

SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

**Unconfirmed minutes of the Scottish Social Services Council held on
Monday 27 February 2023 at 10:00 am in Compass House,
11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY and by Teams meeting.**

Present: Sandra Campbell, Convener
Professor Alan Baird, Council Member
Julie Grace, Council Member (online)
Rona King, Council Member
Lindsay MacDonald, Council Member
Doug Moodie, Council Member (online)
Peter Murray, Council Member

In attendance: Lorraine Gray, Chief Executive (online)
Maree Allison, Director, Regulation
Laura Lamb, Acting Director, Workforce, Education and Standards (online)
Lynn Murray, Interim Director, Finance and Resources
Laura Shepherd, Director, Strategy and Performance
Anne Stewart, Head of Legal and Corporate Governance
Audrey Wallace, Corporate Governance Coordinator

Observing: There were nine observers noted

1.	Welcome
1.1	Sandra Campbell welcomed those present. Apologies were noted from Theresa Allison, Lynne Huckerby and Linda Lennie, Council Members.
1.2	The Members welcomed Lindsay MacDonald, who was appointed on 1 February 2023, to the Council and to his first meeting of the Council. Lindsay MacDonald acknowledged the welcome and spoke to his relevant experience.
2.	Declarations of interest
2.1	There were no declarations of interest.
3.	Minutes of previous meetings
3.1	The minutes of the meeting of 24 November 2022 were approved as an accurate record.
3.2	The minutes of the meeting of 13 December 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

4.	Matters arising
4.1	There were no matters arising which are not included elsewhere on the agenda.
5.	Convener's report
5.1	Sandra Campbell presented report 01/2023 which summarised her activities as Convener since the last scheduled Council meeting in November 2022. She mentioned her meetings with Iona Colvin, Chief Social Work Adviser and also the Council Member away days which took place later in November 2022.
5.2	In the report she also confirmed that Lindsay MacDonald would take up a role on the Audit and Assurance Committee, given his experience and qualifications.
5.3	The Council
	1. noted the summary of the key issues and activities covered in the report.
6.	Chief Executive's report
6.1	Lorraine Gray presented report 02/2023 which detailed the SSSC's key performance against strategic priorities as well as key areas of work in each of the directorates.
6.2	<p>The following areas were highlighted and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorraine Gray advised that she had attended two recent conferences, one on the future of the National Care Service review and the other on the Next Steps for Social Care • she also advised that there was no update as yet on the 2022/23 staff pay award but expected that there would be an update soon • in answer to a query about the Changing Times, Changing Perspectives Resource, Lorraine Gray confirmed that this is a useful and helpful resource in working through complaints • Laura Lamb added additional information about how the proposed route into social work for postgraduates would work, it being similar to a fast-track system. This is expected to be in place by autumn 2023 with a possible cohort of 100 people joining if funding is agreed. • Laura Lamb confirmed the updated position regarding the commissioned review of Practice Learning funding and confirmed that a report including recommendations should be available by June this year with changes being made in time for the academic year beginning in autumn this year. • Laura Lamb confirmed that the SSSC is working in partnership with Health Improvement Scotland regarding the evaluation of the Care Experience Improvement Model. She advised that the evaluation of

	<p>this model will inform a National Improvement Plan and prevent duplication of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Lamb confirmed that Scottish Government and the SSSC have agreed to the SSSC maintaining a single Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) portal, which would provide a one-stop-shop for ELC CPL. This would assist in tracking and reporting on trends. <p>Lorraine Gray confirmed that she, Maree Allison and Laura Lamb had met with Dame Sue Bruce, Chair of the Independent Review of Inspection, Scrutiny and Regulation (IRISR). Matters discussed included use of intelligence and data and also the issue of nurse managers in care homes and the challenges of being registered with either the Nursing and Midwifery Council or with the SSSC.</p>
6.3	The Council
	1. commented on the content
	2. noted the information contained in the report.
7.	Audit and Assurance Committee report to Council
7.1	Alan Baird presented report 03/2023 from the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting of 02 February 2023, along with the assurance report which was submitted to the Committee.
7.2	<p>The key issues the Committee discussed were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the status of Fitness to Practise Panel Members, which is to be discussed later in this meeting • the budget pressures which leave the organisation in a period of uncertainty over the budget for next year. Especially mentioned was the inability to recruit and retain specialised staff. Lorraine Gray added that while staff continued to be loyal to the organisation, lack of funding will likely impact on this. • Council noted that the meeting to approve the budget for 2023/24 is scheduled to be held on 27 March. • an internal audit report on Payroll which, although graded satisfactory, included three recommendations. The Committee requested a further report on the performance of the external payroll company in due course, once recommended improvements had time to make a difference. Committee noted that although some issues may have been ongoing, there were now actions put in place to remedy these • Committee welcomed Karlyn Watt, from the newly appointed external auditors, Deloitte, to her first meeting • Laura Shepherd clarified that in setting the risk number 5 at red level, cognisance had been taken of the development of internal staff through the work of the organisational development team. <p>Sandra Campbell suggested, as previously discussed with the Minister, she should be invited back to talk to the Council Members about the budget situation.</p>

