

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE – 27 MAY 2024

For approval

Minutes of the twentieth meeting of the Performance Committee held on Monday
5 February 2024 at 10.30am 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

- * Mr S Borley, SQA
- * [REDACTED], SQA
- * [REDACTED], SQA
- * [REDACTED], SQA (PC 21/7 only)
- * [REDACTED], SQA (PC 21/7 only)
- * Ms S Rogers, SQA Chair

* indicates present

21/1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convenor welcomed everyone to the twenty-first meeting, including, Ms Shirley Rogers, SQA's new Chair.

Ms Handley had submitted late apologies and therefore the necessary quorum for the Committee was not met. After consideration of the agenda the Convenor decided to proceed with the meeting given that agreement of the previous minute was the only item that required Committee approval. Ms Handley had submitted her thoughts on the papers by email and the Convenor would incorporate these into discussions.

21/2 DECLARATION OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts of interest declared on the agenda.

21/3 PREVIOUS MEETING

i Minutes from previous meeting

The Convenor advised that Ms Handley had endorsed the minutes virtually, therefore the Committee approved the minutes of the twentieth meeting held on 7 November 2023 as an accurate record.

ii Action Grid

The Committee noted the closure of the only open action.

iii Workplan

The Committee noted the contents of the workplan.

21/4 MATTERS ARISING

20/7 Focus for next meeting

The Committee noted that an item on SQA's Corporate Plan 2024-27 had been removed from the agenda following discussion at the SQA Board meeting in January. Further work would be done on the development of the plan, including a programme of external engagement. The latest summary of feedback and how this had been incorporated into the development of the draft plan would be provided to the SQA Board in March.

21/5 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW – Q3

The Convenor took the opportunity to express her support and acknowledged the work and dedication of team with the continued development of the Quarterly Performance Review (QPR), particularly around the level of detail now included.

██████████ provided an overview of the QPR that covered the period October to December 2023, reporting that the Corporate Outcomes had changed from three assessed at green and two ambers to four assessed at green and one amber. She went on to highlight the deliverables that had changed in RAG status and context about what had changed was provided.

During the discussion, the Committee:

- Welcomed that that deliverable for 'National Qualifications Delivery to plan' had changed RAG status from amber to green, and that all the milestones in the programme were tracking to green.

It was highlighted that management continued to closely monitor the EIS Further Education Lecturers Association (FELA) dispute. As advised at the SQA Board in November 2023, there was robust contingency plans in place to minimise any effect.

- Noted that following on from the last meeting the results from 2023 Key Audience Research (KAR) data had been incorporated to the dashboard and as a result, the overall deliverable around building credibility and trust in SQA had changed RAG from green to amber.

The Committee recognised that there were significant differences between the audiences, with teachers less happy than other groups. Therefore, there was support and encouragement of the continuation of visits to centres to hear first-hand from classroom teachers and learners about their experiences of delivering and taking qualifications.

- Were pleased to note that, as planned, all of question papers had gone to print.
- Was reassured that work continued with apprenticeship developments as part of the Standards and Framework Programme, including establishing uptake reporting which would establish a joint plan and priorities.
- Welcomed that staff turnover was the lowest SQA had seen since the end of 2021-22, and that it had been on a decline since Q3 of 2022-23.
- Noted that although there had been upward trend of sickness absences this was down to seasonal illnesses and that the majority of stress absences were not work related.

The Committee were assured that the Executive Management Team's (EMT's) priority continued to be the health and wellbeing of the staff, and this would continue to be closely monitored.

- Enquired around SQA's appointee population and why there was no measure included within the people dashboard. It was noted that an outline of SQA's legal obligations in relation to the employment status of the appointee population and options would be provided to the SQA Board in March. Following endorsement by the SQA Board a measure would then be included within the dashboard.
- Acknowledged that SQA continued to encounter a lot of performance and capacity challenges and the Committee was assured that SQA would continue to operate to meet its statutory duties.
- Significant work had been undertaken on accessibility of the website and the Committee was reassured that this work would continue and anything new on the website would be accessible going forward.
- Work was ongoing to maximise cyber security and there would be a focus on vulnerability scans to understand legacy issues.

21/6 STRATEGIC BEST VALUE AND FINANCIAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Mr Dickson provided an overview of the detailed report on the progress made within the different workstreams within the Best Value Programme. It had been a productive quarter, with a focus on continuing to self-assess against Audit Scotland's current Best Value Framework.

The Committee noted the update and welcomed the review of the reporting approach to ensure consistent reporting across the different factors of the framework.

21/7 SQA PEOPLE SURVEY – PROPOSED NEW APPROACH

██████████ and ██████████, were welcomed to the meeting.

██████████ delivered presentation on the progress to date in developing the new, more frequent Colleague Engagement Survey. She highlighted that colleague engagement was central to the new approach, with five core multiple choice questions designed to each measure a different factor of engagement. There would also be two core free text questions, and opportunities to include additional themed questions when appropriate. The first Colleague Engagement Survey would be launched at the beginning of May and would take place three times a year.

The Committee welcomed the new approach, particularly the ability to capture colleagues' reactions around specific events throughout the year and enable management to take a more continuous improvement approach.

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

21/8 FOCUS FOR NEXT MEETING

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

21/9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business raised.

21/10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on Monday 27 May 2024 and would be held by MS Teams.