SPPA
Scottish Public Pensions Agency
Buidheann Peinnseanan Poblach na h-Alba

Minute number 5M/23

Meeting	Management Advisory Board
Meeting date	30 October 2023
Meeting time	10:00 – 13:00
Meeting location	SPPA Tweedbank (Hybrid)

Members in attendance	Clare Scott	Meeting Chair
	Mark Adderley	Non-executive Board Member
	Ian Forbes	Non-executive Board Member
	Helen Mackenzie	Non-executive Board Member (remote)
Other attendees	David Robb	Chief Executive Officer
	Iain Coltman	Head of Policy
	Garry Cossar	Head of People, Strategy and Communications
	Frances Graham	Chief Operating Officer
	David Gunner	Programme Director
	John Burns	Chief Financial Officer
	Anna Skowron	Financial Controller
	Rachel Miller	Planning and Performance Manager
	Clare Moffat	Corporate Governance Manager
	Phillip McKibben	Financial Controller
	Roderick Glass	Business Partner
Apologies	Jane Malcolm	Non-executive Board Member
	Norman McNeil	Non-executive Board Member
Minute taker	Demi Ditchburn	Corporate Governance Officer

1   Welcome and apologies

1.1.   Apologies were received from Jane Malcolm and Norman McKenzie. The Chair welcomed John Burns and Anna Skowron to their first Management Advisory Board meeting in their new roles.

1.2.   There were no changes to Board members' registered interests nor were there any declarations of interest in the business to be conducted. Clare Scott reminded members of her role in the Local Government Pension Scheme, noting this is not a new interest. Mark Adderley noted that he has declared a new interest to the corporate governance team, in relation to world squash officiating.

2   Minutes of the previous meeting

2.1   The board agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 were a true and correct record.

3   Actions

3.1   Members reviewed the action tracker. The following actions were approved for closure:
MAB 0523.01
MAB 0523.03
MAB 0523.04
MAB 0723.01
MAB 0723.02
MAB 0723.03
MAB 0723.04
MAB 0723.05

3.2   Updates on the remaining open actions were noted. The Board decided to keep action 0523.02 (Leadership development programme – lead indicators) open for further action by the People Committee.

4   Audit and Risk Committee Update

4.1   The Committee Chair reported on the meeting held on 27 June 2023 and the Board noted the unconfirmed minutes provided. The Board noted that the Committee had discussed:
- The Committee's effectiveness self-assessment and whether the highest risks were receiving sufficient attention on the agenda, noting that a new standing item on data had been added to the Committee's agenda
- The Agency Annual Report and Accounts.

4.2   David Robb confirmed to the Board that the Agency Annual Report and Accounts had been completed and was ready for laying before Parliament in the coming weeks.

5   Agency Performance Report

5.1   The Board received the Agency Performance Report, noting the new format. The Board raised and discussed:
- The positive improvements to the content and format of this report and usefulness of the data included
- The potential future impact of the work with employers on the percentage of ABSs that can be completed
- Issues affecting email queue management
- Plans for tracking longer term trends
- Implementation of voice recognition telephony
- Numbers of complaints upheld and the importance of accurately classifying complaints to assist service analysis

5.2   The Board recommended that cyber security incidents be included either in the IT or data protection sections of the report.

5.3   The Board recommended that the report include commentary on strategic risks aligned to priorities and that the Executive Team consider how finance reporting is included in or aligned with this report.

6   Risk Management Report

6.1   Garry Cossar introduced the Risk Management Report. The Board discussed:
- The need for the risk register to be a 'living document' rather than a static record
- SPPA has an opportunity to discuss its risk appetite with the Board and seek feedback/advice on this
- Need for further understanding and nuance in relation to controls.

The Board recommended that the risk of not having sufficient resources be recorded as the most significant risk.

7   2015 Remedy

7.1   David Gunner introduced the 2015 Remedy progress update. The Board discussed:
- Colleague engagement with the September training sessions
- The manual spreadsheet solution for deferred choice members
- Contingencies in relation to switch-over dates at the beginning or end of the month
- The positive work that has been done on communications.

7.2   The board noted thanks to Iain Coltman for stepping in as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for Remedy following the departure of the previous Chief Operating Officer and noted that Frances Graham was now taking on the SRO role.

8   Pensions Platform Programme – Benefits Realisation

8.1   David Gunner delivered a presentation on benefits realisation for the Pensions Platform Programme. The Board discussed:
- Metrics needed for measuring return on investment
- People transformation.

9   Agency Finance Report and Financial Sustainability

9.1   Phil McKibben presented the Agency Finance Report, noting the projected reduction in fixed term appointments (FTA). The Board discussed:
- Preparing the workforce for change
- The need to articulate the choices the SPPA has in light of the public finance resource gap across the sector
- Opportunities for efficiency related to shared services and an urgency to start acting on this
- The tension between acting as a pensions administration service and an agency of the Scottish Government, with different service expectations from each of these sectors.

9.2   The Board recommended that the SPPA work with executive teams in other agencies and act immediately to identify actions for cost savings. The Board noted that the draft budget would be set in early December.

10   CEM Benchmarking

10.1   The Board considered the CEM Benchmarking report, noting that this reporting would feed into the annual business planning process for the coming year. It was noted that there is an opportunity to analyse the cost spending against SPPA's peers to inform business planning. The Board recommended that SPPA engage in networking opportunities arising from the CEM work.

11   Governance Update

11.1   The Board discussed the recent Board Effectiveness Review and suggested the following actions should be prioritised:
- Have a board meeting with papers limited to one page per item
- More concise reporting, particularly between meetings
- More 'little and often' engagement to facilitate the advisory function of the Board to Executive Team
- Review the relationship between the Director General and the Management Advisory Board

11.2   The Board reviewed the SPPA Framework Document. It was noted that the Framework document did not refer to the People Committee; risk and finance are grouped together in documentation and they are no longer together in the SPPA; and the governance schematic on the website incorrectly suggests that the CEO is a member of Management Advisory Board.

Action MAB 1023.01: Corporate Governance Team to consider including the People Committee in the Framework Document, review how risk and finance are referred to in the Framework Document; and review the Governance Schematic to accurately represent the CEO's relationship to MAB.

Owner: Clare Moffat
Deadline: April 2024

11.3   The Board reviewed the annual Management Advisory Board Agenda Planner. It was recommended that a formal annual review of the risk register and risk appetite be added.

Action MAB 1023.02: Corporate Governance to add a formal annual review of the risk appetite to the MAB annual agenda planner.

Owner: Clare Moffat
Deadline: 24 January 2024

Action MAB 1023.03: Corporate Governance to circulate the August People Committee minutes to MAB members.

Owner: Clare Moffat
Deadline: 30 November 2023

Action MAB 1023.04: Corporate Governance to invite all MAB members to future Audit and Risk Committee deep dives.

Owner: Clare Moffat
Deadline: 24 January 2024

Action MAB 1023.05: Audit and Risk Committee to consider disaster recovery/business continuity planning as a deep dive topic in 2024.

Owner: Helen Mackenzie
Deadline: 24 January 2024

12   Any Other Business
12.1   The Board thanked Garry Cossar and Philip McKibben, as this was their last meeting in their roles. The Board wished them well in their new roles elsewhere in the Scottish Government.

13   Effectiveness of this meeting against MAB role
13.1   The Board noted the need to find the balance between structured forward agenda plans and allowing for the free discussion on pertinent topics. Consideration was also given to whether there was a need for co-opting additional members and/or use Board members' specific skills for specific discussion topics. The Executive Team was reminded that it would be useful to be clear what they need from the Board in each agenda item.

Version Control		
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