

**SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

**PC5/4 i**

**PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 24 FEBRUARY 2020**

**For approval**

Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Performance Committee held on Monday 18 November 2019 at 10.40 am in Arrol, Lowden.

**Members**

- \* Ms E Craig (Convenor)
- \* Ms A Davis
- \* Mr H McKay
- \* Mr R Stewart

\* indicates present

**Officers**

- \* Ms J Blair
- \* [REDACTED]
- \* Mr S Borley
- Ms M Cahill
- \* Mr A Dickson
- \* Mr L Downie
- \* Mr J McMorris
- \* Ms F Robertson
- \* Dr G Stewart

**In attendance**

- [REDACTED] SQA (PC4/8 only)
- [REDACTED] SQA
- [REDACTED] SQA
- Mr D Middleton, SQA Chair

**4/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting, including Mr David Middleton, SQA Chair.

Apologies were recorded for Ms Cahill.

**4/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared on the agenda.

**4/4 PREVIOUS MEETING**

**i Minutes from previous meeting**

The minutes of the third meeting of the Committee held on 5 August 2019 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**ii Action Grid**

The Committee noted the contents of the Action Grid.

**iii Workplan**

The Convenor explained that on finalisation of the 2020 meeting dates for the SQA Board, the Committee's meeting dates would be circulated.

It was agreed that an annual review on the effectiveness of the Committee would be added to the first meeting of each calendar year.

The Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

#### 4/4 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

#### 4/5 **PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - DELIVERABLES WORKSHOP**

For SQA to deliver on its purpose and mission, outcomes were identified as the strategic priorities for the period 2020-23. The next step in developing a performance framework was the creation of SQA's deliverables that would allow SQA to move towards its outcomes.

The Committee participated in a workshop on SQA deliverables, led by Mr Borley and [REDACTED] from the Strategic Planning and Governance team that assisted in the process of developing SQA performance framework - specifically helping to create deliverables. The workshop focused on areas that had emerged through the development of the performance framework as priority activity.

It was noted that there were similar workshops taking place with a wide range of staff from across the organisation had signed up to participate. Initial feedback from staff had indicated that they had welcomed the opportunity to be part of strategic discussions. The output from all the workshops would form the deliverables and ultimately the key indicators, which in turn, would form the basis for the future Quarterly Performance Reviews (QPR).

During discussion, the Committee:

- Recommended that management undertake a gap analysis to identify any gaps and ensure that all relevant priorities were covered.
- Suggested that management explore and understand how the new performance framework was going to deliver, including raising awareness that the baseline data would be different from previous indicators.
- Highlighted that when moving to the new performance framework there was a danger of losing sight of 'what was' and how areas would change over time.
- Agreed that it was essential that management did not lose the principle of the deliverables.
- Recommended that management ensure that all levels of dimensions were measured, not just those that could be measured easily.
- Suggested that it would be beneficial for the SQA Board to receive an overview of the market share around qualifications.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to participate in the workshop and looked forward to discussion on the final draft of the framework at the next meeting.

#### 4/6 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Mr Borley led on presenting the report and the following areas were covered in the course of discussion:

##### ***Strategic Goal 1***

- Progress of Product Portfolio Futures Project

The project overall resources were rated at amber due to the impact of current budget deficit position. The Committee were reassured that mechanisms were in

place to enable the use of existing resources more flexibly and that work would be prioritised and resourced appropriately.

- RNQ programme

With the RNQ programme transitioning to business as usual, the Committee enquired if the Scottish Government was mindful that some funding would continue to be required for the development, delivery and maintenance of the qualifications. The Committee noted that funding requirement had been included in the Spending Review Business Case that had been submitted to the Scottish Government for the four-year period ending 2023-24.

### **Strategic Goal 2**

- Regulatory Requirements (Performance against the Ofqual requirements)

The Committee questioned why the RAG status was assessed at green when a non-compliance had been issued by Ofqual. It was explained that Ofqual had amended their requirements related to quality assurance practice and were consulting on the details. To raise the issue with all awarding bodies they had issued a notification of non-compliance.

The Executive Management Team (EMT) had discussed and agreed the rating did not merit an amber. The position would be reviewed after the outcome of Ofqual consultation.

### **Strategic Goal 6**

- HR Data - Absence levels

The RAG status was reported at amber as a result of the Q2 sickness rate above the target. Absence levels had increased slightly (mainly cold and flu related illness) and stress levels had decreased.

It was highlighted that there was lots of work taking place in Health and Staff Wellbeing and management was closely monitoring staff welfare.

- HR Data - Turnover of staff

The Committee noted that the higher level of staff turnover compared to last year was mainly a result of the Voluntary Early Release Scheme.

