

sportscotland

Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Board Meeting held at the **sportscotland** National Centre Inverclyde on Tuesday 29 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
Mr S Sweeney
Ms G Treasurer
Mr A Watt

In Attendance

Council Officers

Mr F Dunlop
Ms R Barrington
Mr C Burn
Ms J Dixon
Mr M Drummond
Ms L Cook

Scottish Government

Mr A Sinclair

Guest presenters

Ms Z Burton, Deloitte
Mr J McNeill, Deloitte

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Business

1 Apologies for Absence

➤ *Ms H Ousta.*

2 Declarations of Interest

➤ *None.*

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 25 February 2025

➤ *The minutes of the Board meeting held on 25 February 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record.*

4 Matters Arising

None.

5 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed the five new Board members, Ms Connolly, Ms Treasurer, Ms Gotts, Mr Kerr and Mr McDaid and looks forward to working with them all.

The Chair updated that she attended the Health and Sport Committee meeting with Mr Dunlop, which presented a good opportunity to discuss the work being delivered by the sector, the impact of the work and the challenges the sector is facing.

The Chair also updated that she attended the UK Sports Minister Cabinet meeting, where the Sports Ministers for the UK and Ireland come together with the respective Chairs and exchange information and raise awareness. The meetings have lapsed recently but there is an attempt to get back on track to meet twice a year.

The Chair congratulated Bruce Mouat's rink on their recent win at the World Men's Curling Championships. British Curling have now qualified teams in all disciplines for next year's Olympic and Paralympic Games.

6 Executive Management Report

Mr Dunlop provided an update on transgender guidance following the Supreme Court ruling. Discussions have taken place with the other Home Country Sports Councils and initial views have been sought from our legal advisors. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced that it will issue further guidance and that will include guidance for sport and leisure and until that is available, we will continue to refer to and promote The Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport guidance which was published by the UK Sports Councils in 2021. The Board supported this position and encouraged communications to reinforce the message that sports should not react until clear guidance comes from EHRC.

Mr Dunlop updated on discussions with the LTA and Scottish Tennis around the utilisation of up to £500k of the ring-fenced tennis monies to expand the schools tennis programme in Scotland. While supportive the Board asked that discussions around capital investment was also

progressed, and a clear position reached in a timely manner. The Board also discussed the importance of the school's programme linking to local clubs.

Mr Dunlop updated the Board on developments at Cricket Scotland. He also highlighted the work being undertaken on the lessons that can be learnt by **sportscotland**, a paper will be brought back to the Board in June. The Board discussed the range of tools that are in place to support governing bodies to continually improve and to manage difficult situations in a timely manner.

Mr Burn highlighted progression that has been made with the London Marathon Foundation investment since February. Community grant schemes which are in line with the club and community agenda across two LAs will now be funded.

Mr Burn updated that UK Sport have now awarded £1.3 million investment to support athletes in Scotland, this is in line with previous Olympic and Paralympic cycles. Mr Burn gave the Board an update on the discussions around Sport Org and the considerations around it.

Mr Burn updated on a range of Scottish Governing Body matters including discussions with the Scottish Government and the SFA in relation to UEFA legacy; support for Scottish Athletics as they establish a new SCIO to run Grangemouth Athletics Track; changes at BadmintonScotland, with Jonathan Russell being appointed as an interim CEO; changes at PaddleScotland with Kevin Pringle being appointed as interim CEO.

The Board asked for an update on the facilities audit. Mr Burn explained that the audit of facilities is complete and that we are now finalising the next stage of the work which is looking at usage. Mr Burn explained that an update will be brought to the June Board meeting, and he expects a final report will then come to the August Board meeting. The Board emphasised the importance of having this work complete by the August Board meeting so that the findings can be used in the autumn.

Ms Steven updated on the Voluntary Severance scheme confirming that twenty four people have now accepted their offers. Ms Steven added that this is on top of those posts not filled through recruitment management and will result in a reduction of circa fifty posts in the organisation. Ms Steven explained that the Leadership Group will now use the findings from the workforce review to manage the changes and consider further actions. The Board discussed the transition process, recognising that by using a voluntary scheme and recruitment management the gaps are not always in the right place, Ms Steven acknowledged this point and explained that the vacancies are reasonably balanced across the organisation but that the workforce review findings will now help shape the management and next steps, Ms Steven added that the People Development Committee will continue to receive updates and be consulted. The Board raised a question around retaining organisational knowledge through this change period and the importance of having this documented. Ms Steven will ensure this is built in.

Ms Steven updated that three Glenmore Lodge instructors were involved in a road traffic incident in January. All three instructors are now back in Scotland, and we are continuing to support them as they recover.

Ms Steven updated on the current live litigations.

