

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Note of the thirty sixth Meeting of the Authority (The Board) which took place on Friday, 22 June 2018 at 10.00 a.m. in the QQI Meeting Rooms, 10 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2.

Present:

- Ms. Joanne Harmon (Chair)
- Dr. Padraig Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Ms. Cliona Curley (Secretary)
- Dr. Barbara Brittingham
- Ms. Mary Danagher
- Mr. Oisín Hassan
- Mr. Blake Hodkinson
- Mr. Thomas McDermott
- Ms. Niamh O'Reilly
- Prof. Irene Sheridan
- Dr. Anne Walsh

Apologies: No apologies

In attendance:

- Ms. Caitríona Lawless (Recording Secretary)
- Mr. Liam Butler (Item 8)
- Mr. Eamonn Collins (Items 7-8)
- Ms. Alex Keys (Item 6)
- Dr. Bryan Maguire (Item 6)
- Ms. Karena Maguire (Item 12)
- Dr. Anna Murphy (Item 10)
- Mr. Shaun Quinn (Item 7)
- Ms. Mary Sheridan (Item 9)

INTRODUCTION

Following confirmation that a quorum was in place, the Board agreed that the agenda for the meeting was acceptable and adopted same.

1. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Board noted that one conflict of interest was declared and the Board Member undertook to leave the meeting during consideration of the item.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 27 APRIL AND 16-21 MAY 2018

The *Minutes of the QQI Board Meeting* held on 27 April and the *Minutes of the Incorporal QQI Board Meeting* held 16-21 May 2018 were **confirmed and signed**.

3. NOTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 27 APRIL AND 16-21 MAY 2018

The Board **approved** the *Notes of the Meetings of 27 April and 16-21 May 2018* for publication on the QQI website.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Board noted the **Action Tracker**.

4.1. Action Tracker

The Board noted the update on the Action Tracker.

4.2. Review of Action Tracker

The Board noted the Review of the Action Tracker and expressed its satisfaction with the use of the system to date. The Executive undertook to review the format again in June 2019.

5. DRAFT BOARD AGENDA

The Board noted the **Draft September 2018 Board Agenda**.

5.1. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The Board noted that the annual attendance by the CEO of SOLAS, Paul O'Toole at a QQI Board Meeting (a feature of the MoU between QQI and SOLAS) was confirmed for the September 2018 Board Meeting.

5.2. Strategic Planning

The Board noted that the Executive's focus would now move from the drafting of the Strategy Statement 2019-2021 to the planning of the implementation phase and an update on this would be provided at the September 2018 Board Meeting.

5.3. Relations with the Department of Education and Skills (DES)

The Board noted that the mid-year Review Meeting for the 2018 Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) was scheduled for 26 June 2018. The Board noted that the Chair and Chief Executive would update the Board on its meeting with the Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills at the next Board Meeting.

6. **APPRENTICESHIPS**

The Board received a presentation on Apprenticeships which was followed by a Questions and Answers session.

The Board noted the background and progress in validating apprenticeship programmes to date. The Board noted that apprenticeships featured strongly on the Department's agenda. Apprenticeships feature in the Action Plan for Education 2018 and as part of the National Skills Strategy 2025, the Department is aiming to have 50,000 apprenticeship and traineeship places provided by 2020.

The activity of the Apprenticeship Council, on which QQI has a representative, has led to changes in the governance of new apprenticeship programmes. The new programmes lead to more progression opportunities and are more flexible. The Board noted, however, that developments in this area have to work within the existing Industrial Training Legislation which was passed in 1967.

The Board noted that promotion of the Apprenticeship brand is the responsibility of the Apprenticeship Council and SOLAS. The Board noted that the emphasis on quality is QQI's responsibility and the Executive will continue to ensure that the relevant standards are reached.

The Chair thanked the Executive for the very interesting presentation.

7. ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW AND RELATED MATTERS

The Board noted the update on the **Organisational Review and Related Matters**.

Items omitted from this note.

7.1. Organisational Review

The Board noted the update on the Organisational Review provided by the Change Management Consultant. The Consultant briefly outlined the background to the review and updated the Board on progress and developments in relation to the Review recommendations.

The Board noted that the Change Management Consultant had attended the strategic development workshops and had been involved in the strategic planning process.

