

sportscotland

Council Meeting

Minutes of the Council Board Meeting held at the **sportscotland** National Centre Inverclyde on Tuesday 29 August 2023 at 09:00

Present

Members

Mr M Young, Chair
Mr A Bain
Ms M Campbell
Mr T Mistry
Mr S Lindsay
Mr D McDonald
Ms H Ousta
Mrs S Sandilands
Mr S Sweeney
Ms K U'ren
Mr A Watt

In Attendance

Council Officers

Mr F Dunlop
Mr N Cobb
Mr M Cowan
Mrs S Elms
Mr B Fleeting
Mr J Lunn
Mrs J Lynn
Mrs K McCheyne
Mr D McKay
Mr P Reid
Mrs A Wyllie
Ms L Cook

Scottish Government

Mr A Sinclair

Guest presenter

Ms K Grainger, Chair, UK Sport

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Business

1 Apologies for Absence

➤ *Mr C Grant.*

2 Declarations of Interest

➤ *None.*

3 Minutes of Meeting held on 27 June 2023

➤ *The minutes of the Board meeting held on 27 June 2023 were approved as a true and accurate record.*

4 Matters Arising

Mr Dunlop updated on the Health and Safety internal audit, the remedial plan that is in place and the immediate actions which have been completed over the summer including updated policies which have been shared with all staff. Mr Dunlop noted that a more detailed update will be given to the afternoon's Audit and Risk Committee.

5 Chairs Opening Remarks

The Chair commented on the excellent presentation and discussion with the Young People's Sports Panel the previous evening.

The Chair highlighted the UCI Cycling World Championships and noted that it was a real triumph for sport and Scotland. He went on to discuss the wider ambitions associated with the Championship and how these ambitions and commitments must be realistic for future events.

The Chair updated that the Commonwealth Games in Victoria have been cancelled and there is not a clear alternative host at the moment. There are wide implications for both performance sport and the longer term development of sport in Scotland if a solution is not found.

6 Executive Management Report

Mr Dunlop gave an overview of financial pressures which are being created by a dip in the National Lottery income and early indications from the Scottish Government around this years pay award which is expected to be above what has been budgeted. There is a Leadership Group meeting to be held on Friday at which Mr Cobb will update the group on these pressures and mitigations.

Mr Dunlop updated that he has now met with 29 of the 32 Local Authorities. The meetings have helped to build relationships, provided an opportunity to promote sport and physical activity and to understand local challenges and opportunities.

Mr Dunlop updated that the SGB Chairs met during the Cycling World Championships. Attracting and recruiting more diversity to SGB Boards and senior staff positions was discussed as were the pressures currently being faced by SGBs.

Mr Dunlop updated on the avalanche incident at Glenmore Lodge earlier in the year. He explained that an internal review had been completed and that the Trust Board had recently agreed to commissioning a further externally led review to maximise learning.

Mr Dunlop finished by highlighting the recent successful Street Soccer Scotland event which was hosted at Inverclyde.

The Board discussed the lack of diversity on SGB Boards and the reasons why this has not progressed as much as everyone would have liked. Mr Lunn gave his view that there were a number of factors including a general challenge with recruiting volunteers post COVID but that there were initiatives and plans in place and being developed, for example the Leaderboard Academy work with Sporting Equals. The Board commented that this is not a sport specific issue and Boards across Scotland are experiencing similar recruitment challenges. The Chair suggested that we need clear interventions and used the approach taken to recruit the **sportscotland** Board as an example of how this can work.

The Board discussed the challenges being faced by LAs and the need to remain flexible to find new and different approaches and solutions but at the same time remain strong and clear on the importance and value of sport and physical activity. The Board discussed the importance of local politicians in the decision-making process. Mrs Lynn updated on the work with COSLA officials and through their committees.

➤ *The Board noted the Executive Management Report.*

7 Katherine Grainger, Chair, UK Sport

The Chair welcomed Ms Grainger and thanked her for attending the meeting.

Ms Grainger commented that last night it was so refreshing to hear opinions and thoughts from young people which emphasised the importance of engaging and listening to as wide a group of people as possible.

Ms Grainger updated that UK Sport is well into their current strategy which is designed to inspire and unite the nation, it was designed before the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, but the ambition remains the same despite budgets getting tighter.

Ms Grainger highlighted that there is less than a year until the Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games and that this will be the first Games since London that will take place in our time zone. All sports are in their final preparation phase which will culminate in selections to Team GB and Paralympics GB. Ms Grainger explained the ongoing discussions and positions around the participation of Russian athletes.

Ms Grainger discussed the issues around the Commonwealth Games, in particular the costs of hosting and for some nations the relevancy. Ms Grainger agreed that the Commonwealth Games does play an important part in the development of sport and the development of many athletes.