7.3	The Council
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. accepted that the assurance report presented a true and fair view of the SSSCs performance towards achievement of strategic objectives, financial management and risk identification and management. In particular that <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. operational performance as measured by strategic key performance indicators give confidence that the SSSC is delivering as forecasted to meet strategic objectives agreed with the Sponsor Department b. financial performance is consistent with forecasted spend and this does not present concern relating to year-end outturn of approved budget c. operational delivery and financial expenditure are consistent. 2. approved <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the Risk Management Policy (at item 8 below) b. the revised Risk Register and the revised Risk Appetite Statement, effective from 1 April 2023 (at Appendices 2 and 3 to the report). 3. noted <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Karlyn Watt from the new External Auditors, Deloitte, attended the meeting b. the Committee noted challenges faced in recruitment and retention of staff c. further information which was sought during scrutiny of the assurance report may be available once data is ingathered through development of the insights and intelligence project d. the risk register position was approved e. the views of the Committee will be conveyed to the Care Inspectorate when its committee meets to consider the joint internal audit report on payroll f. the Committee requested a further report on improvements made by the external payroll company, once the company has had sufficient time to implement these g. the Committee approved a revised completion date of 31 January 2024 for one recommendation from the internal audit report on Data Protection h. the Committee approved the draft internal audit plan for 2023/24, subject to the Interim Director of Finance and Resources approving any minor amendments i. the Committee's continued concern over the funding of the organisation and that a full presentation and updated budget report will be submitted to Council later in this meeting j. there were no instances of fraud, bribery or corruption detected in quarter 3 of 2022/23 k. a further report on the position of Fitness to Practise Panel Members will be submitted to this meeting of the Council.

8.	Risk Management Policy Review
8.1	Laura Shepherd presented report 04/2023 along with the revised Risk Management Policy. Members noted this had been reviewed by the Audit and Assurance Committee earlier in the month when the Committee had recommended that the policy be approved.
8.2	The Council
	1. approved the revised Risk Management Policy as presented.
9.	SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026
9.1	Lorraine Gray presented report 05/2023 appended to which was the draft SSSC Strategic Plan 2023-2026. She referred Members to the consultation and discussion sessions which had taken place in formulating the draft strategy. The plan was set out in the context of the current climate including the uncertainty over the outcomes from the National Care Service review and how these would be implemented. It included working towards increasing the number of career pathways, developing the data we gather in order to share and make better use of intelligence available, and looking at further groups of sector workers that could be included in the SSSC Register. The plan also included developing the Continuous Practice Learning and working on shaping the National Social Work Agency.
9.2	Lorraine Gray emphasised that learning and qualifications must stay relevant and work was ongoing to make sure that sufficient learning options are available. This should help people see social care as a career path and to remain in the sector.
9.3	Laura Lamb spoke of the benefits of the Future Proofing Project (FPP) and how that project would be core to taking the strategic plan forward. An important part of the work involved engaging with young people to consider working in the care sector as a lifelong career, with a wide range of options to follow and progress.
9.4	Members discussed the learning opportunities available for sector workers and considered whether there were more funding and opportunities available to public sector workers than in the private sector. Laura Lamb confirmed that data available indicated that the adult social care is the sector least qualified and that further funding and support is required for that sector. This is being considered with partners as part of a skills response plan for adult social care.
9.5	There was some discussion on the SSSC's partnership with NES which is formally set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU is currently being refreshed. It was noted that officers continued to have a close working relationship and there may be opportunity in the future for non-executive members to work more closely together as they had in the past.

9.6	The Council
	1. approved the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.
10.	Financial Strategy 2023-2026
10.1	Lynn Murray presented report 06/2023 and the Financial Strategy for 2023-2026. She advised that this was a medium-term strategy to support the Strategic Plan which had been approved earlier in the meeting. She reminded Members that this was a high level strategy and it is supported by annual budgets which would be discussed later in the meeting.
10.2	Members discussed the overall strategy and expressed concern that the strategy was a three-year strategy yet the budget is set only annually. Additionally, Members were concerned that the SSSC was not in a position to raise funds, unless through increase of registration fees. Consultation on a review of fees had been put on hold in 2022 due to the effects of the pandemic and the rise in the cost of living. Scottish Government had not yet confirmed whether there would be a consultation on review of registration fees in 2023.
10.3	Members acknowledged they had little scope for making decisions as many areas of funding were controlled by the Scottish Government. Sandra Campbell suggested that further to the recent meeting, Council Members should meet again with the Minister to discuss funding for the organisation.
10.4	The Council
	1. approved the Financial Strategy 2023-2026.
11.	Review of SSSC Corporate Governance Framework
11.1	Anne Stewart presented report 07/2023 along with the revised SSSC Code of Corporate Governance. She advised that she had carried out a three-yearly review of the code and proposed some changes which are highlighted in the report.
11.2	Anne Stewart also spoke to the Council's annual effectiveness review. The process had been completed towards the end of 2022 and outcomes discussed at the annual away day in November 2022.
11.3	The Council
	1. approved the revised Code of Corporate Governance, subject to some minor typographical corrections
	2. noted that the annual effectiveness review had been carried out and discussed at the annual away day in November 2022.

