

**MINUTES OF THE SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE DUMYAT MEETING ROOM, SPS COLLEGE, POLMONT ON 25 JANUARY 2023**

**Present:** Ann McKechin, Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board Chair  
 Teresa Medhurst, Chief Executive, SPS  
 Sue Brookes, Interim Director of Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement, SPS  
 Lynne Clow, Non-Executive Director  
 Ian Harley, RMAC Chair and Non-Executive Director  
 Adam Jobson, Head of Organisational Development, SPS  
 Jim Kerr, Interim Deputy Chief Executive, SPS  
 Gerry O'Donnell, Interim Director of Finance, SPS  
 Ali Purdie, Interim Director of Operations, SPS  
 Amy Scott, Acting Advisory Board Secretariat, SPS  
 Gill Stillie, Non-Executive Director  
 Rob Strachan, Divisional Head of Strategy, Planning and Partnership, SPS  
 Lisa Taylor, Branch Head, Office of the Chief Executive, SPS  
 Stephen Uphill, Non-Executive Director

**Introduction and Welcome**

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence**

2. Apologies for absence were received from Gareth Rose, Head of Communications.

**Declarations of Interest**

3. There were no new declarations of interest.

**Draft Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting Held on 30 November, Action Points and Matters Arising**

4. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 30 November were agreed as a true record and the Action Tracker was updated during the course of the discussion. The actions were revised as follows:

- Close Actions 17 and 30.
- Add an action regarding the Opening of HMP Stirling. It was noted that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans had previously offered to attend an Advisory Board meeting, however, it was suggested by the Chair that this meeting may be better held in an informal setting with no fixed agenda which could be facilitated at the opening of HMP Stirling in the summer. This was agreed.

**Action: OCE Secretariat**

**Chief Executive's Update**

5. This update included the following points:
  - Finance: Mrs Medhurst advised that since the last meeting, the final position for the Capital and Revenue budgets were announced. She discussed work Mr O'Donnell had undertaken with this and noted there were complex pressures over the next financial year. Scottish Government aimed to bring down the deficit in the Justice portfolio by the end of 2024 and

Mrs Medhurst advised there are decisions to be made with the Capital budget that may affect some of the major projects currently planned. She further discussed the position on public sector pay and advised this had not been announced which raised concerns due to the timescales involved.

- Estate: Mrs Medhurst discussed the Christmas period and advised members that the Service was in a settled and stable position, which was very positive. She also noted establishments were still monitoring COVID, however, infection rates were very low.
- Corporate Plan: Mrs Medhurst advised members that the Director General (Learning and Justice) had attended the previous Executive Management Group (EMG) meeting to provide feedback on the plan. She discussed the feedback provided and noted there was push back on the diversity and inclusion section of the plan which has prompted a further discussion on the values set.
- Mrs Medhurst informed members of items of business that had taken place since the last meeting. These included her own meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Veterans that morning, Mr Kerr's attendance at the Criminal Justice Committee and a session on improved delivery of outcome with the Justice Board.

#### Operational Update

6. The update from Mr Purdie included:

- There were 7,376 people in SPS' care on 20 January.
- There were 20 significant incidents reported during the 2 months from 24 November 2022-19 January 2023.
- There was a total of 2 deaths in custody reported within the reporting period: one as a result of apparent natural causes and one reported as apparent suicide.

#### Corporate Plan 2023-2028 Update

7. Mr Kerr provided an introduction before handing over to Mr Strachan who gave a brief overview of the background and discussed the development of the plan. He discussed the emerging findings from the development work and the strategic content and analysis of the evidence.

8. Mr Jobson discussed the leadership strategy and values with members. Ms Clow raised whether negative feedback had been reported from staff. A further discussion took place on workshops and training plans to help staff adapt the same learning practices.

#### **AB(JAN)01/23: Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Update**

9. Mrs Brookes discussed the update and noted this portfolio figured largely in the Corporate Plan update discussed previously in the meeting. She talked through the paper and discussed the broader health and wellbeing content, before moving onto the death in custody section. There were currently a total of 505 recommendations made in this area from a number of different reports and policy documents.