The Board noted a number of recent developments including the appointment of a Director of Corporate Services, receipt of sanction for and appointment of a Finance Manager and a Communications Manager and the separation of the Finance and Human Resources functions. The Board noted that a Policy on International Engagement had been introduced and work had also commenced on increasing CPD for management.

The Board noted that the next steps following on from the development of strategy would include work force planning and that capital expenditure in the ICT area would most likely be required within the next few years.

The Board noted that the IR Forum had also met recently.

The Board thanked the Consultant for the update and noted the progress made.

7.2. Human Resources/Staffing

The Board noted the recently appointed Communications and Finance Managers had commenced their employment with QQI. The Board noted that the HR and Finance functions were now separated as a result. The Board noted that competitions for other vacancies at Grade VII, IV and III are currently underway or are commencing shortly.

The Board welcomed the new appointments and noted that Communications had been a priority of the Board for a number of years.

8. **BUDGET AND FINANCE**

The Board noted the update on **Budget and Finance**.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Liam Butler, the new Finance Manager, to the meeting as an observer.

8.1. Funding Model Overview

The Board noted an overview of the current funding model and noted the Executive's intention to develop a more predictive funding model.

The Board noted the concerns of Board Members to QQI's vulnerability to a similar financial situation to 2017 arising again and the implications the current funding model has for the organisation's independence. A Board Member suggested that the Executive examine how similar agencies/organisations in other countries are funded, particularly those within the European Union.

The Board also requested that the Executive should flag with the Department, upcoming items likely to impact on QQI finances such as a possible move to a single premises within five years once the current leases terminate, ICT upgrades (which are likely to require capital expenditure) and the Board noted that the Executive was already examining, and where necessary flagging these areas with DES. The Board noted that the Executive had also completed some initial work around accommodation layout and design. The Board noted that the current leases are

configured to terminate around the same period and that the lead in time features on the Executive's agenda.

8.2. Bank Mandate

The Board noted that the Executive was amending the Bank Mandate to reflect a number of recent changes i.e.: a new Chairperson, a new Director of Corporate Services/Board Secretary and a new Finance Manager. The Board noted that the Chief Executive and the Manager of HR and Employee Engagement would also be retained as authorised signatories. The Board **approved** the changes.

8.3. Accommodation Plan

The Board noted that the designers had submitted plans to the Executive within the last week and the Executive would consider them shortly.

8.4. ICT Resources Approval

The Board noted the update on current ICT resource contracts and noted that the Executive was aligning the end dates of all current contracts.

The Board discussed and **approved**:

- The continuation of offsite ICT contract resources and/or services to January 2019 and to commence procurement of onsite contracts (current contracts extended by 3 months from the end of July 2018 to facilitate the procurement exercise) and
- the purchase of services in MS Azure as outlined in the proposal submitted.

9. AUDIT AND RISK

The Board noted the documents relating to **Audit and Risk**.

The Board noted a report of the Audit and Risk Committee Meeting of 26 April 2018.

9.1. Risk Appetite

The Board noted and discussed the draft Risk Appetite which the outgoing Board had provisionally approved (subject to a new Board considering it at a later date) at its final meeting in November 2017. The Board welcomed the opportunity to discuss the document. Following its discussion, the Board **approved** the Risk Appetite and requested that the Executive revisit the Risk Register and residual risks and trace them back to the Risk Appetite for consideration at the next Audit and Risk Committee Meeting prior to being presented to the Board for its attention.

9.2. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Board noted the update on the implementation of GDPR. The Board noted that the Executive had been working through its project plan on the area and work will continue through to 2019. The Board noted that Data Processing Agreements are being put in place with providers.

The Board **approved** the following policies and procedures:

- Data Protection Policy,
- Data Subject Rights Policy and Procedures,
- Subject Access Requests Policy and Procedures and
- Personal Data Breach Policy and Procedures.

9.3. Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee

The Board noted the Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 27 February 2018.

10. STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Board noted the update on **Strategic Planning**.

10.1. Corporate Plan 2018

The Board noted the interim Q2 Progress report for the 2018 Corporate Plan. The Board noted that the final set of Education and Training Boards (ETB) QA procedures were approved at the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC) meeting

held on 20 June 2018 and as a result, the Executive has now completed the re-engagement process with all 16 ETBs.

