

MINUTES OF THE SCOTTISH PRISON SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD IN THE LOCHNAGAR MEETING ROOM, SPS COLLEGE, POLMONT ON 28 SEPTEMBER 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
Sharon Lawson, Executive Personal Assistant, SPS (Minutes)
Gerry O'Donnell, Director of Finance, SPS
Linda Pollock, Deputy Chief Executive, SPS
Ali Purdie, Interim Director of Operations, SPS
Gareth Rose, Head of Communications, SPS
Gill Stillie, Non-Executive Director
Lisa Taylor, Head of OCE Branch, SPS
Stephen Uphill, Non-Executive Director

In Attendance: Michael Beardmore, Head of Strategic Planning, SPS (for paper **AB(SEP)03/23** only)

Introduction and Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting and thanked Mrs Brookes, and Messrs Michie and Slokan for arranging the C&R Demonstration for NED colleagues earlier that morning at HMPYOI Polmont.
2. Advisory Board members welcomed Ms Pollock to her first Advisory Board meeting as Deputy Chief Executive. The Chair advised that adverts for new Non-Executive Directors (NEDs) would be issued shortly, with interviews being planned for November. Ms Taylor agreed to share the link to the adverts with members when they are published.

Action: Ms Taylor

3. Members noted the recent publication of HMCIP's Annual Report which focused on the increasing prison population, and that a paper would be discussed later in the meeting in this respect. They also welcomed HMCIP's report on Polmont and remarked on the recent focus by the media on HMP Stirling and deaths in custody.

Apologies for Absence

4. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Strachan.

Draft Minutes of the Advisory Board Meeting Held on 26 July, Action Points and Matters Arising

5. The draft minutes of the meeting held on 26 July, as amended, were agreed as a true record. The Action Tracker was updated during the course of the discussion, with a number of actions being closed.

Action: Ms Lawson

Chief Executive's Update

6. The Chief Executive advised that Scottish Government colleagues are currently reviewing options to relieve the pressure on the prison estate and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice is making a statement in Parliament next week on prison population, and meeting with the Criminal Justice Committee (CJC) thereafter.

7. The NEDs noted that the CJC has had a particular interest in prisons over the last few years and asked if it would be beneficial to offer informative briefing sessions to CJC members to allow them a better understanding of the emerging issues, and to increase opportunities for members of the judiciary to visit prison establishments. The Chief Executive advised that the Cabinet Secretary's engagement with prisons has been exemplary, and she will have visited all prisons by the end of the year. It was also noted that prisons also invite their local constituency MSPs into their establishments for an informal tour and briefing to allow them a better understanding of the issues being faced in prisons.

8. The Chair shared her concerns about the pressure on SPS as a whole in relation to staffing and prisoner numbers. The Chief Executive confirmed that she also shared those concerns about the current and on-going pressures on colleagues, and particularly on those within her own office at the moment.

9. Members thanked Mrs Medhurst for this update and subsequent helpful discussion.

Operational Update

10. Mr Purdie advised members that:

- There were 7,904 people in SPS' care on 22 September, 503 higher than this period last year.
- There were 72 significant incidents reported during the 2 month period from 20 July-20 September.
- There were 11 deaths in custody reported within the reporting period - 2 as a result of apparent overdose; 4 as a result of apparent natural causes; 4 as a result of apparent suicide and one as a result of suspicious circumstances.
- There have been a number of noise complaints received from residents living next to HMP Stirling. The Advisory Board noted that SPS colleagues have met with the local councillor and residents a number of times to attempt to resolve the issues and a range of practical and operational options have been put in place to improve the situation for residents.

11. Mr Purdie was thanked for his update, with members noting that a paper on the Private Sector Contracts would be considered later in the meeting.

AB(SEP)01/23: Prison Population Update

12. This paper provided an update on the proposed options provided to members at the July Advisory Board meeting in respect of managing upward projections in the Scottish prison population over the next 6-12 months. The options are aligned to Strand 1 of the Population Review developed by Operations Directorate.

13. Since the start of the COVID-19 recovery phase by Justice Partners within the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Services (SCTS), SPS has seen a continuous rise in the number of people in our care. This rise is projected to continue and, therefore, SPS has been required to review the current population management strategy.

14. Following a lengthy discussion, the Advisory Board noted the steps being considered by SPS and Justice partners to accommodate the rising prisoner population and thanked Mr Purdie for his update.

AB(SEP)02/23: Financial Update/Budget Monitoring: Periods 4 and 5

15. There were some significant changes for a variety of reasons between the financial position at the end of July and the end of August and these 2 papers provided respective updates. Members noted that the increase in prisoners would undoubtedly impact the financial position further.

16. Members noted that the Annual Report and Accounts had been signed-off and congratulated Mr O'Donnell and the Finance team for their work in this respect, despite the pressures they faced. NED colleagues asked that a Capital Accountant be recruited quickly to alleviate some of the pressures faced.

Action: Mr O'Donnell

17. Members discussed plans for the replacements of HMPs Glasgow and Highland.

AB(SEP)03/23: Performance Monitoring, Planning and Risk (Q1)

18. Members welcomed Mr Beardmore to the meeting at this point who advised that this report provided an integrated account of organisational performance and risk for Q1.

19. During Q1, SPS' new Corporate Plan 2023-28 (CP2328) and Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) 2023-24 received Cabinet Secretary approval and were published and distributed to key stakeholders during Q2.

20. Q1 saw the crystallisation of significant organisational risk as a result of the population increasing at a time when SPS is experiencing real resource constraints - both in terms of budget and staff capacity. The increase in volume compounds the demand-side pressure created by the increases in the complexity of the population in recent years.

