# sportscotland

**Council Meeting**

Minutes of the Council Board Meeting held at the **sport**scotland National Centre Inverclyde on Tuesday 10 December at 09:00

### Present

### Members

Ms M Campbell, Chair

Mr A Bain

Mr C Grant

Mr T Mistry

Ms H Ousta

Ms S Sandilands

Mr S Sweeney

Ms K U’ren

Mr A Watt

### In Attendance

### Council Officers

Mr F Dunlop

Ms R Barrington

Mr C Burn

Ms L Cook

**Scottish Government**

Mr A Sinclair

**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Business**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

* *Mr S Lindsay and Mr D McDonald.*

1. **Declarations of Interest**

* *None.*

1. **Minutes of Meeting held on 29 October 2024**

* *The minutes of the Board meeting held on 29 October 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.*

1. **Matters Arising**

None.

1. **Chairs Opening Remarks**

The Chair highlighted that the Scottish Sports Awards was a great event, the format worked well, and it was great to have support from the Cabinet Secretary and the Minister.

The Chair updated on the Board recruitment process and that recommendations are now with the Minister for approval. New Board members will be invited to the February meeting as observers and will formally start on the 1 March.

The Chair noted that Katherine Grainger’s term as Chair of UK Sport is due to end in March and that she has been appointed as Chair of the British Olympic Association. The recruitment for Katherine’s replacement is expected to start in the new year.

1. **Executive Management Report**

Mr Dunlop updated on the most recent meeting with the Minister where the Chair and Mr Dunlop provided an overview of the business planning process and some of the early considerations which were emerging. Mr Dunlop explained that the Minister understood both the financial and strategic pressures and decisions which had to be made and had reiterated her support for the work that **sport**scotland is doing and the importance of sport and physical activity. Mr Dunlop explained that the **sport**scotland Annual Review meeting will take place on the 19 December with the Minister and the Cabinet Secretary.

The Board discussed the frustrations that despite the positive feedback, the government had not made any progress towards their commitment to double the sport and physical activity budget. The Board agreed that further discussion and consideration should be given to how we continue to present the case for sport.

Mr Sinclair acknowledged the frustration; he explained the significant pressure that the health budget is under and the unpalatable decisions that Ministers are faced with. He reminded the Board that there is one budget left this parliamentary term and suggested **sport**scotland should continue to raise the case for sport.

The Chair concluded the discussion by recognising the importance of getting the balance right between expressing our disappointment whilst maintaining our positive relationships.

Mr Dunlop updated on the various strands of tennis development and the intention to meet with Scottish Tennis and the Lawn Tennis Association in January.

Mr Burn gave an overview of recent discussions with Commonwealth Games Scotland. CGS are requesting investment to support Team Scotland in the 2026 Games, this request will be considered as part of the usual business plan and budget process. The Board asked about plans had the Games been held in Australia, Mr Burn explained that there would have been a request for investment regardless of where the Games are held and that our approach in the past couple of cycles has been to provide a ‘core’ investment on an annual basis to CGS and then consider a Games time investment based on supporting TEAM Scotland.

Mr Burn updated that we are hosting a networking meeting for SGBs Chairs and CEOs in Stirling on the 23rd January and asked any Board members to notify Ms Cook if they would like to attend.

Mr Burn highlighted the recommendation to recognise Pickleball Scotland, explaining that all home countries will consider this recommendation, the Board supported the recommendation.

Mr Burn explained a new opportunity that he is exploring with the London Marathon Foundation where a partnership approach with various local authorities could see additional monies being made available for club sport, with a particular focus on clubs operating and supporting young people in areas of poverty.

Mr Burn finished his update by sharing the revised Sports Development structure which has been developed in consultation with Heads of Sports Development following Mr Lunns’ resignation. He explained that Mr Lunns’ role will not be replaced as the workforce review is due to happen soon, but the Sports Development Heads have been reprofiled to oversee the portfolio with Ms Lynn being moved from Active Schools to Club and Community with a responsibility for national and local connect. Ms Wernham will oversee school and education and retain a responsibility for people development and Mr Cowan will retain his places responsibilities, including national and local partner responsibilities. Mr Burn explained the approach will delegate further responsibilities to Lead Managers and Partnership Managers.