10.2. Draft Annual Report 2017

The Board noted that the Executive had incorporated as much of the Board's feedback received by the deadline on the draft report circulated in May as possible and had retained a note of any additional pieces/requests which it would incorporate into the drafting process for the 2018 Annual Report.

The Board **approved** the QQI Annual Report for 2017.

10.3. QQI Strategy Statement 2019-2021

The Board noted the draft Strategy Statement 2019-2021. The Board noted the significant amount of work completed during the development and drafting process and the clarity of the resultant statement. The Board noted the update on the public consultation. The Board noted that the draft Statement had been submitted to the Minister for Education and Skills and the Minister of State for Higher Education for their views. The Board noted that the Statement incorporated the anticipation of the new legislation, the need for capital investment in ICT, as well as implications for workforce planning, skills and research.

The Board discussed and queried a number of areas which the Executive clarified.

The Board **approved** the Strategy Statement 2019-2021 subject to the feedback received from the Minister for Education and Skills. The Board noted that the Executive would contact Board Members in relation to an incorporeal Board meeting if necessary.

The Board noted that the next phase of the development process was beginning, including work on an implementation and execution plan. The Board noted that the Executive would shortly begin work on the Corporate Plan for 2019.

The Chair and Executive thanked the Board for all their feedback and contributions. The Chair thanked and congratulated the Executive on the production of the final version of the Strategy Statement.

11. GOVERNANCE

A Board Member withdrew from the consideration of part of this item.

The Board noted the documents relating to **Governance**.

11.1. Reserved Functions

The Board noted the annual review of the Reserved Functions of the Board. This item had been deferred from the April 2018 Board Meeting to facilitate a Board Induction Session. The Board noted a number of amendments to the Reserved Functions, largely, to remove time bound one-off functions.

The Board **approved** the revised Reserved Functions of the Board.

11.2. Code of Business Conduct

The Board noted that following the annual review of the Code of Business Conduct, there were a number of suggested changes to the Code.

The Board **approved** the revised Code of Business Conduct.

11.3. QQI Committees

The Board **approved** the re-appointment of Thomas McDermott as Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for a period of 3 years to 23 September 2021.

The Chair, on behalf of the Board, expressed appreciation and recognition of the work completed to date.

11.4. Customer Charter Action Plan

The Board noted that the Department had granted the Executive a derogation in relation to the development of a Customer Charter Action Plan to the end of Q2

2018. The Board noted the draft plan presented covered a one year period to June 2019 at which point the Executive would review the Charter and Customer Action Plan in light of the new Strategy Statement.

The Board **approved** the Customer Charter Action Plan.

The Board noted that no complaints of service had been received during 2017.

11.5. Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) Management Letter

The Board noted the Management Letter, dated 14 May 2018, regarding the Audit of the 2016 Financial Statements, which was tabled for information.

12. **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU)**

The Board noted the document entitled **Memorandum of Understanding**.

The Board noted the first MoU between QQI and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) had concluded on 31 December 2017. The Board noted a report on the progress arising from the activities etc. contained within the first MoU and noted the advancement of the relationship between the two agencies as a result of the Agreement. The MoU had proven to be beneficial to both agencies in recognising the roles of each other and defining those roles for HEIs. The new draft MoU continues to build upon the original and develops mutual work areas further as well as including some new initiatives.

The Board **approved** the draft MoU between QQI and the HEA which will cover the period May 2018 – 31 December 2020.

13. **COMPREHENSIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

The Board noted the document relating to the **Comprehensive Policy Development Programme**.

The Board noted and **endorsed** a revision to the *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers* (Version 2, 2018).

14. ITEMS FOR NOTING

The Board noted the **Items for Noting**.

14.1. Approvals and Reviews Committee (ARC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Approvals and Reviews Committee held on 8 March 2018.

14.2. Policies and Standards Committee (PSC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Policies and Standards Committee held on 9 March 2018.

14.3. Programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC)

The Board noted the report of the meeting of the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee held on 11 April 2018.

14.4. Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events

The Board noted the Media Mentions, Key Developments, Current and Forthcoming Events (from 1 May to 22 June 2018).

14.5. Rolling Board Agenda 2018

The Board noted an update on the Rolling Board Agenda for 2018.

15. NEXT MEETING

The Board noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday, 21 September 2018** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

THIS CONCLUDED THE BUSINESS OF THE MEETING.