

Meeting: Board meeting
Date/Time: 11 December 2025 at 09.30
Location: Microsoft Teams

Minutes - Open Session

1. Opening Items

The Chair welcomed members and observers, and especially Calum Munro, to his first meeting of the Board, as part of the executive team.

1.1. Welcome and Apologies

Committee Members Present:

Mary MacInnes [MTMI]
Seonaidh Charity [SC]
Rob Dunbar [RD]
John MacDonald [JND]
Michelle Macleod [MNL]
DK MacPhee [DKM]
Stewart MacLeod [SML]

In Attendance:

Ealasaid MacDonald Ceannard/Accountable Officer [ED]
Iain Macmillan, Director of Development [IMM]
Calum Munro, Head of Education and Plans [CM]

Apologies:

Nicola Pearson, Head of Finance & Corporate Affairs [NP]

Minutes:

Nicola NicThòmais, Lasair Ltd

1.2. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

1.3. Any Other Competent Business (AOCB)

None.

2. Finance

2.1. Financial Report

ED introduced this paper as NP was not present. Satisfaction was expressed that the budget will be adhered to as agreed. The Government will announce next year's budget sometime in the new year.

Decision:

Members noted the financial report.

3. Corporate Plan and Performance

3.1. Report on progress with the National Plan

Out of 35 actions, there is evidence to show that progress is being made on 25. The Plan is making a difference, and there is satisfaction with the progress so far. Work is needed particularly on priority areas: home, business and the economy and 0-18 Education.

It was heard that the Faster Rate of Progress group had been changed into a new group called 'TOG', and that some of the functions of that group will be undertaken by it from now on. The Ceannard and IM were present at the launch meeting. Officials believed that the new Act would make the responsibilities clearer, particularly in relation to Education. Members agreed that Gaelic education itself is also a major part of the economy of rural areas, contributing, for example, to permanent jobs.

North West Lewis have a Community Gaelic Plan and development work on the Uist plan continues. Many others have shown interest and are considering developing community plans. The work on the Areas of Linguistic Significance overlaps with the work on the plans and clarification is awaited as to where the Areas of Linguistic Significance will be.

Visit Scotland, Creative Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland will report on their strategy at Tog.

Some of the gaps are due to a lack of evidence rather than a lack of progress and, and also where there were no actions aligned to certain priorities in the Government's Plan.

Members recognised how challenging it is to influence Gaelic usage in the home. The work of the Officers is very important in this area.

Under the new Act, the Bòrd will have responsibilities to monitor and report on the progress of public bodies.

Decision: Members noted the progress report. Members agreed to prepare the information for the Government.

3.2. Education & Learning

Work is underway regarding Early Years provision with the intention of transferring the 0-3 care model to local authorities. A meeting is to be held with GLAN to consider teacher recruitment and retention.

Decision: Members noted the Education and Learning report.

3.1. Priorities for the Early Years Grant Scheme

4. Risk Management

4.1. Strategic Risk Register

There was no change in the last quarter. The register has been considered by the Audit Committee. The focus is now on next year's budget.

6 is a new and significant risk, *Systems failure leading to data breach* and the audit committee asked for more insight on the subject from the Data Officer. She will attend the next meeting of the Audit Committee. The team is undergoing a great deal of training on this subject.

Training for the Board would also be useful and the Ceannard agreed to look into this. The Ceannard is satisfied that the right steps are being taken on these issues.

Decision: Members agreed the risk register.

5. Corporate

5.1 Communication with Stakeholders

Communications packages are now going out to Members every month with media and communications information. It was recommended that a paper should not be prepared for the communication heading on the agenda unless a specific or strategic point arose.

A communications support contract has been awarded to *True North Ltd.* following a procurement process through Public Contracts Scotland. This contract aims to highlight the work of Gaelic development officers, as well as a campaign to promote Gaelic usage.

Website tenders are still being evaluated.

Decision: Members agreed the paper on stakeholders.

Members agreed with the recommendation not to prepare a paper unless there is a specific topic to be raised.

5.2. The Scottish Languages Act

The Scottish Languages Act 2025 (Commencement No 1) Regulations 2025

In addition to the information in the paper, the launch of the TOG group earlier this week was welcomed.

Draft guidance from the Government on the Areas of Linguistic Significance will be issued to Members for their comments. It is hoped that the guidance will be released this week. It is important that Members submit their ideas – this is a one-time opportunity and there are risks if it doesn't result in good progress.

Members were encouraged that useful discussions have been taking place between the Board and Kate Forbes. The number/percentage of Gaelic speakers are important in relation to the Areas of Linguistic Significance and some clarification is needed.

Members asked whether the Act would affect positions within the team. It was confirmed that changes have already been made within the team as a result of the Act.

There are provisions in the Act about funding support but this is not new money. The Board will have additional responsibilities in terms of assessing the implementation of standards for the Plans and from now on more assessment work will be required.

Decision: Members note the information in the report.

5.3. Programme of meetings 2026/27

The programme of meetings for 2026/27 was noted.

Decision: Members agreed the programme.

6. Board Work Plan

6.1. Board Work Plan

The Board's work plan for 2026/27 was noted and communication will be taken off the agenda unless there is strategic business to be raised.

Decision: Members approved the work plan.

7. AOCB Date of next meeting: TBC

Nothing was raised.

Date of next meeting: TBC

The Chair thanked everyone and closed the meeting at 11.51am.