sportscotland

Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Board Meeting held at the **sport**scotland National Centre Inverclyde on Tuesday 28 April at 09:00

Present

Members

Ms M Campbell, Chair
Mr A Bain
Ms M Connolly
Ms J Gotts
Mr A Kerr
Mr S Lindsay
Mr T McDaid
Mr T Mistry
Ms H Ousta
Ms G Treasurer
Mr S Sweeney
Mr A Watt

In Attendance

Council Officers

Mr F Dunlop
Mr C Burn
Ms A Langley
Mr M Drummond
Ms F Wernham
Ms A Wyllie
Ms L Cook

Scottish Government

Mr A Sinclair

UK Sport

Mr N Webborn
Ms S Munday

Observer

Ms N Russell

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Business

1 Apologies for Absence

- *None.*

2 Declarations of Interest

- *None.*

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 24 February 2026

- *The minutes of the Board meeting held on 24 February 2026 were approved as a true and accurate record.*

4 Matters Arising

None.

5 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair introduced Ms Russell who provided an overview of her career with Police Scotland and the leadership programme she is undertaking.

The Chair thanked the Board members for their time meeting with her for the one to one discussions. The Chair summarised the key themes from the meetings, including that Board meetings are providing the right balance of strategic discussions, governance and assurance; that Board members recognised an opportunity in the coming months with a settled management team, new monies and a new government to progress significant work; and, the opportunity to continue to streamline Board papers and how information is shared, utilising technology and AI where appropriate.

The Chair updated on other key meetings, including with Mr Webborn, Chair of UK Sport and Ally Boyle, Chair of Public Health Scotland who will attend the Monday evening session of our June Board.

6 Executive Management Report

Mr Dunlop updated on the UK Safe Sport project which is exploring options for the delivery of safe sport. Mr Dunlop explained that a feasibility phase will now start to better understand three different models, those being a UK wide framework with a fully devolved delivery, similar to the status quo, a more centralised UK policy and strategic lead with devolved operational delivery and a fully centralised UK led service. Mr Dunlop explained that once this more detailed phase of work is complete a paper and full discussion will be brought back to Board before any decisions or commitments are made.

The Board discussed the complexities where a service like child protection is devolved and that the feasibility work must explore and understand this fully as well as considering the financial implications while retaining a focus on how we make sport a safe place for all to take part.

Mr Dunlop updated that we have now reached the end of our two year partnership with COSLA, he reminded the Board that the original objective was to better understand and connect with local politicians. Mr Dunlop went on to outline the progress and developments which have happened as a result of the partnership, as well as some of the challenges. The Board discussed the progress that had been made, the local elections due in 2027 and the opportunity to build on our work to date. It was agreed that the Chair and Ceo should meet the senior team at COSLA.

Mr Dunlop updated on recent meetings with the LTA and Tennis Scotland, including a meeting between the **sport**scotland Chair and the Chair and CEO of Tennis Scotland. The Board discussed the range of work with tennis, including the capital commitments, the partnership with the LTA and the involvement of Scottish Government. It was agreed that a paper should be brought to the next Board meeting which summaries all strands of work.

Mr Burn updated on the SGB Coalition consultation which is being led by David Joy and Paul Bush. The work is scheduled to be finished by the end of August and Board will be kept up to date with progress.

Mr Burn updated on staffing across the Sport Directorate, he explained the changes in the performance team and in the development team with a particular focus on aligning staff to business plan priorities.

Mr Burn gave an overview of the progress in investing the new monies. He explained that to allow partners and internal staff to manage this work different streams have been phased across a number of months, he reassured Board that with the exception of school swimming, all strands are on schedule. Mr Dunlop explained that the school swimming strand of investment was currently being discussed between Scottish Government, Scottish Swimming, CoSLA and **sport**scotland but that he was confident that there would be a resolution, albeit the roll out of the programme would be affected.

Mr Burn updated on a range of other SGBs which are receiving specific support.

