**Board Meeting Minutes – Extracts in scope**

24 Jan 2024

4.2 Corporate Plan: progress to date and ambition.

Mr Baxter went on to present the progress to date in developing the SQA Corporate Plan 2024-27, inviting the Board’s comments and advice on the direction of travel in relation to the ambition that the plan articulates, including the supporting draft deliverables that would underpin the delivery of the three-year outcomes.

Mr Baxter reported that the plan seeks to capture the ambition for transformation, providing context and direction for the future. This ambition goes beyond a three-year corporate plan, aiming to set a longer-term direction with an emphasis on understanding how to effectively deliver on and achieve these ambitions.

The Board strongly endorsed the current direction of travel, noting the importance of partnerships, including the relationship with appointees who should see themselves as an integral part of SQA.

The Board acknowledged their crucial role in leading and supporting this work, to secure a successful transition to the new qualifications body, and ongoing successful delivery. The Board supported a programme of external engagement on the draft plan, which would begin imminently.

It was anticipated that the Corporate Plan would return to the Board in March for final approval.

20 March 2024

3.3 SQA Corporate Plan 2024-27

The Board received a presentation from Mr Baxter, Mr Ware and Mr Booth providing an update on the progress to date on developing SQA’s ‘prospectus for change’ (the corporate plan) for the period 2024-2027, including feedback from engagement with stakeholders, users and staff. The Board were provided an opportunity to discuss the direction of travel in relation to the ambition the prospectus articulates, including the draft deliverables that would underpin the delivery of the three-year outcomes; and how these would be delivered in partnership with stakeholders and users.

The Board noted that very positive feedback had been received overall, prompting discussion on the scale of engagement activity, which was comprehensive. The Board supported the strategy. but discussed concerns in centres regarding disparities in the implementation of project learning experiences across schools, noting that historically, it had not been possible to achieve a consistent standard across all centres, highlighting issues of fairness. The Board noted the need to await the government's response to the Hayward Review to determine how this this aspect will be considered.

It was noted that the organisation had engaged extensively with stakeholders, with progress made in the past couple of years to enhance openness, transparency, and accessibility for all stakeholders. Teaching unions had also been involved in these conversations. The Board discussed the importance of the impact of COVID being reflected, emphasising the importance of considering student wellbeing, mental health, and resilience. The Board noted that various presentation formats, including video and testimonials, are being considered to make the information more relatable and accessible.

There was unanimous support for the organisation's direction of travel, with the final stages of refining language and presentation underway. Members commended the boldness of setting out a clear vision for the organisation's future and collectively endorsed the ambition outlined in the presentation.

24 April 2024

3.1 Corporate Plan: A Prospectus for Change

Mr Baxter introduced the near final version of the SQA Corporate Plan to the Board, highlighting that it reflected both internal and external engagement. He emphasised that, where possible, the plan aligned with the review landscape, striking a balance between ongoing delivery and the need for change and transformation. Mr Baxter reported that the plan had been universally positively received, both in substance and in tone. Members commended the extensive work put into its development.

The Board discussed the organisation's role and commitment as an employer. It was agreed to add a reference in Annex 2 to the implementation of the careers service review. There was also discussion on the need to add strength to our commitment to employee relations, including the relationship with SQA’s Trade Unions (TUs) and adherence to Fair Work principles.

Sustainability had been incorporated into operational planning and there was discussion about whether more emphasis could be placed on wider strategic drivers of change, for example the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. The Board noted that agility would be required in moving forward to ensure activities aligned with broader policy announcements which were outstanding.

The Board welcomed the plan as comprehensive overall, with detailed operational plans to follow. Mr Baxter noted that an updated plan reflecting the comments of Board members would be submitted to the Scottish Government for approval which would allow the organisation to progress with operational planning.

A further update would be provided at the Board’s meeting in May.

 29 May 2024

4.2 Prospectus for Change (Corporate Plan) Approval by Scottish Government

Ms Raven, Head of Strategic Planning and Governance, joined the meeting to provide an update on the Corporate Plan (CP). Initial review feedback had been received from Scottish Government policy officers on the final draft version of the CP. The main feedback was the addition of performance measures and targets against each deliverable, a requirement from the Scottish Public Finance Manual. The Executive Management Team (EMT) would review this feedback, and the final version would be completed by the end of the week before submitting to the Cabinet Secretary, accompanied by a paper from the Chief Executive highlighting key points. The final version of the CP would be circulated to the Board virtually before submission to the Cabinet Secretary. Ms Raven would clarify the timeline for receiving feedback from the Cabinet Secretary.

Ms Raven noted that the plan would also be translated into Gaelic and potentially other non-English languages for dissemination.

Ms Raven thanked the Board, and all involved in the creation and development of the plan for their contributions.

18 September 2024

The Chair informed members that the Cabinet Secretary had signed off the SQA Corporate Plan and the Framework Document.