

**PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 3 FEBRUARY 2025 For approval**

Minutes of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Performance Committee held on Thursday  
5 December 2024 at 2pm by Microsoft Teams.

**Members**

- \* Ms A Davis (Convenor)
- \* Mr R Erskine
- \* Ms M Wailes

**Officers**

- \* 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 (Until PC24/7)
- \* Ms D Stewart
- \* Mr M Ware

**In attendance**

- \* Mr S Allan, SQA (PC24/7 only)
- \* [REDACTED], SQA (PC24/5 only)
- \* [REDACTED], SQA (PC24/6 only)
- Mr R Pidgeon, SQA (PC24/7 only)
- \* [REDACTED], SQA (PC24/6 only)
- Ms S Rogers, SQA Chair (Until PC24/6)
- \* [REDACTED], SQA

**24/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the twenty-fourth meeting, particularly Mr Erskine to his first meeting of the Committee.

Apologies for absence had been received from [REDACTED], Mrs Mahmoud, Ms Raven and [REDACTED].

**24/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

There were no conflicts of interest declared on the agenda.

## 24/3 PREVIOUS MEETING

### i Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the twenty-third meeting held on 21 August 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

### ii Action Grid

There were no open actions.

### iii Workplan 2024

The Convenor reminded the Committee that the annual review of performance of the Committee had been postponed until the Board recruitment had been completed. Given that today was the first meeting for Mr Erskine the review would be held in next year.

### iv Workplan 2025

The Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

## 24/4 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

## 24/5 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW (QPR) – Q2 2024-25

██████████ presented the QPR for the period from July to September 2024 and during the discussion, the Committee:

- Noted that all of SQA's Corporate Outcomes were still at amber and there were no changes in the RAG status for any deliverables.
- Was provided with reassurance on the Awarding Programme and that the scope for 2025 was nearly complete.
- Noted that the current phase of HN-Next Gen project was centred on the completion of in-flight pilots and evaluation and was anticipated to be completed at the end of Q3. Ongoing developments would require scrutiny to ensure safe continuation of the project, however, due to reduced resource SQA would move into a distributed delivery model across the organisation. Management was closely monitoring this, and revised governance would be in place by Q4. Assurance was provided that budgeted planning and managing the resource was a priority.
- Recognised that the recruitment freeze was an on-going challenge. It was noted that if there was a risk to core services in teams, this would be considered by the Executive Management Team (EMT) and if endorsed recruitment was permitted.
- Noted that SQA was still awaiting confirmation of the budget and funding from the Scottish Government and welcomed that appropriate risks had been added to the Corporate Risk Register regarding the uncertainties for SQA to deliver all

strategic and operation objectives if not funded within the Budget Allocation and Monitoring (BAM) letter.

- Noted that in response to a query around what metrics should be considered by what Committee to ensure unnecessary duplication consideration would be taken by management.
- Noted that a programme plan had been established and priority areas identified with mitigating measures implemented in the interim around cyber resilience due to the unknowns around timings and funding of the Digital Awarding Business Case that was with the Scottish Government for approval. The Committee suggested that it would be helpful if a trackable roadmap on the different cyber related projects could be considered. This would provide the ability to track the different projects and separate the risks.
- Noted that the best value programme had made progress but not as fast intended because of resource constraints.
- Congratulated the People Directorate for achieving the investors in young people gold and for the investors in wellbeing award.

██████████ left the meeting.

#### **24/6 STRATEGIC BEST VALUE AND FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

Welcomed to the meeting was ██████████ and ██████████.

Mr Dickson provided an overview of the current cost allocation and status.

██████████ went on to present an introduction of how SQA's Markets were performing, and it was anticipated that more details would be available for the next meeting. The Committee noted that direct costs were directly tied to SQA's products and services and were allocated by source or agreed cost drivers. The amount of direct costs identified had increased as the model becomes more accurate. Indirect costs were not directly tied to products and markets and were put together into an overhead bucket and allocated as a proportional direct expenditure. It was highlighted that the figures in the analysis would differ from the figures in the finance SQA board papers and if anyone would like to see the differences these were available. There would be a further detail on the financial performance of our products and markets, including what was categorised as overheads in due course.

██████████ and ██████████ left the meeting.

#### **24/7 2023-24 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT RESEARCH RESULTS**

Mr Simon Allan, Senior Research Manager, and Mr Richard Pidgeon, Head of Communications and Engagement were welcomed to the meeting. They provided a comprehensive overview of the results from the 2023-24 Key Audience Research that included details of both the 2023-24 Key Audience Research and the 2024 SQA Centre Survey, and outlined how SQA would respond to these results as an organisation. The Committee had also been provided with full reports by Ashbrook Research & Consultancy Ltd.

The Committee discussed the results in depth, noting that the results were relatively positive, with significant improvements in most key indicators. It was noted that there had been declines in some key scores with parents/carers of school learners and with college lecturers. As the second year that the Key Audience Research had been conducted, a comparison to 2022-23 results had been made to determine what progress had been made.

The results were discussed in depth and in the course of discussion, the Committee:

- Observed that a comparison to the 2022-23 results had been conducted to determine what progress had been made, with most improvement being often largest in those areas where performance had been the weakest.
- Welcomed that the results were relatively positive, with significant improvements in most key indicators, particularly the results amongst teaching staff in schools, school learners and those in management roles in schools. This was especially reassuring as there had been targeted effort in the school's sector which had obviously had a positive impact. Having discussed the results for lecturers which were poorer than a year ago it was suggested that SQA could focus more on this sector.
- Acknowledged that the Key Audience Research results demonstrated significant progress against the baselines established in SQA's Prospectus for Change and towards the ambitious targets set for 2027.
- Noted that whilst the majority of centres in 2023-24 continued to believe that SQA was bureaucratic the results had shown a decline since last year. It was highlighted that the limited digital capacity within SQA could impact bureaucracy perceptions.
- Acknowledged the continued challenge SQA faced and emphasised the importance for SQA to continue to improve how it communicates and engages with stakeholders and customers.
- The Committee thanked Mr Allan and Mr Pidgeon for the comprehensive and thorough presentation.

Mr Allan and Mr Pidgeon left the meeting.

## **24/8 COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS**

The Convenor presented the Committee Standing Orders as per the annual review schedule, noting that it was a critical document, and some minor amendments were proposed.

The Committee endorsed the amendments and agreed that the Standing Orders would be presented to the SQA Board for formal approval at its January 2025 meeting.

## **24/9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no further business raised.

**24/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Wednesday 3 February 2025 and be held on MS Teams.