Ms Langley presented a preview of the branding for the Summer of Sport 2026. The Board discussed how local opportunities will be advertised and connected. Ms Langley explained the engagement we have with all Local authority teams and how this is being connected through the branding and through our website. The Board asked for more information on the monitoring and evaluation of summer of sport. Ms Langley explained that we are contracting a third party to monitor and report on the investment. The Chair asked that we also capture and tell stories around the impact of the money and how this connects to Sport for Life and wider outcomes.

Ms Langley highlighted the work Ms Keast, Policy and Public Affairs Manager has done on post-election planning and engagement. The Board discussed the approach and tactics, supporting the medium / longer term approach, recognising new MSPs will be receiving significant information in the first few months. The Chair added the importance of the opportunity that summer of sport offered, particularly the Commonwealth Games.

The Board asked for more information on trends showing highlights or concerns from the Good Day at Work survey? Ms Langley answered that overall the results are positive, including good levels of staff engagement with the survey. These was a slight overall drop in the results but that was expected given the changes last year, nonetheless the detail was being carefully considered and once again we would produce an organisational action plan as well as team level discussions.

- *The Board noted the Executive Management Report.*

For Decision

7 Planning and Reporting Documents

7.1 2026/27 Business Plan

Mr Drummond thanked the Board for their feedback during the sprint session and presented the business plan structure which has taken account of that discussion.

The Board discussed the approach to inclusion and how it was presented in the business plan, asking if the breadth of our work and commitments are adequately articulated. Mr Webborn asked about the latest insight around young people with a disability and how inclusive school and club sport was for those young people. Mr Dunlop outlined the EDI Approach which underpins the business plan and explains our commitment to inclusion across our people, programmes and new ideas and how this approach was informed by Equality in Sport research which we commissioned and published in 2024. Mr Burn gave an overview of the work that SDS has been doing, including their delivery as part of teacher education, he recognised that while this is very positive, SDS continue to highlight the challenges and gaps with current provision,

The Board discussed the measurement framework and the specific actions in the plan, recognising this was still work in progress but asking how confident and comfortable the staff team were with this work? Mr Drummond responded that there are some areas that we need to spend more time to ensure we have the right measures in place. As a starting point we are continuing with the baseline data used previously which allows for trend analysis, he confirmed updates will continue to come to Board as part of the quarterly reporting process.

Mr Burn explained the work that has been led by the staff teams to develop the thinking for the new strands of investment, how this has been done with partners and with the support of all parts of the organisation. The Board recognised the significance of this work and of building it into the Business Plan and budget in the timescales.

The Chair noted that the Board are happy to approve and thanked the team and Mr Drummond for his stewardship.

- *The Board approved the 2026/27 Business Plan.*

7.2 2026/27 Budget

Mr Drummond presented the budget for approval, highlighting key aspects of income and expenditure.

The Board asked for more information on the £1.5 million of new monies which has been allocated for monitoring and other one of activities. Mr Drummond explained that one off expenditure this year helps manage inflationary costs in future years and the relationship between this years budget and the medium term financial planning.

The Board discussed the various strands of new money, asking for more information on process and confidence of spend and that we have the right focus and balance of monies. Ms Langley explained the approach which has utilised our existing investment policies and processes, in addition a project oversight group is in place, with all members of the SMT included. Mr Burn explained that he anticipated the demand for new monies would be greater than what is available, he reminded the Board that the strands of money were based on many years of work with partners, but he did acknowledge there may need to be some flexibility between strands once we understand more detail. Mr Burn highlighted that while we are confident that the strands of investment are what is needed by the sector, they do not address the demand for capital investment.

The Chair confirmed that the Board are happy to approve the budget.

- *The Board approved the 2026/27 budget.*

- *The Chair, Mr Dunlop and Ms Munday left the meeting.*

8 Risk Management

8.1 Risk Register

8.2 Risk Framework

Mr Drummond introduced the paper and provided an update on the current risks.
The Board highlighted that there are four risks in the summary which are beyond our risk appetite and have been so for some time. Mr Drummond responded that we are continuing to attempt to reduce any risks that are above the risk tolerance. The Board asked the senior management team to review these risks again.