The Board discussed further the potential options and implications around the Commonwealth Games while recognising it was very early days since the decision by Victoria and that the situation would become clearer in the coming months. The Chair asked about the engagement with the Commonwealth Games Federation and the importance of discussing and understanding purpose and value rather than just how to save the games. Ms Grainger noted that meetings are scheduled and work is underway to consider both short and longer term issues.

The Board discussed with Ms Grainger issues and concerns around the climate emergency and the position of major events and high performance sport. Ms Grainger updated on the UK Sport strategy on this and how that is being discussed with individual governing bodies, she went on to highlight the work being done by a growing group of athletes who are taking lead roles in this debate.

The Board asked about the wellbeing of athletes and the latest work being done to ensure this remains at the fore of decision making and practice. Ms Grainger agreed that this is such an important area and outlined a range of initiatives and support that are in place, she went on to explain that coaches and staff working in performance sport also need similar support and are subject to some similar pressures.

The Board discussed the wider benefits of hosting international events and the scale of social impact that they have. Ms Grainger agreed that measuring wider social benefit is extremely hard but there are clear measures around economic, sporting and performance impact.

For Discussion

8 Female Athlete Health and Performance

Mrs Elms presented on the work of the Female Athlete Health and Performance group. She highlighted the research findings and work the group has done and explained how this has led to better support female athletes.

The Board welcomed the presentation and the work being progressed. In particular they encouraged embedding the learning and understanding in coach and athlete education at an early stage so that conversations and understanding becomes more natural. They also discussed the communication style and methods to ensure young people engaged with the guidelines and the learning.

The Board asked about the diversity of the team working on this project, and whether there is an understanding of different religious and cultural attitudes? Mrs Elms agreed that further work was required to ensure this wide understanding. Mrs Wylie explained that there are opportunities to work with our YPSP and there are other pieces of work happening across the organisation and with partners which could all connect.

The Board commented that sport science is traditionally based on males and so emphasised the importance of this work. Mrs Wylie added that the University of the West of Scotland are conducting female specific research and have a specific module on female health.

The Chair thanked the team for the leadership in this important area.

➤ *The Board noted the Female Athlete Health and Performance presentation.*

9 Sport for Life – schools and education

Mrs Lynn updated on the progress of work in the school and education environment and highlighted the significant reviews underway, in education, which include looking at the curriculum for excellence, qualifications, assessment and the roles of Education Scotland and the SQA in supporting this.

Mrs Lynn explained the latest Active Schools monitoring figures which show a steady return to activity sessions but with girls returning slower than boys. Mrs Lynn added that we continue to work with local partners to collect EDI information and that this process will continue to develop.

The Board commented on the challenges around recruitment of Active Schools staff and asked about the impact of less experienced staff joining teams. Mrs Wyllie explained that with over 400 staff in the network there was always a turnover but that this has increased post COVID, she explained the support offered to Active School managers who in turn manage the co-ordinators.

The Board commented on the presentation from the YPSP and how they had referenced the work of active schools in supporting them and how we need to keep finding ways of getting the stories as well as the facts and figures communicated. Mrs Wyllie explained the processes in place to make sure we get a continual flow of information and examples of the work going on.

The Board asked about the utilisation of the school estate? Mr Cowan noted that it is probably underutilised, he explained that in 2016 we carried out work to look at this and the findings suggested a 96% utilisation, acknowledging this will have changed post COVID. The Board also recognised that the school estate is not built to be a customer focused facility and may lack the ability to open up for public use. Club use could be easier but community use can be challenging and that is why public leisure facilities are still crucial.

➤ *The Board noted the Sport for Life – schools and education paper.*

10 Sport for Life - places

Mr Cowan gave an overview of the sport facility estate and a range of issues and considerations for the short, medium and long term. This included an update on the pressures being faced by local partners in running, maintaining and replacing facilities, including meeting net zero targets, the cost impact on club and community groups and the discussion around the utilisation of the school estate. He explained that the situation is constantly evolving and our knowledge and understanding is developing through local conversations, our EQIA process and by engaging with a range of stakeholders. Mr Cowan explained the planned work which is captured in this years business plan which will be in two phases, firstly a review of the developments across the estate in the last 10-15 years and secondly an assessment of what is needed in the next decade.

The Board asked how do we get a collective approach from all aspects of the system? Mr Cowan noted that we need to work with partners who have an interest and a stake to secure the future of facilities and understand what is needed and where it is needed, he explained that this is not always easy as different partners have different expectations and pressures. Ultimately additional investment is needed to maintain and replace elements of the estate.

