

MINUTES OF THE SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE DUMYAT MEETING ROOM, SPS COLLEGE, POLMONT ON 27 MARCH

Present: Ann McKechin, Non-Executive Director and Advisory Board Chair
Teresa Medhurst, Chief Executive, SPS
Linda Pollock, Deputy Chief Executive, SPS
Sarah Angus, Director of Policy, SPS
Lynne Clow, Non-Executive Director
Ian Harley, Non-Executive Director and RMAC Chair
Andy Hodge, Director of Operations, SPS
Adam Jobson, Director of Organisational Development, SPS
Sharon Lawson, Executive Personal Assistant, SPS (Minutes) (attended virtually)
Simon Little, Non-Executive Director
Gerry O'Donnell, Director of Finance, SPS
Gill Stillie, Non-Executive Director
Lisa Taylor, Head of Corporate Strategy and Governance, SPS
Stephen Uphill, Non-Executive Director
Billy Watson, Non-Executive Director

Introduction and Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and referred to several issues that had arisen since the last meeting, including her annual one-to-one evaluation calls with Non-Executive Directors (NEDs), and the BBC "Women in Prison" series which was currently showing. She felt the series was very well made and touching, showing the Service and staff at its best, and thanked Communications colleagues for their input in this.
2. It was noted that a joint meeting with senior Scottish Government colleagues and Governors-in-Charge would follow this meeting.

Apologies for Absence

3. Apologies for absence were received from Gareth Rose.

Declarations of Interest

4. There were no new declarations of interest.

Draft Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting Held on 29 January, Action Points and Matters Arising

5. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 29 January were agreed as a true record. The Action Tracker was updated during the discussion, with several items being closed. The Chair was concerned that the outstanding actions were becoming quite lengthy, though noted that a number of these would close following the May Advisory Board meeting. Nonetheless, she agreed to review and consolidate the Tracker wherever possible, and present a more streamlined version at the next meeting.

Action: Ms Lawson/Ms McKechin

Chief Executive's Update

6. The Chief Executive's update touched on the following points:
 - SPS colleagues had attended the Scottish Government Executive Team Risk Session on prison population which primarily focussed on the actions to be taken over the next 6 months to reduce the prison population.

- The response to the Sheriff's recommendations on the Katie Allan and William Lindsay (Brown) FAI Determination was published on 13 March. The Chief and Deputy Chief Executives had arranged to meet with their families shortly.
- Resourcing bids to assist in meeting SPS' delivery landscape would be submitted to the Director General (Education and Justice) shortly.
- Ms Angus' team had recently held a Summit to consider deaths in custody.
- The Chief Executive had attended the Butler Trust Awards in London on 25 March, where 3 members of SPS staff had received commendations from Princess Anne and met with King Charles.

7. The Chair thanked Ms Medhurst for her update.

AB(MAR)01/25: Budget Setting

8. This paper provided an update on the 2025-26 resource and capital budget position and was noted by members.

9. Financial planning packs were issued to Directorates and establishments in October and returned in November. The central finance team then collated and analysed the submissions to form an estimated outturn for 2025-26 budget meetings to have a further critical review of the budget requirements and provide a robust financial forecast.

10. Following these meetings, an EMG session was held to look at a strategic approach to address the forecast budget funding gap, identifying priority projects for the year ahead and ensuring this was reflected in the finalised budgets issued to Directorates. Members particularly noted the impact of phasing of major capital projects and the position in relation to the resourcing of non-major capital expenditure.

AB(MAR)02/25: Financial Update/Budget Monitoring

11. This paper provided an update on the 2023-24 financial position as at 31 January and was discussed and noted by members.

Prison Population

12. Mr Hodge advised that the prison population on 27 March was 8,184, with 82 individuals on HDC. STP40 concluded on 20 March and has seen 307 individuals released over the 3 tranches. Members noted the challenges presented by both the size and complexity of the population.

AB(MAR)03/25: Estates Development Programme

13. This paper summarised the progress of the Estates Major Infrastructure Works and Maintenance Works since the previous progress report in September 2024 and was noted by members, who thanked colleagues for their informative paper.

14. The Estates capital and revenue funded projects are categorised into several different programmes of work, with the 2 principal programmes being the Major Infrastructure Works and Planned Preventative Maintenance programmes.

AB(MAR)04/25: Improvement Framework (Q3 2024-25)

15. This paper provided an integrated account of organisational performance (including review of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP)) and risk as at the end of Quarter 3 (Q3) of the 2024-25 reporting year and was noted with thanks to Ms Taylor and colleagues.

16. As part of this update, Ms McKechin noted that Crowe have now begun the Culture Review and advised that NED members were very keen to be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the Review. Mr Jobson agreed to take this forward.

Action: Mr Jobson

RMAC Chair's Verbal Report

17. Mr Harley advised of the following key issues:

- There had been a discussion around SPS' Fraud Response Group at the last RMAC meeting and whether additional resource for this Group was required.
- A deep dive session on the GeoAmey contract had also been held. Whist RMAC members noted that the position had improved slightly, there was still cause for concern, and this topic would be discussed again at today's RMAC meeting.

18. Members thanked Mr Harley for this update.

Any Other Business

19. The Chair advised that she had received correspondence in relation to SPS' transgender policies and staff who declare a transgender identity. Ms McKechin undertook to provide a copy of her response to this letter to Advisory Board colleagues and would be happy to discuss at a future meeting.

Action: Ms McKechin

Draft Agenda for May 2025 Meeting

20. The agenda for the May meeting was agreed as drafted. Ms Pollock, Ms Taylor agreed to meet with the Chair in advance of the meeting to discuss presentation of the Governance Review.

Action: Ms Pollock/Ms Taylor/Mc McKechin

Date of Next Meeting

21. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held on **28 May from 0900-1200hrs in the Lochnagar Meeting Room, SPS College, Polmont.**

**Advisory Board Secretariat
March 2025**