

Consumer Scotland Board Meeting
29 July 2021
Minute of Meeting

Attendees: David Wilson (Chair)
Nick Martin
Angela Morgan
James Walker
Neil Ritchie (Scottish Government Implementation Team)
Andrew McConnell (Scottish Government Implementation Team)
Wendy McCutcheon (Scottish Government Implementation Team)

Apologies: Jill Rosie (Scottish Government Implementation Team)

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies from Jill Rosie. The Chair recorded his thanks to Jill for her role in producing the papers for this meeting. Andrew McConnell, who is also a member of the Implementation Team, was welcomed to the meeting. **(Action: Organogram and contact details to be provided for all of the Implementation Team)**

Agenda Item 2 – Minutes of Last Meeting

2. The minutes of the meeting of 1 July 2021 were agreed.
3. Sue Bomphray, the HR Advisor, will be starting on 2 August 2021 and will be attending future Board meetings. As stated at the last meeting, early priorities will be supporting the Board in the recruitment of the CEO and senior team, including any potential interim arrangements, and supporting TUPE considerations on transfer of functions from Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) to Consumer Scotland. **(Action: Implementation Team to share meeting dates with HR Advisor)**
4. The Implementation Team advised that a holding webpage on the Scottish Government website would be developed to provide high level details of the work of the Consumer Scotland Board. **(Action: website / email domain names paper to be prepared and discussed at next meeting)**
5. All other action points would be covered under the forthcoming agenda items.

Agenda Item 3 - Forward Look and Priorities

6. Neil introduced this paper which had been developed to inform a discussion on priorities going forward. Areas for discussion included the following:
 - Key milestone timeline
 - Summary of board sponsor responsibilities
 - High level risk register
 - Implementation Team's work-plan

7. These documents have been produced in way which would allow them to evolve as work progressed.
8. In general, all Board members were content with the principles around the papers. Regarding the Board Sponsor responsibilities, Nick stated that he might not be the best placed to lead on any (interim) Chief Executive work. This was agreed, and acknowledged that it is something that Angela will be leading on.
9. The timeline was looked at in-depth. Timings were extremely tight on some of the areas such as recruitment and too long to deliver in some other areas such as the Framework Document. It was noted though that there were significant independencies and some judgment was required as to what was on the critical path. Nonetheless, it was recognised that the appointment of the CEO is the key priority.
10. The Board then had a general discussion around the paper Angela had prepared on the CEO recruitment, including a Draft Person Specification and Essential Criteria for the Chief Executive. During these discussions James posed the question of how do you set a benchmark on Remuneration when looking to appoint a Chief Executive. It is expected that the new HR adviser will be able to provide all the relevant help and advice the Board needs to ensure the successful recruitment of a Chief Executive. Early meetings were being arranged with Sue, Angela and David to identify the work programme and the sequencing of, amongst other things, the outline of a staff structure, the procurement of recruitment consultants, securing necessary approvals for recruitment.
11. At the next Board meeting, there needs to be a further discussion on the role of the Chief Executive and also if the Board wish to appoint an interim Chief Executive. **(Action: Sue/Angela to ensure a paper is brought to the next meeting on the CEO Recruitment process)**
12. The draft risk register was discussed in detail. All risks had been left in green and the Board discussed the associated risks against each subject heading. Overall the Board did not feel sufficiently assured to confirm that all work was on track, with risks mitigated. The Implementation Team was asked to reflect on the discussion – finance/resources and the Framework Document were two particular areas of concern for the Board - and further discussion on these issues between Nick and the Implementation Team was required. The Board also commented on the priority status in the work-plan and cited that it would be helpful if a timeframe could be attached to the priorities. **(Action: For the next Board meeting, the Implementation Team to present an updated paper, with a particular focus on resources and budget, reflecting the comments received)**
13. Following on from the risk register discussions, the Board then started to discuss the TUPE arrangements. The Board felt that they required more background / the business case as to why there was a proposed transfer of functions from CAS to Consumer Scotland before any productive discussions could continue. **(Action:**

Implementation Team to provide Board with background on TUPE discussions at next Board meeting)

Agenda Item 4 - Policy Landscape and Strategy

14. This section of the agenda focused on the work that James and Neil had carried out in relation to plotting the Scottish consumer landscape and the opportunities and challenges facing Consumer Scotland.
15. James had also undertaken some work on the strategy which included his thinking around how Consumer Scotland could influence the landscape and how short-, medium- and long-term goals could be set.
16. A discussion followed on how Consumer Scotland would deliver on advocacy and advice. It needs to be made clear what Consumer Scotland will do and what it won't get involved in. This will be crucial to ensure that other organisations do not feel threatened by, but want to work with, Consumer Scotland.
17. Building on the presentation and the subsequent discussion, James agreed to produce a strategy paper which would begin to summarise issues where there could be a role for Consumer Scotland. This would provide a further development of the key issues in the slide presentation, covering;
 - *Key Players*: to provide further details on the likely relationships with the key organisations noted in Slide 3 and develop a "Soft Power" mapping of the landscape facing Consumer Scotland;
 - *Challenges and Opportunities*: to provide a "long-list" of key policy issues that Consumer Scotland could be engaged in, building on Slide 4. This might include scam prevention, postal delivery charges, vulnerable consumers, data privacy, product recall database development etc. The aim would be to help a strategy process to identify a short-list of issues to be prioritised; and
 - *What Consumer Scotland does*: to summarise the functions of the organisation, building on Slide 5. The legislation sets out a set of Functions, under Sections 2 to 7 of the Act. A more detailed outline of what and how the new organisation could implement each of these functions would help in a number of ways – ranging from policy prioritisation to organisational design.
18. The Board would then use this to start prioritising areas of work, and subsequently, the work-plan. **(Action: James, with support from Neil, to produce a strategy paper for next Board meeting)**
19. The discussion then moved on to the use of language in the Consumer Scotland Act and how it can be interpreted. There is a need for Board members to be clear about the roles and responsibilities of Consumer Scotland especially when speaking to stakeholders to avoid any doubt. It was acknowledged that Consumer Scotland would listen to the pulse of the consumer but would not be able to take every consumer's pulse. Angela highlighted that she was working on a paper for co-opting a member with vulnerable experience onto the Board and would bring this paper to the next meeting. **(Action: Angela to bring paper to next meeting on issues around Vulnerable Consumers)**

Agenda Item 5 – Ministerial Meeting

20. The Chair advised that he had been invited to meet with Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth for an introductory discussion on Consumer Scotland. He agreed with the Board key points that he would raise with the Minister.

Agenda Item 6 – AOB

21. A glossary of terms paper had been developed but due to time restraints was not discussed at the meeting. Feedback on the definitions in this paper would be appreciated, especially anything else that should be added.

22. The Chair summarised the key points from the meeting and confirmed that the date of the next meeting was 17 August at 2 pm. He thanked all for their participation in today's meeting.

**Consumer Scotland Implementation Team
6 August 2021**