

Minutes of the 56th SCQF Partnership Board held on Wednesday 08 December 2021 at 09.00 hours via video conference on behalf of SCQF Partnership, 201 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 2LW

Confirmed minutes for website

Present:

Rob Wallen (RW)	Chair SCQF Partnership
Jim Metcalfe (JM)	College Development Network
Stuart McKenna (SMcK)	STF
Alastair Sim (AS)	Universities Scotland
Gill Stewart (GS) on behalf of Fiona Robertson	SQA
Alastair Delaney (AD)	QAA
Malcolm Foley (MF)	QC Chair

In Attendance:

Aileen Ponton (AP)	SCQF Partnership
Sheila Dunn (SD)	SCQF Partnership
Julie Cavanagh (JC)	SCQF Partnership
Beverley Wallace (BW) (Secretariat)	SCQF Partnership
Jim Godfrey (JG)	SCQF Partnership (Items 1 – 4 only)

Welcome and introductions

RW welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were noted from Fiona Robertson, who was represented by Gill Stewart.

Register of Interests

RW reminded Directors to submit their annual Register of Interests along with an updated Fit and Proper Person form by end of December 2021 if they had not already done so.

Noting of any conflict of interest

RW asked the Directors if they were aware of any issues presenting a conflict of interest and none were noted.

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021

RW asked Directors if they were happy that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. The Directors confirmed they were satisfied.

RW then talked through the redacted minutes for the website. The Board agreed to the redactions but with the following caveats: Item 4, paragraph 2 - leave in one sentence referring to the external audit tender process; Item 8, paragraph 4 – redact the paragraph but leave in the first sentence; and Item 10 – leave in one sentence referring to CGLI.

2. Matters Arising

AP updated Directors on the recent issues in recruiting a Finance Officer for maternity cover and the subsequent appointment of JG as detailed in Item 4. JG was formally introduced to everyone attending the meeting and the Board then noted the matters arising.

3. Management Accounts 2021 – 2022 Quarter 2

AP began by informing Directors that consultancy costs were now unlikely to be incurred for the 'Learning for Sustainability' Project and as a result the grant would generate mostly additional income. Also a further budget forecast re-profiling exercise was planned for end of December where further savings were expected to be made. In relation to the conference, this was now going ahead online and would be picked up in further detail in item 7. Finally, the new leased broadband line had been installed and although the monthly outgoings would increase it was felt the benefit of a more stable connection outweighed the costs.

RW then invited JG to provide any additional comments. JG had no comments on the paper however told Directors that the financial records were in excellent order and that they could have confidence in the organisation's record keeping and accounting.

Asked if the delay to the third phase of the Skills Recognition project would have an impact on the budget AP responded saying there would not be any impact as payments from GCU were up-to-date. Also there were no further monies due until the next financial year when phase three was expected to commence and a further budgeting exercise would take place once commitments were known.

MF then asked if consideration had been given as to whether the current level of dilapidations accrued were sufficient. AP explained that this had been discussed at the last ARC meeting and it had been agreed that there was no need to revisit a dilapidations report commissioned in 2018. Instead a decision was made to use the upper figure given in the report of £48k plus vat as a guide and that enough money would be set aside over the next two years to cover this. The Board then approved the Q2 Management Accounts.

4. Report from the Audit and Risk Committee

As detailed in the ARC minutes attached to the paper, AP brought Members attention to an issue regarding a request to carry forward an underspend of £46k of SFC's funds.

Columns for 2022-23 had been added to the risk strategy, with the funding risk showing as amber as SG and SFC had not yet confirmed funding. The risk around recruitment and retention had been downgraded due to the appointment of maternity cover for the finance post. The Board then noted the business of the ARC and agreed the amended risk strategy. JG then left the meeting.

5a. Report from the Quality Committee

MF provided a brief update as detailed in the paper with the exception of the matter relating to CGLI that would be picked up as item 5b on the agenda. Additionally, MF highlighted that, in terms of more than one Framework logo appearing on a certificate of an SCQF credit rated programme, it was agreed that the current guidance not allowing more than one logo should remain unchanged. It was agreed that multiple logos and multiple levels would be confusing for learners and employers. However an information note would be developed to clarify the rationale for this

approach which was not the same as in other parts of the UK. The Board were then happy to note and endorse the business of the Quality Committee.

5b. CGLI Ceasing Credit Rating

Having been informed of CGLI's intention to cease as a CRB in Scotland at the September 2021 Board meeting the Board approved the set of actions indicated in the paper. They also agreed that the Chair would write to CGLI detailing the decision of the Board and next steps.

6. CEO Report

AP highlighted a number of key sections of the CEO report. The Veterans' Skills and Qualifications Mapping Tool was progressing very well. The steering group were very pleased with a recent demonstration of the tool and following planned live testing with veterans it was hopeful that it would be launched at the end of January 2022.

The Partnership's new Development Officer had been making significant progress in signing up new Inclusive Recruiters, with 8 new signings from a good range of sectors. These new signings were being followed up to obtain blogs and testimonials. The number of School Ambassadors was also increasing with applications being received for bronze, silver and gold status.

Further to the update provided in the paper regarding the issue with UCAS recognition, a meeting was planned with AP, SD along with SQA Awarding, SQA Accreditation and UCAS on 9 December 2021 to seek clarification on how to move forward.

Finally JM thanked SCQFP staff for organising the School and College Ambassador event in November that he had chaired. JM felt the event had gone extremely well and there had been a far greater engagement than he had expected. AP added that event had resulted in schools enquiring about the School Ambassador programme and how they could form links with colleges. The Board then noted the update from the CEO.

7. Update on conference for 2022

JC provided an update as detailed in the paper and also provided some additional updates as follows:

- a chair had been approached and a response was awaited;
- the conference would run from 10.00 – 3.30;
- there would be five workshop/seminars running in the morning and again in the afternoon;
- a speaker from Opito had been approached;
- the Cabinet Secretary had confirmed a keynote for the afternoon session;
- the conference would celebrate 21 years of the SCQFP but aimed not to be too reflective but more forward looking;
- the aim was to have the agenda finalised by the end of December.

JC then offered Directors the opportunity to host the workshop/seminars should they wish to get involved, to which a number of Directors responded positively. In light of CDN being selected as the conference organiser JM requested that it be noted that he had no involvement or influence in the tender process. The Board then noted the contents of the paper, were asked to hold the date of Thursday 24 March 2022 in their diaries and to contact AP if they were interested in hosting one of the workshop sessions.

8. Strategic Plan Development 2022-25

Directors were asked for their input in shaping the new Strategic Development Plan 2022-25 in time for the March 2022 Board which would in turn help set the context for the 2022-23 Operational Plan.

The Directors provided some initial feedback on links to government policy, key drivers and possible priorities for 2022-25 as follows:

- although it was good to link the plan to government policy, the strategy needed to have more of a sense of confidence around SCQFP's own mission and aims;
- the policy section should acknowledge the changing state of reviews and delivery patterns and how the SCQFP could adapt and help the sector move forward;
- the Partnership's position on neutrality should be strengthened in the vision and mission statements.

It was then agreed that AP would email a draft plan to the Board by the end of January 2022 and Directors would have two weeks to respond. AP & JC would also look at refreshing the design of the plan.

9. Considerations for CEO recruitment 2022

AP, SD, JC & BW left the meeting at this point to allow a confidential discussion regarding the approach to be taken in any future recruitment process for a new CEO for the Partnership. The matter would be discussed further at the March 2022 Board meeting.

10. Any other business

There was no other business discussed.

11. Date of next meeting

Thursday 17 March 2022 from 09.00 – 11.00.