

<b>Meeting</b>	Management Advisory Board
<b>Meeting date</b>	12 February 2024
<b>Meeting time</b>	10:00 – 13:00
<b>Meeting location</b>	SPPA Tweedbank (Hybrid)

<b>Members in attendance</b>	Norman McNeil	Meeting Chair
	Mark Adderley	Non-executive Board Member
	Clare Scott	Non-executive Board Member
	Helen Mackenzie	Non-executive Board Member
	Jane Malcolm	Non-executive Board member
<b>Other attendees</b>	David Robb	Chief Executive Officer
	Laura Pacey	Head of Strategy and Communications
	Frances Graham	Chief Operating Officer
	David Gunner	Programme Director
	John Burns	Chief Financial Officer
	Debbie Trafford	Head of People
	Clare Moffat	Corporate Governance Manager
<b>Apologies</b>	Iain Coltman	Head of Policy
	Ian Forbes	Non-executive Board Member
<b>Minute taker</b>	Marnie Davis Wood	Corporate Governance Officer

## 1 Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Iain Coltman and Ian Forbes.
- 1.2 There were no changes to Board members' registered interests nor were there any declarations of interest in the business to be conducted.

## 2 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 2.1 The board agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 and 11 December 2023 were a true and correct record.

## 3 Actions

- 3.1 Members reviewed the action tracker. Action MAB 1023.03 (circulation of People Committee minutes) was closed.
- 3.2 Updates on the remaining open actions were noted.
- 3.3 The Board raised concerns about the delay in providing minutes for the People Committee and heard that this was a result of capacity limitations in the Corporate Governance team. The Board noted that it was best practice to produce minutes a week after meetings. The role of the People Committee as an advisory committee was discussed and it was agreed that a People Committee update should be on the agenda at each Board meeting. The People Committee Chair provided an update on key issues discussed at the meeting, including the Leadership Development Programme.

### Action MAB 0224.01

People Committee minutes to be completed by 23 February 2024.

Owner: Corporate Governance Team

## 4 People Survey Update

- 4.1 Debbie Trafford presented a summary of results of the People Survey. This included:

- Good scores in relation to perception of pay and benefits
- Junior grades are less engaged than managers
- Key areas to focus on are leadership through change and perceived impact of learning and development
- The iterative 'you said, we did' process underway to act on people survey results.

4.2 The Board discussed management's views of the results, noting that the themes of the results were broadly aligned with management's expectations. The ET's view was that the effects of the implementation of Remedy changes were not yet reflected in the results. Concerns were raised about the drop in results relating to inclusion and 'my team' in People, Strategy and Culture and it was noted that this was further explored in a session with teams in December and had to do with communication and involvement in decision making at that point in time. The Board noted the positive results in engagement and leadership development.

## **5 Audit and Risk Committee Update**

5.1 The Committee Chair reported on the meeting held on 16 January 2024 and the Board noted the unconfirmed minutes provided. The Board noted that the Committee had discussed:

- The committee's developing approach to positive indicators for counter-fraud assurance, noting that a counter-fraud policy was being developed
- Progress on addressing National Fraud Initiative (NFI) matches and the upcoming Scottish Government report on NFI being produced by Audit Scotland, noting that there may be concerns noted by Audit Scotland in relation to Police and Firefighters schemes NFI processes
- Further progress on the risk management approach
- Accountability of post-holders for audit actions and assurances, including in relation to contract management.

## **6 Agency Strategic Discussion**

6.1 David Robb gave an overview of the SPPA's financial position for the 2024-25 financial year following a disappointing budget outcome, noting:

- The importance of maintaining focus on the existing five year plan
- Executive Team's work to develop a plan for closing the existing gap in the budget.

6.2 The Board discussed:

- Whether there was potential to go back to the Scottish Government in-year to request adjustments
- The significance of the CEM benchmarking data now available to Executive Team to inform decision making and planning for efficiencies
- Officials and Ministers consider SPPA an essential public service and understand the political implications that would arise should SPPA fail to deliver services and improvements as planned
- Funding required for delivering benefits on the projects to which the SPPA was already committed. It was noted that future efficiencies depend on digitisation
- The phasing of the requirements and resource implications for the Pensions Platform Programme
- The need for detailed resource planning, noting that a timeline is being produced to consider and document benefits realisation and align with project costs
- Human resource implications of cost reduction
- Productivity implications of the 35-hour working week that will be implemented across Scottish Government from October onward
- Automation and digitisation, including updates on the future development of a member portal

- The possibility of prioritising schemes based on size and complexity
- Potential for recovery of administrative costs
- The implications of a potential employer levy as part of a Pension Administration Strategy.

**7. Role of the Management Advisory Board**

7.1 David Robb gave an update on MAB and ARC vacancies, noting that a recruitment exercise would be commencing soon. The committee discussed:

- Having specialist members of the ARC who are not also members of MAB
- The need to consider the MAB Skills Matrix to inform recruitment
- Keeping succession planning in mind and allowing for the possibility for ARC members to move to MAB if necessary
- Ensuring MAB is focussed on medium- to long-term strategy rather than short-term reporting.

**Action MAB 0224.02**

Strategic discussion at a future Board meeting to be dedicated to reviewing the CEM benchmarking data in detail and considering what peers are doing differently in the areas where there are significant differences, including IT and staffing.

Owner: Rachel Miller  
 Deadline: 8 May 2024

**8. Board effectiveness**

8.1 The Board noted that better preparatory information could have been provided to inform the strategic discussion, and there was a need for Executive Team to set up the right conditions to allow useful strategic discussions to take place. It was noted that there was a strong preference for Board meetings to be held on site.

Version Control		
		Version number
Date minutes sent to chair	4 April 2024	0.1
Date approved by chair	24 April 2024	0.2
Date approved by board/committee	8 May 2024	1.1
Date of publication	22 May 2024	1.1