The Board discussed the opportunities and challenges with asset transfer and concluded that it was another important strand of the solution but recognised it was only one of a number of approaches required and that it was not suitable for a lot of facilities or circumstances.

The Board asked for an update on the TSIT projects. Mr Cowan agreed to provide an update for the next Board meeting.

➤ *The Board noted the Sport for Life – places paper.*

For Decision

11 Strategic Guidance letter

Mr McKay introduced the letter and emphasised that our primary drivers have not changed. The direction in the Ministers letter aligns really well to our business plan and focuses on reducing inequalities.

The Chair reiterated that the letter does align with our plan but it is asking us to do a lot of additional work without an indication of how this will be resourced. The Board agreed that the dependency on both national and local partners and resources must be recognised as a significant factor in our ability to deliver on the points in the letter.

Mr Sinclair noted the need for collaboration and emphasised the role and purpose of the Strategic Group which the Minister Chairs. He went on to stated that the Scottish Government's commitment remains to increase the investment in sport and physical activity.

The Board asked if we should have a mobilisation plan for when the additional investment is made so that we can be ready and can also display the potential of what could be happening. Mr Dunlop updated on the work done previously when additional monies were made available and that a number of plans and proposals are in place for when additional monies are made available. Mr Dunlop went on to recognise that the current environment continues to change and so a piece of work has started internally to review our approach and proposals, accepting that the previous work was now nearly two years old. It was agreed that an update on this work would be brought to the October Board meeting.

The Board asked if we should raise awareness with stakeholders and enable them to make the case for the investment and position the story to the Government. Mr Dunlop explained the work undertaken with partners to help create a consistent message from the sector, he explained that this approach has been successful in the past but as pressures increase on partners, they are defaulting to very specific local or sport specific messages.

➤ *The Board noted the Strategic Guidance Letter.*

12 Quarter 1: 2023-2024 progress report

Mr McKay highlighted that the budget report has a lot of red which is due to the late return of signed investment agreements from a number of local authorities which has resulted in payments being delayed until quarter 2. Mr McKay confirm this was now resolved.

The Board discussed the reference to the performance data management project and good practice around managing these pieces of work in the future.

The Chair commented that the report is very comprehensive and clear.

➤ *The Board approved the Quarter 1: 2023-2024 progress report.*

Finance:

13 sportscotland Group Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

14 sportscotland Group Draft Auditors' Report and Letter of Representation

15 sportscotland Lottery Fund Annual Accounts for the years ended 31 March 2023

16 sportscotland Lottery Fund Draft Auditors' Report and Letter of Representation

Mr Cobb introduced the finance papers and provided an overview of the information contained within each paper. Mr Cobb highlighted that we have received clean audit reports for both sets of accounts with only a few recommendations for the management team to consider. Mr Cobb explained the presentation of the pension provision which has previously been shown as a liability but now appears as an asset. Finally, he draw the boards attention to the contingent liability note and explained how this was being treated by the auditors.

The Audit and Risk Committee Chair commended Mr Cobb and Mr Taaffe and their team for their work through the year and in preparing the accounts. The Audit and Risk Committee Chair updated that the Committee has met and provided appropriate scrutiny of the accounts and that the Committee is happy to recommend approval of annual accounts and report.

The Chair thanked the Audit and Risk Committee for the work.

- *The Board formally approved the Group Annual Accounts and Letter of Representation and the Lottery Fund Annual Accounts and Letter of Representation.*

For Information

17 sportsScotland Group and Lottery: Audit Scotland Annual Report to the Board and the Auditor General for Scotland for the year ended 31 March 2023

Noted and taken as read.

18 The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

Noted and taken as read.

19 The Scottish Sports Council Trust Company Wylie & Bisset Audit Findings for the year ended 31 March 2023

Noted and taken as read.

20 Playing our Part 2022-23: Summary of progress – annual review

Mrs McCheyne highlighted the case studies, and the video case studies which will all go live next week.

The Board asked for an update on progress against the previously reported challenges around the performance measurement framework and issues with gathering data. Mr McKay updated that work is ongoing to look at options and that these will come back to Board later this year or early next year.

Noted and taken as read.

21 Communication update

Mrs McCheyne reiterated the opportunities for Board members to attend events to get a flavour of how we work with partners and get involved. Contact Miss Cook if interested in attending any events.

Noted and taken as read.

22 Any Other Business

Mr Dunlop highlighted that as part of our commitment to the UK Anti-Doping framework we are required to have an identified Board member with a responsibility for anti-doping. It was agreed more information would be circulated to the Board about the responsibility and interested Board members should then get in touch with Mr Dunlop.

Mr Dunlop updated that the two new Directors, Rachel Barrington and Craig Burn, will start on Monday 2nd October and attend the next meeting.

23 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 October 2023 (Inverclyde)

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