

Minute of last meeting

Scottish Hockey Board Meeting Minute

Date: 9th December 2025

Location: Edinburgh in person

Time: 6pm

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

1.1 Neil Francis welcomed everyone,

2. Attendance and Apologies

2.1 Attendees:

1. Neil Francis (Chair)
2. Derek Keir
3. Jane Harvey
4. Karen Gallacher
5. Kaz Marshall
6. Alison Lunn (sportscotland online)
7. Balvinder Sagoo
8. Mike Burnet
9. Simon Clarke (online)
10. Emma Douglas-Allan

2.2 Apologies:

- Martin Shepherdson
- Gareth Tenner (left at 8 pm)

1. Attendance and Apologies

The meeting was attended by Board members and senior staff, with representation from sportscotland. Apologies were received from two Board members. The chair noted thanks for the contribution to Scottish Hockey to Martin Shepherdson who will be stepping down from his role.

2. Approval of Previous Minutes and Publication Approach

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on **28 October 2025** were approved as a fair and accurate record.

- The Board discussed transparency and agreed that **public-facing summary minutes**, focused on decisions and actions with appropriate redactions, should be published after each meeting.
- It was agreed that an **ongoing Action and Decision Log** will be maintained, with new items clearly highlighted and completed actions archived.
- Board papers and the current budget position were noted. The **2026 Budget and Business Plan** will be reviewed and approved at the February Board meeting due to current organisational structural review.

Action:

- Publish approved summary minutes and introduce Action and Decision Log.

3. Safeguarding

- The Board received an update on safeguarding activity. No new matters were reported at the start of the meeting.
- The Board discussed safeguarding capacity and the importance of maintaining oversight.
- Organisational safeguarding standards and processes are being reviewed in preparation for the next annual external assessment by Children First.

Actions:

- Introduce Board safeguarding report that provides high-level visibility of activity and workload.
- Confirm safeguarding compliance position at the next Board meeting.

4. Strategic Direction and Operational Update

- The Board discussed the continued shift toward **strategic governance**, reducing operational focus at Board level.
- Recent staff appointments were noted positively.
- Updates were received on digital and communications development, including:
 - Commissioning of a new website provider, aligned to the upcoming strategy launch.

- Use of improved social media tools to better reflect the hockey community.
- The CEO shared the planned use of competitions and membership systems to improve data integration and operational efficiency for more informed decision making.

Action:

- Prepare a coordinated strategy launch and website launch plan.

5. Finance and Commercial Matters

- The Board noted a **positive financial forecast for 2025** and acknowledged the current budget position for future years.
- A detailed review of the **2026 budget** will take place at the February Board meeting to ensure alignment with strategic priorities.
- A commercial opportunity supporting elite athlete preparation was discussed. Key financial, contractual, and reputational considerations were highlighted and considered.

Decision:

- Proceed with the opportunity subject to appropriate due diligence and contractual assurances.

Actions:

- Finalise contractual arrangements with appropriate safeguards.
- Complete due diligence and confirm delivery planning.
- Review staffing costs as part of the 2026 budget process.

6. sportscotland – Annual Investment Return

- The Board noted the timelines and requirements for the **Annual Investment Return**, including submission deadlines and review processes.
- Updates were provided on engagement opportunities and changes to the overall investment framework.

Action:

- Prepare and submit the Annual Investment Return in line with requirements.

7. Strategy Approval and Publication

- The Board formally **approved the Strategy for Hockey in Scotland**, recognising the extensive consultation and engagement undertaken to build alignment with key stakeholders including clubs and partners.
- Guidance was provided on public launch and communication, including:
 - Clear and concise public-facing messaging.
 - Professional design support.
 - Emphasis on digital assets rather than large print runs.

Actions:

- Prepare a strategy launch timetable.
- Develop a concise public summary and supporting communications assets.

8. Organisational Structure

- The Board discussed organisational structure in the context of strategic delivery and long-term financial sustainability.
- It was noted that proposals are at an early stage and that no final decisions have been made.
- The Board agreed that an appropriate and proportional staff consultation process should commence to explore options, gather feedback and explore alternatives and mitigations.

Next Steps:

- Begin a formal consultation process, supported by external HR advisers, before any decisions are taken.

9. Any Other Business

- The Chair shared insights from cross-sport discussions, highlighting common challenges across governing bodies, particularly in safeguarding and governance complexity.

10. Close

The Chair thanked attendees and closed the meeting.
Actions will be progressed as outlined above.