Ms Steven updated on estates, highlighting that the Caledonia House sale is now in the final stages, she added that now Glasgow 2026 organising committee have confirmed they are moving out of Templeton and a review of that office will commence.

➤ *The Board noted the Executive Management Report.*

For Decision

7 Planning and reporting documents

7.1 Corporate Plan

Mr Dunlop reminded the Board of the discussion at the December Board meeting where it was agreed that we would take a light touch approach to reflect any changes, this was then reviewed at the February Board meeting. The final formatted version is now included for approval.

➤ *The Board approved the Corporate Plan.*

7.2 2025/26 Business Plan

Mr Dunlop reminded the Board of their feedback at the February meeting against the draft Business Plan. This feedback has been taken into account with a more streamlined plan and measurement framework that focusses on the 'enablers'. Mr Dunlop clarified that the business plan is for one year and that during this year we will continue to refine our approach to business planning, monitoring and reporting.

The Board discussed the importance of the quarterly reports. Ms Stevens explained that at the June meeting the Board will receive the quarter 4 report for financial year 2024/25 in the old format. The Board requested that they also see a template for the new format to allow for feedback ahead of the Q1 report for financial year 2025/26. The Board asked that further consideration is given to the integration of the Business Plan and the Workforce Plan.

➤ *The Board approved the 2025/25 Business Plan.*

7.3 2025/26 Budget

Mr Dunlop gave an overview of the key financial context, including flat line income from both Scottish Government and National Lottery, inflationary pressures including the impact of pay awards and the commitments against the Lottery balance. The Board discussed the budget, including the Lottery balance and considerations around that, requesting a further paper be brought to the next meeting.

The Chair commented that this is the culmination of an enormous piece of work and congratulated the staff team for completing it. The Board recorded their appreciation to the staff who have been involved in all three documents as they have taken an enormous amount of work and recognised the complexity of the task given the number of changes and dynamics that come with that. Mr Dunlop will pass this on to the staff in his next update.

➤ *The Board approved the 2025/26 Budget.*

8 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mr Dunlop highlighted that our EDI approach has three strands, people, the system and new ideas and everything we do links to this approach and to the Public Sector Equalities Duty and our responsibilities against these duties.

Mr Dunlop explained that there were three papers, Mainstreaming Report, Equality Outcomes Report and Employee Report , all three reports will be published on our website.

Mr Dunlop summarised the reports by noting that progress is being made in all areas but that there was still work to do. The Board noted the changes demonstrated in the Employee report and welcomed the progress, recognising this has been in a time of limited recruitment. Mr Dunlop

added that awareness and understanding across the sector is improving, he recognised the significant work done by equality organisations and partners in educating and supporting more inclusive practices. The Board discussed the importance of intersectionality and the impact of cost of living / poverty on participation in sport.

➤ *The Board approved the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report.*

9 Risk Management

9.1 Risk Register

9.2 Risk Framework

Mr Drummond provided an overview of the risk management papers and highlighted that the risk framework incorporates the revised risk appetite, which was approved by the Board in December, the changes then led to a refresh of the risk register. There is an annual review of the register, and it is discussed twice a year at the Audit and Risk Committee.

Mr Drummond highlighted key changes which were discussed by the Audit and Risk Committee in February including a new risk (number seventeen) which reflects the impact of the cost of living crisis on **sportscotland's** key SGB partners as this was previously only captured for LAs.

Mr Lindsay, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee reiterated that this is an enormous piece of work and was the first review of the risk appetite of the organisation in six years. A lot has fundamentally changed and that is thanks to the team for all their hard work. The Chair commented that it is a major refresh and shows a much better understanding of where our risk is coming from and what the appetite is.

The Board asked if self-insurance has been taken off the table? Mr Lindsay responded that it has not been taken off the table yet and we have not given up but it is difficult in the context of public bodies as we are relatively small so it is a huge issue when we have a litigation claim. Mr Drummond added that there is a self-insurance position that we are encouraged to take but the parameters of that is challenging and there is tension to maintain.

The Board discussed whether they should spend more time on the specific risks and the mitigations. Mr Lindsay responded that the Audit and Risk Committee formally review the risk register twice a year as well as reviewing when required. The Audit and Risk Committee bring issues of concern to the Board if they feel matters are not being addressed and they will bring concerns out with the annual cycle as they see necessary.

The Board asked if the recent staffing developments should be captured as a risk. Ms Steven explained that the staffing changes were being managed as a risk but at this stage it was not deemed to be a corporate level risk, this would be subject to continual monitoring by the Leadership Group.

➤ *The Board approved the Risk Register and Risk Framework.*

10 Board and Committee Terms of Reference

Ms Steven updated that the four Chairs met, reviewed and updated each of the terms of reference with minor changes including one for the Audit and Risk Committee that is still to be clarified in regard to membership for non-Board members.