The Board discussed the changes in the context of the wider business planning and prioritisation exercise, Ms Barrington added that the Strategic Workforce review is being progressed and the recent Good Day at Work survey results which will both be updated to the next People Committee. The Board agreed that an update to the next Board meeting would also be appropriate.

Ms Barrington highlighted that the paper includes two national survey results; the Scottish Health survey and the Scottish Household survey which have just been published. Ms Barrington noted that the surveys are moving to every two years so there will not be another one until 2026 and suggested that we should think about ways in which we can use other data and research to support our thinking going forward, this is work in progress.

Ms Barrington updated on estates, explaining that the sale of Caledonia House was progressing slower than hoped and that progress with the Cumbrae sale was progressing in line with planning conditions and timelines. Ms Barrington updated the board that there are two litigations which remain ongoing.

* *The Board noted the Executive Management Report.*

**For Decision**

1. **Corporate Strategy**

Mr Dunlop introduced the paper explaining the recommendation that Sport for Life remains fit for purpose with some small changes which do not require a consultation process. Mr Dunlop explained that the changes would take account of the new Physical Activity for Health Framework which has replaced the Active Scotland Outcomes and to capture our commitment to environmental / sustainability agenda.

The Board agreed that the approach sounds sensible, recognising that there is more change, which is being captured through the business planning process, but that Sport for Life continues to give the correct strategic direction.

The Board asked for more detail on the impact of including sustainability and climate change. Mr Dunlop explained that we are continuing to do work in this area, particularly through our facilities investment and expertise, the issue was that Sport for Life did not capture or recognise the importance of this work.

The Board discussed the measurement framework and the need to demonstrate the impact of our investment and our strategy. Mr Dunlop agreed and explained the different levels of measurement from the annual report, the business plan measures and KPI’s to individual team measures which are captured in Pentana. Mr Dunlop went on to confirm this continues to be work in progress and the board will see it again as part of the draft business plan at the February meeting.

The Board suggested that we should emphasise the work we are doing on safe sport and safeguarding more.

The Chair confirmed that the Board are happy to support direction of travel.

* *The Board noted the Corporate Strategy update.*

1. **2025/ 2026 Business Planning**

Mr Dunlop introduced the paper and noted that over a period of time our long term investment and commitment to partners has been well received and stability of funding is vital for them. The business plan review process has been an opportunity to review all parts of our work and investment, but we should have a clear ambition to get back to a place where our partners have confidence in our long term commitment and direction.

Ms Barrington summarised the outcome of the business plan reviews which have been presented and discussed at Board meetings in June, August, and October 2024. Ms Barrington went on to present the medium term financial modelling which highlighted the significant challenge across the next three years and explained that even when we stop or review activities as discussed in the business plan review process there is still a significant gap.

The Board discussed the rising staff costs, including the assumptions built into the medium term financial modelling. Mr Dunlop explained that a recruitment freeze on all but essential posts has been in place for some time but the uncertainty and lack of control that this approach offers means we cannot rely on it to deliver the savings required. The Board discussed other options and concluded that a voluntary severance scheme should be considered further. The timing of this scheme was discussed alongside the workforce review and the affordability, the Board agreed that the SMT should consider this further and if appropriate progress with a voluntary severance scheme in the new year.

The Board discussed the importance of maintaining or growing the percentage of our investment that goes to partners. It was agreed that we should continue to monitor this, albeit there will always be anomalies on a year by year basis.

The Board discussed the importance of the learning from the inclusion projects being captured and built into our work going forward. Mr Dunlop agreed and reassured the board that was the intention and was in line with the **sport**scotland EDI approach.

The Board discussed the work of the national centres, acknowledging the important role they play in delivering the outcomes of Sport for Life, supporting partners and delivering sport. The Chair of the Trust Board recognised the good work but also the need to continually review the model and the work of the centres to make sure they are delivering high quality opportunities and support to the sector but also running as efficiently as possible, he went on to reassure the Board that the Trust Board understands the pressures on **sport**scotland and that the Trust Company will have to play its part in managing this in the years ahead.

The Board acknowledge the quality of the work presented over the last three meetings and how that has helped make decisions on how we prioritise our work in the years ahead. The Board considered the impact this change will have on staff and partners and asked that regular feedback is sought from both as we progress and that regular updates were brought back to the Board.

The Chair thanked everyone for their input to the discussion and to the Leadership Group and SMT for their work to this point.