12.	Draft budget 2023/23 and indicative budgets for 2024/24 and 2025/26
12.1	Lynn Murray presented report 08/2023 which included the draft budget for 2023/24 and the indicative budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26. Members were asked to consider and make comment on the proposals. The final budget will be presented to the Council at a special meeting to be held on Monday 27 March 2023. Lynn Murray advised that comments made today will help inform the final budget proposal in March.
12.2	Members were referred to appendices 1A and 2, these contained supporting information, and assumptions. Appendix 1B contained sensitive information and could be discussed during the private session later in the day.
12.3	Lynn Murray guided Members through Appendix 3, a powerpoint presentation, which drew out the key budget issues and areas of change or concern.
12.4	The discussion focussed on possible areas of savings including changes to the staffing establishment and potential reduction in operating costs all of which come with varying levels of risk to the organisation. Members noted that a business case had been drafted to present to Scottish Government for funding for the Future Proofing Project, this being a one-year, one-off expenditure.
12.5	There was some discussion on the pay award for staff including the assumption for future years, which Members stated appeared unrealistic and low in the current climate. Lynn Murray advised that the Scottish Government has not provided guidance for 2023/24 but the figure included in the assumptions is the same as some other public bodies. Lynn Murray explained that the SSSC does not have a capital budget, only revenue.
12.6	Members also discussed efficiencies made by the digitalisation projects and Laura Shepherd confirmed that many efficiencies had already been realised through digitalisation. Opportunities for further improvements and efficiencies through digital projects would continue to be pursued. Maree Allison confirmed that a large part, approximately half, of the FPP budget is expenditure on digital efficiencies.
12.7	The Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. considered and commented on the draft budget for 2023/24. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. noted there is a budget gap of £2.859m (table 1, Appendix 1A) and potential efficiencies and savings have been identified and discussions with Scottish Government are ongoing about how we will close this gap 2. considered and commented on the indicative budgets for 2024/25 of £2.299m deficit and 2025/26 £2.534m deficit (table 1, Appendix 1A)

	<p>3. noted that sensitive information was contained in Appendix 1B of this report and it may be discussed in the private session later in the meeting</p> <p>4. considered and commented on the considerations for projected general reserves and risks to the budget.</p>
13.	Procurement Strategy April 2023 to March 2026
13.1	Lynn Murray presented report 09/2023, the three-year procurement strategy which is a joint strategy with the Care Inspectorate. She confirmed to Members that the SSSC has no legal obligation to publish a strategy, but it is good practice to do so. She also confirmed, following a question, that should the SSSC sign up to climate change targets, there could be a risk of additional cost not accounted for in the draft budget and indicative budgets.
13.2	<p>The Council</p> <p>1. approved the draft Procurement Strategy 2023 – 2026.</p>
14	People Strategy mid-year progress report
14.1	Lynn Murray presented report 10/2023 which gave a mid-year update to Council on the progress of our People Strategy delivery plan and the planned delivery for the remainder of the year. She advised that good progress has been made to date. She also advised that early indications from the staff survey showed improvements in all areas apart from the section on pay and benefits.
14.2	Lorraine Gray advised on the timetable for advising Members on the results and proposed actions arising from the staff survey. After some discussion it was agreed that the results would be released to Members and staff during March. A report on planned actions would be submitted to Council in August, unless Members, having seen the results, requested the Chair of Audit and Assurance Committee to add the item to the agenda for the Committee in May.
14.3	Lynn Murray confirmed that strategic policies and procedures, including those relating to HR, were now on a programme for regular review. The reviews were on track and reported to both Audit and Assurance Committee and Council, quarterly, along with the calendars of business.
14.4	<p>The Council</p> <p>1. noted the mid-year updates for the year two of the People Strategy delivery plan</p> <p>2. agreed arrangements for considering the outcome of the recent staff survey</p> <p>3. agreed that future updates would be reported annually rather than six-monthly.</p>

15.	Council Action Record
15.1	The Council reviewed the Council action record and noted that actions C5, C9, and C92 were completed and agreed that these be archived from the quarterly report but be held on file for future reference.
16.	Date and time of next meeting
16.1	The date of the next Council meeting will be 27 March 2023 to consider time sensitive information. This will be an online meeting only and there will be a development session immediately following.
16.2	The next meeting to consider scheduled business will be held on Thursday 25 May 2023 at 10.00am.
	<i>Items 17 and 18 were discussed in private and minuted separately.</i>

Council 27 February 2023

Start time: 10am

Finish time: 1pm

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Sandra Campbell
Convener