The Board discussed the mitigation action around external insurance. Mr Drummond updated on this action and the approach which has been taken and discussed with the ARC.

Ms Langley explained that as she becomes more familiar with the organisation and the sector she will continue to work with Mr Drummond, the senior team and the ARC on our risk register and approach.

- *The Board noted the Risk Register and Framework.*

9 Board and Committee Terms of Reference

Ms Langley introduced the item and updated on the Audit and Risk Committee revised Terms of Reference which include one minor adjustment. The Trust Board and People Development Committee will consider their Terms of Reference at their May meetings and changes brought back to the June Board.

The Board asked how formal the regular self-assessment requirement is? Mr Drummond answered that this will consist of annual one to ones with the Chair.

Ms Langley updated that the advert to coopt a member on to the Audit and Risk Committee has now gone live.

Mr Mistry emphasised the importance of the cross over between committees.

- *The Board endorsed the Terms of Reference.*

For Discussion

10 Medium Term Financial Planning

Mr Drummond introduced the paper and set the context.

The Board discussed the Lottery balance and the income profile and assumptions. Mr Drummond explained that slightly more confidence is emerging on the growth in Lottery income, Ms Langley added that at this stage this could be quickly off set by a range of negative economic factors. The

Board asked Mr Drummond to consider the lottery balance as a percentage rather than a static figure and it was agreed to discuss with other distributors their policies for managing the balance.

The Board discussed the impact of pension valuations, Mr Drummond will continue to monitor this.

- *The Board noted the Medium Term Financial Planning paper.*

- *Mr McDaid, Mr Sinclair and Mr Drummond left the meeting.*
- *Ms Wernham and Ms Wyllie joined the meeting.*

11 Active Schools

Ms Wernham and Ms Wyllie presented an update on the Active Schools work themes from the evaluation.

The Board discussed the principle of an inflationary uplift, recognising the changing ratio of investment over the period of the program and the importance of maintaining a national commitment and coverage. Mr Burn added that at this time the costs of this have not been built into the medium term finances and that more work is required to understand the implications. The Board supported the principle but agreed that the detailed implications need to be considered, including how the model may evolve and the potential for differences in provision from one authority to another. Ms Wyllie gave examples of discussions taking place that are considering how resources can be more targeted in certain clusters.

The Board discussed the changing demographic of volunteering and the considerations around paid delivery, particularly when we are focussing on underrepresented groups. Ms Wyllie explained that we are seeing different local models emerging, the key policy direction from the Scottish Government is that the activities should be free to the pupils.

The Board discussed the wider outcomes and benefits that the Active Schools programme delivers and if and how these could be captured and reported. Ms Wyllie explained the balance between empowering a targeted and needs based approach at a local level and creating national targets, but recognised the programme delivers against a broad set of outcomes. Ms Wyllie explained the monitoring and access to data that we now have across all 32 Local authorities.

The Board asked for more information around pupils with additional support needs. Ms Wyllie explained that there is some great practice and examples but that an over arching challenge is often with pupils not having the support to stay for after school activities and curriculum time then it becomes even more important to build confidence and engagement.

The Vice Chair summarised the discussion, confirming the Boards in principle support to explore the financial model through the LA meetings which will start in the Autum to discuss the new four year partnerships.

- *The Board noted the Active Schools presentation.*

For Information

12 Audit and Risk Committee draft minutes

Noted and taken as read.

13 Any Other Business

Mr Webborn thanked everyone for their hospitality and the opportunity to spend time with the **sport**scotland Board.

The Board requested indicative dates for when Board members might be required for events at Scotland House. Ms Cook will create a spreadsheet to capture the Board's availability during the Commonwealth Games.

14 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 28 and Tuesday 29 June 2026 (Inverclyde)

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.