* *The Board noted the 2025/ 2026 Business Planning.*

**8.1 Investment into SGB & Local Authorities progress report**

Mr Burn gave an overview of our work and reviews with SGBs and local authorities, he reminded the Board that, as part of the draft Business Plan and budget that will come to the February meeting, the Board will see all proposed 2025 / 2026 investments.

Mr Burn updated the Board on a range of SGB issues and challenges that we are supporting. Mr Burn went on to update the Board on specific Local authorities where discussions are ongoing regarding their commitment to Active Schools.

The Board acknowledged the challenges and discussed the support that we give to each SGB, Mr Burn explained there is a range of support through our Expert Resource programme and also the role of the staff team at **sport**scotland.

1. **Revised Risk Appetite Approach**

Ms Barrington noted that this is not an update to the risk matrix but an exercise to understand the level of appetite we are willing to accept in the pursuit of our objectives. The exercise was conducted over the summer with input from our internal auditors. The paper explains all the options and we are looking for approval on our appetite and we will then refresh our risk assessments with the Audit and Risk Committee and provide an update to the April Board meeting.

The Chair noted that if Mr Lindsay were here, he would confirm that it has been thoroughly discussed at the Audit and Risk Committee and ask the Board to endorse.

The Board commented that the report is easy to understand and offers a logical way forward. The Board approved the changes to the risk appetite approach, recognising this will be applied to the risk register and then brought back to the April Board meeting.

* *The Board approved the Revised Risk Appetite approach.*

1. **Equality update**

Ms Barrington introduced the paper, explaining the progress that has been made with our EDI Approach in the last four years and specifically highlighting the work in our New Ideas section which relates directly to our Equality Outcomes. Ms Barrington explained that the intention was to continue with our approach, recognising there continues to be significant work to do across all protected characteristics.

The Board discussed some of the challenges with the new ideas work, recognising the importance of working with and through partners to test and try out co-produced ideas and to take the learning from that to build into our day to day work. The Board discussed how this approach was being used across the inclusion projects and how that learning must be captured and built into our people and system development work. A draft Equalities Outcomes paper and mainstreaming report will come to the February meeting.

* *The Board approved option two for the Equality update.*

1. **Power of Attorney**

Ms Barrington noted that the majority of signatures are completed electronically but specifically for land documents we currently require two wet signatures, and we would like to introduce the power of attorney where any member of SMT can sign. Option one doesn’t need the document to be sealed with the **sport**scotland seal and can be signed digitally in the presence of a witness.

The Board approved option one.

* *The Board approved option one for Power of Attorney.*

**For Information**

1. **sportscotland Estate Strategy**

Noted and taken as read.

1. **Gaelic Language Plan Progress report**

Noted and taken as read.

1. **Board members pay**

Ms Barrington updated that the paper was produced in response to clarification sought on commentary within the financial statements regarding Board members pay and to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency of Board members pay.

The Chair confirmed that going forward Board members will be paid for attending Board meetings, the Audit and Risk Committee and People Development Committee but not the Trust Company Board as it has charitable status. The payment rate to be applied is one and half day’s per meeting to reflect preparation, attendance and travel time. The day and half per meeting is to be applied whether attendance at the meeting is in person or on-line. This is to applied from this meeting forward and not retrospectively.

The Board suggested from an equalities point of view that this should be made clear in the Board recruitment pack. The Chair added that if personal commitments like childcare is a barrier for attending Board meetings then members should discuss with the Chair or Ms Cook and we will do our best to overcome that as we want to be accessible.

Noted and taken as read.

1. **Audit and Risk Committee meeting draft minutes**

Noted and taken as read.

1. **Trust Company Board meeting draft minutes**

The Chair of the Trust Company Board noted that he has now chaired his first meeting and is conducting one to one meetings with the Trust Board members to understand the role better. The next meeting is scheduled for February where the budget planning will be explored.

Noted and taken as read.

1. **Any Other Business**

In anticipation that Mr Grant may not be able to attend his final meeting in February the Chair took the opportunity to thank him for his contributions to the Board over the past eight years, in particular the commercial perspective he has brought and his work as Chair of the People Committee. Mr Grant thanked the Chair for the kind words and noted that it has been a massive honour to be part of the Board.

1. **Date of Next Meeting:**  Monday 24 and Tuesday 25 February 2025 (Inverclyde)

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