

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

PC19/3 i

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 16 AUGUST 2023

For approval

Minutes of the eighteenth meeting of the Performance Committee held on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 10am by Microsoft Teams.

Members

- * Ms A Davis (Convenor)
- * Mrs J Handley
- * Ms M Wailes

Officers

- * Mr M Baxter
- * Ms J Blair
- * [REDACTED]
- * Mr J Booth
- * Mr M Campbell
- * Mr A Dickson
- * Mrs D Mahmoud
- * Mr J McMorris
- * Ms Y Raven
- * Ms F Robertson
- * Dr G Stewart
- * Mr M Ware

In attendance

- * [REDACTED], SQA (PC18/8 only)
- * [REDACTED], SQA
- * [REDACTED], SQA

* indicates present

18/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the eighteenth meeting, and it was noted that apologies for absence were received from Mr Middleton, SQA Chair.

18/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared on the agenda.

18/3 PREVIOUS MEETING

i Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the sixteenth meeting held on 7 February 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ii **Action Grid**

The Committee noted that there were no open actions.

iii **Workplan**

It was highlighted that the SQA's Environmental Strategy would be scheduled into the workplan.

The Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

18/4 **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

18/5 **QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW – Q4**

Ms Raven provided an overview of the Quarterly Performance Review (QPR) that covered the period January to March 2023, reporting that out of the five Outcomes, three had been assessed at green and two at amber. She went on to highlight the deliverables that had changed in RAG status and context about what had changed was provided to the Committee.

During the discussion, the Committee:

- Noted the circumstances around the Temporary and Interim Staff contract and welcomed that it had been resolved and was reporting at green. A procurement exercise would be undertaken for the 2024 contract.
- Enquired if SQA processes to verify uncommon qualifications for schools could be simplified. In response it was advised that the processes in place were to safeguard the learning and teaching for learners. SQA was working on a communication, however, it was highlighted that it was a system wide requirement to comply with all the processes.
- Welcomed that SQA were on track to close out all the EHRC Section 23 Agreement conditions by September 2023.
- Noted that the overall Product Portfolio deliverable was amber due to a number of issues, including resourcing, particularly as technical, experienced resource was required. Whilst challenging, priorities should be clearer over the next few months.
- Noted that there was ongoing uncertainty on the financial resources available to SQA in 2023-24 without a confirmed budget from the Scottish Government.
- Were reassured that although the Internet Resilience project had been delayed due to the availability of resources and hardware there was no risk to internet service provision.

18/6 **STRATEGIC BEST VALUE AND FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

Mr Dickson provided a comprehensive overview of the new strategy for the Finance function of the Finance and Corporate Services Directorate. He explained that the strategy focused on systems development, process improvement, reporting quality, people development and communications for the next 18-24 months.

The Committee commended the ambitious strategy and welcomed that it had been developed by the team who would deliver it.

It was clarified that all strands within the strategy would be progressed together, where possible, and that delivery was directly linked to the Directorate Operational Plan, and individuals' objectives within the team.

Acknowledging the impact of the strategy on the reform programme for the new organisation, the Committee welcomed that progress would be reported back.

In closing, the Committee requested that congratulations to the team for the development of the strategy, especially the presentation and visuals of the report.

18/7 **2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS: DRAFT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

Ms Raven highlighted to the Committee that there were several areas in the report that were still to be finalised and that Section B (Accountability Report) and Section C (the unaudited Annual Accounts 2021-22) would be presented to the Audit Committee for review at its meeting in June, and the SQA Board would approval the final version at its meeting in September.

Although the report was a balance on SQA's delivery of core functions and the reform programme, the Committee recognised the importance to highlight the positives and celebrate success. It was suggested that some visuals impact such as graphics be incorporated, along with some quotes / figures and possible case studies, such as application of maths.

The Committee was requested to send any feedback directly to Ms Raven by the end of the week before a copy of the draft performance analysis of the Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23 was sent to Audit Scotland.

18/8 **2022-23 SQA CENTRE SURVEY RESULTS**

██████████ was welcomed to the meeting who provided a comprehensive overview of the key results from the 2022-23 SQA Centre Survey Results. The Committee had also been provided with a detailed paper, which had highlighted the key points and the independent survey by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The Committee discussed the results in depth, welcoming the positive report, particularly that overall satisfaction with SQA had increased by 7.2% from 2021-2022 and that SQA staff were noted as a key driver of centre satisfaction. The Committee suggested that by sharing the results with staff, particularly with the positive improvement, could provide an opportunity to boost staff morale.

Discussion led to the areas that centres had suggested that SQA could improve on and it was noted that whilst key processes with customers had not changed there was continued perceptions that SQA was bureaucratic. It was highlighted that the limited digital capacity within SQA could impact bureaucracy perceptions. More detailed research was needed to understand the difference in perception between audience groups.

The Committee thanked [REDACTED] for the comprehensive and thorough presentation.

[REDACTED] left the meeting.

18/9 FOCUS FOR NEXT MEETING

The Committee considered the items for the next meeting and agreed the agenda would be established from the workplan.

18/10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business raised.

18/11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Tuesday 16 August 2023 and would be held by MS Teams.