### **Strategic Goal 7**

- Project Portfolio Milestones - Programme: Enabling Functions

Noting that the overall project status was amber, the Committee requested an update on the two projects reporting at red:

- ❖ CBS Phase 3

A compliance issue within the product software for the Appointee part of the project had been identified that related to the calculation of pension submissions. A solution had been identified and testing was underway.

- ❖ **Systems Platform - Networks**  
The technical design submitted to SQA did not meet the requirements anticipated and the supplier would re-architecture the design.

### **Strategic Goal 8**

Overall RAG status was assessed at amber and the Committee welcomed the detailed explanatory note that provided the Business Development financial position for 2019-20.

The Committee noted that both income levels and expenditure targets continued to be challenging.

### **RAG report ratings**

The Committee ratified EMT overall RAG report ratings on the Strategic Goals; green for Goals 1-7 and amber for Goal 8.

## **4/7 STRATEGIC BEST VALUE AND EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**

It was highlighted that the Benefits Table included within the papers had been an earlier draft and current version was tabled. It was clarified that there was no change to the figures, only additional narrative for the Markers' Meeting Project (under Release Compensation and Appointee Fee Savings).

Mr Dickson was pleased to advise that there had been positive initial feedback on the Spending Review Business Case that had been submitted to the Scottish Government.

The Committee noted that there would be a review to ensure it was clear which benefits were included within the strategic programme outlined in the business case and which were included in estimated business as usual Efficiency Savings for 2019-20.

The Committee noted that the paper presented highlighted an optimistic case and the details of benefits would continue to be discussed by management.

## **4/8 SQA CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS**

██████████ Senior Research Manager, from the Marketing and Communications team was welcomed to the meeting.

The Customer Survey is a quantitative piece of research that was issued to centres in Scotland, across the UK, and internationally by inviting customers for their opinions on all aspects of SQA's work, including a range of questions about their perceptions of SQA and views of the organisation. It was designed to provide an objective measure and was used as the source of a key indicator for overall satisfaction with SQA performance in the QPR (Strategic Goal 5). It also contains a great deal of more detailed analysis of how our customers perceive SQA's performance and how they view the organisation as a whole.

██████████ presented in detail the results of the 2019 Customer Survey and the recommendations of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG) which was set up to scrutinise the survey results.

During the ensuing discussion the Committee:

- Were pleased to note that this year's results were seen as being very positive, with significant improvements in many key areas from 2017.
- Noted that Customer satisfaction had increased and scored highest of all the surveys conducted to date.
- Noted that the process for the survey was that the appointed independent research company selected a weighted sample from the full list of centres in Scotland, the rest of the UK and the international. It was highlighted that the appointed independent research company calls the sample of centres in order to complete the survey.
- Noted that it was the first time international centres had been included and they would be from now on.
- Noted that the identified areas of concern included complaints/problems, bureaucracy and appearing forward thinking and that these were broadly similar to those identified in 2017.
- Endorsed that the areas of concern would continue to be monitored by SQA in future Customer Surveys.
- Welcomed that the findings of the research were shared widely throughout the organisation.

Discussion lead to the different customer types of SQA and the Committee agreed that further details on the segmentation of these would be useful.

The Committee welcomed the Customer Survey results and agreed that as part of SQA's annual performance activity, the findings would be brought to the Committee annually as part of the deliverables for how SQA work with customers.

██████ left the meeting.

#### 4/9 **FOCUS FOR NEXT MEETING**

The Convenor opened discussion to identify future focus areas and the following was discussed:

- Performance framework

Dependant on the timeframe the final set of deliverables for performance framework may be presented to the next meeting for ratification. The Committee agreed that the Convenor and Mr Borley would meet offline to discuss and agree the approach.

The Committee noted that it was anticipated that the final draft of the framework would be discussed at the next meeting.

- Customers

The Committee agreed that further details on Customers would be helpful and informative and suggested that this could include:

- ❖ Segmentation of the different customer types of SQA (as previously discussed - PC4/8 refers).
- ❖ A broader understanding on the underlying trends within the Customer Survey.

- Stakeholders

The Committee welcomed a greater understanding of stakeholders in general, with the possibility of SQA developing a stakeholder map, similar to the assurance map that had been discussed by the Audit Committee.

- SQA's People Survey 2019

The Committee noted that the results would be digested by EMT prior to presentation to the Committee.

The Committee noted that EMT would consider the areas identified further, and if appropriate would schedule into the Committee workplan.

#### 4/10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business raised for the consideration by the Committee.

#### 4/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

On finalisation of the 2020 meeting dates for the SQA Board, the Committee dates would be circulated to the Committee.

*Later: The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Monday 24 February 2020 in Lowden.*