McVicar

- \* indicates present

**75/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

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

**75/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

**75/3 PREVIOUS MEETING**

**i Minutes of meeting held on 14 March 2012**

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

**ii Action Grid**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

**lii Workplan**

The contents of the action grid were noted.

**75/4 MATTERS ARISING**

Any matters arising would be covered in the course of the agenda.

**75/5 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman reported that he had attended the recent Art Open Day at Lowden. It had been a hugely successful event that involved the local community.

It was noted that it was the first day of the Diet, with in the region of 740,000 examinations taking place over the coming six weeks.

## 75/6 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Chief Executive referred to the contents of her report and highlighted specific areas of interest and progress. During discussion, it was confirmed that the political unrest in Bahrain was being monitored in close liaison with the UK Government. There was no current risk or threat to SQA.

The Chief Executive was pleased to report that the Remuneration Committee had approved Linda Ellison's appointment to the post of Director of Finance, which would take effect from 30 April 2012. Ms Ellison would work on a full-time basis for an initial period of two to three months, and would then revert to three days a week. The Board fully endorsed the appointment.

## 75/7 CfE

### i Programme Review

The Chief Executive provided a presentation on the CfE Programme Review, which included an update on SQA's progress against milestones, the status of the overall CfE programme, and the management of risks and dependencies.

The Board engaged in an extensive review of the CfE programme, and was satisfied to note that all SQA's milestones have been successfully delivered on schedule. During a discussion around the high level review of the broader implementation of CfE, the Board recognised that it had the ability only to influence SQA's direct activities and deliverables. The Board also recognised that certain future milestones, including the successful delivery of certification, relied on the 'on time' delivery of activities across all of the partners involved in Curriculum for Excellence. The Board expressed its concern regarding these dependencies and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a dialogue with the Chair of the CfE Management Board to receive a more detailed update on the current status. The Chairman would extend an invitation to Sarah Smith, Director of Learning, to attend a future meeting of the Board.

There was also discussion around the importance of CfE communications and the criticality of co-ordinated messaging to ensure that all stakeholders and the broader education community were aware of CfE.

### ii CfE Update

This agenda item was considered as part of 75/7 i above.

## 75/8 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Members had before them a tabled paper on the financial results to 31 March 2012.

Ms Ellison was pleased to advise that the Scottish Government had formally approved the drawdown of £750,000 of underspend in 2011-12 grant in aid funding

as working capital. This carry over between the financial years had been supported by the Scottish Government to enable SQA to manage better any cash management issues that could arise during the year as a result of income and expenditure timing issues. This positive step forward was acknowledged by the Board, with the assurance that SQA officers would continue to monitor closely budgeting and forecasting activity.

Ms Ellison advised that dialogue was ongoing with Scottish Government officials around the absorption of costs relating to the development and implementation of the Post Result Services, and the affordability of awarding pay progression to staff.

#### **75/9 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

The Board noted the intelligence report as at 31 March 2012 and acknowledged the work in developing the pipelines for the UK and International markets.

The Board also noted with concern, the potential loss of income from existing income streams due to changes to government policy and regulation in relation to the Post-16 Reform programme and CfE. It was commended that work was underway to address these issues and develop a strategy to limit potential loss and influence decision making where possible.

#### **75/10 REPORT FROM CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME GROUP**

The Board noted the contents of the report and that the e-Marking project was now reported at green. This was welcomed by the Board, with a note of thanks to all staff involved.

#### **75/11 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

##### **i Audit Committee – 24 February 2012**

A verbal update had been provided to the previous meeting of the Board. The approved minutes were noted by the Board.

##### **ii Advisory Council – 30 January 2012**

A verbal update had been provided to the previous meeting of the Board. Prof Simmons drew attention to the revised Memorandum of Understanding that was now presented to the Board as a paper for noting. The approved minutes were noted the by the Board.

##### **iii Advisory Council – 19 March 2012**

Prof Simmons provided an update on the business covered, which had included a very significant and detailed discussion on the UCAS Reviews to help inform SQA's formal response.

He also assured the Board that the Advisory Council had undertaken an in-depth review of the consultation on 'Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Candidates in NQs in Scotland', as presented to the Board that day as a paper for noting. The draft minutes were noted by the Board.

iv **Qualifications Committee – 18 April 2012**

Mrs Walsh provided a verbal update on the business covered, and highlighted that the self-evaluation proforma on the compliance with Ofqual's new Conditions of Recognition had been approved for issue. At its meeting, the Qualifications Committee had also considered at length, SQA's proposal to draft a Code of Practice.

v **International & Commercial Committee – 24 February 2012**

A verbal update had been provided to the previous meeting of the Board. The approved minutes were noted the by the Board.

vi **Accreditation Committee – 20 March 2012**

Ms Wilkinson provided an update on the business covered, which had included discussion around the different models of regulation. She extended an invitation to members of the Board to attend a workshop on 12 June 2012 that would include a discussion on European issues. It was noted that the Board would receive a presentation on Accreditation and Regulation at its next meeting in June.

75/12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no matters raised for consideration.

The Board noted the contents of the following papers:

**PAPERS FOR NOTING**

- 1 **Section 96(7) Equality Act 2010**
- 2 **Advisory Council Memorandum of Understanding**

75/13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Board would be held on Wednesday 13 June, in the Optima Building, Glasgow.