21. Set against these organisational challenges, some significant milestones were achieved in Q1, including the opening of HMP Stirling, Ministerial approval of CP2328, the business case for HMP Glasgow receiving SG support, the roll-out of in-cell telephony cabling to cells, the completion of trauma-informed workshops for SPS leaders, and the road-testing of dashboards for population and performance.

22. Members thanked Messrs Strachan and Beardmore for this informative paper, and the time taken to produce the new reporting format over the summer. All agreed that the revised report now provides instructive information, but the Chair asked that members continue to feedback any further comments they had to Messrs Strachan and Beardmore over the next few months.

Action: All Members

23. The Chair asked that this report should include questions for Advisory Board members to consider, potentially then prompting 'Deep Dives', and should receive higher prominence and appear as a standing item on future agendas, saving colleagues time in having to produce and present the current standard 'update' reports.

Action: Ms Lawson/Messrs Strachan/Beardmore

24. Mr Beardmore left the meeting at this juncture with colleagues thanking him for his attendance.

AB(SEP)04/23: Health and Wellbeing

25. This paper provided an outline of the strategic priorities for SPS, and an update on the development of key strategies and the interface with NHS prison healthcare to ensure an integrated approach for those in our care.

26. Members noted that engagement with Health colleagues was positive, and that progress was being made across many justice and health related areas. They thanked Mrs Brookes for the paper.

AB(SEP)05/23: 'Talk to Me' Review

27. This paper provided members with an update on the current position in relation to the review of the 'Talk to Me' strategy for preventing suicides in prison.

28. 'Talk to Me' was implemented as the revised suicide prevention strategy in December 2016 following the review of the previous suicide prevention strategy, 'ACT2Care', which had been in place since 1996. The primary focus with the implementation of 'Talk to Me' was on improving support for those in distress and at risk of suicide.

29. The Strategy Review Group, which includes key partners from Scottish Government, NHS, Health Scotland, Samaritans, Breathing Space and Families Outside, will analyse all information gathered and consider the evidence base for change. It is hoped to have a draft revised strategy out for consultation in the next few months.

30. Ms Stillie stated that the work around the DIPLAR process and family engagement was now coming to fruition in terms of discussions that have been held and the positive attitude, care, diligence and commitment of staff despite the other pressures they were currently facing within the prison estate was to be commended.

31. Members noted this paper and the progress made to date and looked forward to receiving further updates in due course. In particular, they asked for a timeline when the recommendations from Gill Imery's Review of Deaths in Prison Custody would be completed.

Action: Mrs Brookes

32. Mrs Brookes was also asked to keep Advisory Board members updated on clinical accountability and hospital discharge issues.

Action: Mrs Brookes

AB(SEP)06/23: Private Sector Contracts - Update

33. This paper provided an update on the operational and contractual performance of the major private sector contracts managed by SPS and was noted by Advisory Board members.

34. SPS has 3 major contracts for the delivery of custodial and prison escort services - the Scottish Court Custody and Prisoner Escort Services (SCCPES), and those for the privately operated prisons at HMPs Addiewell and Kilmarnock.

35. The Contract Management Unit (CMU) continue to work closely with all private sector contractors to monitor performance against contractual requirements and will continue to hold those contractors to account in a balanced and proportionate manner. They continue to invest significant resource in the financial scrutiny of all 3 private sector contracts, ensuring robust governance.

AB(SEP)07/23: Estates Development Programme

36. This paper summarised the progress of the Estates Major Infrastructure Works and Maintenance Works since the previous progress report in March.

37. 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 programme; and the Planned Preventative Maintenance programme.

38. Members noted the update with interest and thanked those involved in the production of the paper.

RMAC Chair's Verbal Report

39. Mr Harley provided the Advisory Board with a summary of recent RMAC activity.

40. As stated previously, the Annual Report and Accounts were signed-off at the meeting on 11 September and Mr Harley commented on the good working relationship between SPS and Audit Scotland.

41. Members thanked Mr Harley for his update.

SPS Strategic Development Group (SDG) Verbal Update

42. Ms Clow advised that since the last Advisory Board, the SDG had met once on 30 August. At that meeting, the group considered updates on the Case Management Review; Trauma-Informed Practice; Population Management; and Data and Evidence.

43. At the next meeting, Ms Pollock will assume the position of Chair, and this will provide an opportunity to consider the group's role and operation.

44. Members thanked Ms Clow for her update.

Major Projects Management Group (MPMG) Verbal Update

45. As discussion on all the major projects had taken place during the course of the earlier discussions, Mr Uphill provided no further update.

Any Other Business

2024 Advisory Board Meeting Dates

46. The dates for the 2024 Advisory Board meetings were agreed as:

- 24 January (pm)
- 27 March (am)
- 29 May from (am)
- 31 July from (pm)
- 25 September (am)
- 27 November (am)

Draft Agenda for November Meeting

47. Pending the changes made throughout the course of the meeting, the agenda was agreed by members.

48. Ms Clow asked that a Communications update be discussed at a future meeting. The Chair agreed to consider adding this to the January agenda.

Action: Ms McKechin/Ms Lawson

Date of Next Meeting

49. The next Advisory Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 November from 1300-1600hrs, in the Dumyat Meeting Room, SPSC. Prior to this, a visit and meeting with the senior management team at HMP Stirling has been arranged for those who wish to partake.

50. The January 2024 meeting will be held at SPSC, but members asked that the March meeting be held in HMP Perth.

Action: Ms Lawson

Advisory Board Secretariat September 2023