10. A discussion took place over the recommendations and the implications for the Service. It was noted a recent workshop had taken place to review these and Mrs Brookes advised she would be looking to prioritise things differently from past reviews, focusing on a holistic approach that emphasised the individual health journey rather than based rigidly on traditional themes.

11. Members discussed the death in custody review. It was acknowledged that it was a complex issue and significant work is on-going to work through this. Mrs Brookes discussed the recommendations that have been met with regards to this currently and the need to properly consider the welfare of staff.

Members discussed a replacement for the Talk to Me process and Ms McKechin requested information on the timeline of this replacement. After a discussion, it was agreed that this matter would come back to the Advisory Board in September 2023 with an update.

**Action: Sue Brookes**

#### **AB(JAN)02/23: Financial Update/Budget Monitoring**

12. This paper provided an update on the Spring budget revision and Mr O'Donnell advised Advisory Board members of the current budget forecast projections. He discussed both Capital and Revenue budget positions and advised of the implications of this. It was noted that efforts to recruit a Capital Accountant were unsuccessful primarily due to the salary level on offer. Further resignations in the Finance team were expected, including the current Head of Finance, with consequent impact on capacity over the next few months.

#### **AB(JAN)03/23: People Metrics**

13. Mr Jobson presented the report and advised members of the progression and challenges that have presented over the recent period. It was noted that the People Survey results for 2022 showed a welcome improvement in relation to training and development scores. Mr Jobson noted the Control and Restraint training had been upgraded which is positive and discussed the use of hybrid training for new recruits. Mr Jobson also discussed the difficulties in staff availability for training and the work on-going to improve this.

14. Members discussed the interview process and the pros and cons of operational staff being included in the process. It was noted that looking at alternative models of recruitment may be beneficial.

15. The Head of College post has been filled. Members agreed this was positive news and welcomed the opportunity for an invitation by the Chair for the new Head of College to attend an Advisory Board later in the year.

**Action: Ms McKechin**

#### **AB(JAN)04/23: SPS Prisoner Survey Re-Design**

16. Mr Kerr presented the paper and discussed the re-design of the survey. He noted that the EMG are content with the approach and discussed how this will fall in line with the new Corporate Plan. Mr Kerr advised work is still to be completed on the corporate design, however, he was content with the progress made thus far.

17. A discussion took place over data capture for the survey. Members discussed the best methods for this and agreed once this had progressed further, it would be brought back to the Advisory Board for further comment.

**Action: Mr Kerr**

#### **RMAC Chair Verbal Report**

18. Mr Harley noted the next meeting was not scheduled until March and discussed the current RMAC Effectiveness Review which will be discussed at the next RMAC meeting.

#### **Advisory Board Development Plan (Supplementary Paper)**

19. Ms McKechin presented the paper and discussed the key points. She discussed the forthcoming recruitment for new Advisory Board members and requested members to reach out to their own networks to encourage individuals to apply. Ms McKechin suggested the plan be brought back to the September meeting for updating once new members has been appointed and this was agreed.

**Action: Ms McKechin/NEDs**

20. Ms McKechin discussed the current annual one-to-one discussions between her and Advisory Board members and suggested ways to improve this. This was discussed and agreed by members.

**Action: Ms McKechin**

#### **Any Other Business**

21. It was agreed that Ms Clow would attend the SPS Strategic Development Group (SDG). Members discussed the Advisory Board's interaction with the Major Projects Management Group (MPMG) and SDG and it was agreed updates from these groups would be added to the agenda for future meetings.

**Action: OCE Secretariat**

#### **Draft Agenda for March Meeting**

22. The March meeting agenda was agreed, with the addition of the draft new core delivery plan.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

23. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held on 30 March. The venue for the meeting would be confirmed in due course.

**Action: OCE Secretariat**

**Advisory Board Secretariat**  
**January 2023**