The Chair highlighted that the new Board members have been allocated to Committees for a period of time and there will be an opportunity to switch around. The Board are supportive of the approach, including where appropriate considering non Board members to sit on committees.

➤ *The Board approved the Board and Committee Terms of Reference.*

11 Memorandum of Understanding (sportscotland and Trust Company)

The Chair noted that the Memorandum of Understanding will potentially change in the future as Mr Bain and Ms Steven review it and OSCR might also influence some changes.

➤ *The Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding (sportscotland and Trust Company).*

For Discussion

12 Looking Ahead - Medium Term Financial Planning

Mr Drummond presented the medium term financial planning paper, explaining the assumptions used to build the model. The Board discussed the assumptions, including the options to make different choices in the years ahead. The Chair asked Mr Sinclair for an update on the Scottish Governments commitment to double the budget, Mr Sinclair explained that Ministers remain committed, however the financial reality remains extremely challenging.

The Board reflected on the commitment to get more money to the sector and how further difficult decisions need to be made if this commitment is to materialise.

The Chair commented that the London Marathon investment has levered another £1.4 million and the fact that it provides a new opportunity for people to buy into so there could be other opportunities out there.

The Chair noted that the conversation continues as we work through the next phase and asked Board members to share their thoughts and ideas with the Senior Management Team so they can distil a way forward.

13 Looking Ahead - Strategic Workforce Review

Ms Dixon explained the context for the strategic workforce review reminding the Board that it was in 2008 that an exercise of this nature was last carried out. As well as the strategic need it was also accepted that the financial pressures associated with the staffing budget meant that this work was very important to help guide the organisation in the next few years. Ms Dixon explained that we have contracted Deloitte to lead the work and introduced Ms Burton and Mr McNeill to present.

The Board discussed the review and asked if Deloitte had found anything surprising or particular to **sportscotland**. Ms Burton explained that the majority of the findings were consistent with other similar organisations that they had worked with, but she did note the positive retention of staff which was more unusual. Mr McNeill added that the external stakeholder sessions had proven to be extremely valuable and reinforced that **sportscotland** were in touch with external partners, their views and their needs in the future.

The Board supported the direction presented by Deloitte, recognising a number of the strands were already in progress and that it would now be up to the Leadership Group to manage change through evolution and using the tools available. The Board asked for more information on the management and implementation of changes. Ms Steven replied that the next step is to take the recommendations away, discuss in more detail as a Leadership Group and then develop a project plan for implementation, Ms Steven added that we have brought in a fixed term HR resource to support this process.

The Board asked Deloitte their view on how aligned staff are to the Corporate Strategy and the Business Plan. Ms Burton replied that overall, everyone is really aligned to the vision and mission and are passionate about their jobs, she felt that more work was needed to align the business plan and individual work programmes. Ms Steven explained this will form part of the work in 2025 /26 when we will review our performance management system, quarterly reports and ultimately individual work plans.

The Board noted that some small contingencies had been built into the budget to help manage the change, however encouraged the executive team to stay focussed on both the savings and the costs associated with change, advising that there will be unseen or planned for costs that emerge.

The Board discussed the internal and external communications to support this work and how this must align with the business plan ambitions and changes. Mr Dunlop explained the internal communications plan which has been put in place, including quarterly staff pulse surveys, and the external communications which has emphasised the need to protect the investment in our partners and our ambition to invest more in club and community sport.

The Chair expressed the Board's thanks to Ms Burton and Mr McNeill.

For Information

14 Environmental Sustainability in Sport

The Chair asked Board members to feed any comments or thoughts into Ms Steven.

Noted and taken as read.

15 Commonwealth Games

The Chair commented that it was good to hear from Mr Doig, Ms Middlemiss and Mr Batty last night who provided a good flavour of the plans for both Team Scotland and the 2026 Games. Mr Burn and his team will continue to work closely with both organisations to maximise the opportunities, including releasing staff to support Team Scotland.

Noted and taken as read.

16 Trust Board meeting draft minutes

Mr Bain, Chair of the Trust Board, suggested a review of the Trust Company should be considered later in the year to take account of the changes to the Corporate and Business Plans and the workforce review.

Noted and taken as read.

17 People Committee meeting draft minutes (verbal update)

Mr Mistry updated that the minutes will be available in the June Board pack.

8 Any Other Business

Mr Dunlop highlighted that the August Board meeting will be at Glenmore Lodge and that the Trust Company Board will meet on the Monday and have joint session with the **sportscotland** Board on the Monday night.

The Chair announced the opportunity to attend the Street Soccer lunch on Friday 9th May and asked Board members to contact Ms Cook for more information.

The Chair thanked the Board for their contributions.

9 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 June 2025 (Inverclyde)

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