

CONSUMER SCOTLAND BOARD MEETING

Tuesday 15 November 2022

10:00 to 13:30

Meadowbank House, Edinburgh, and by MS Teams

Minutes

Board Members Present

David Wilson, Chair

Angela Morgan, Member

James Walker, Member

Nick Martin, Member (by MS Teams)

Also In Attendance:

Consumer Scotland:

Sam Ghibaldan, Chief Executive

Sue Bomphray, Director of Operations (by MS Teams)

Douglas White, Director of Policy and Advocacy

David Eiser, Director of Research and Analysis

Andrew Denholm, Head of Communications

Tracey Reilly, Head of Policy and Markets

Laura Smart, Investigations Lead (by MS Teams)

Hilary Tennant, Governance and Corporate Services Manager

Gail Walker, Head of Water and Post

Jane Williams, Head of Research

Welcome and Declaration of Interest

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. No declarations of Interest were noted.

Minutes from the Previous Meeting and Action Tracker

2. The Board approved the minutes of the previous meeting on 20 September 2022.

3. The Action Tracker was presented and updates provided:
 - a. Hilary Tennant (HT) provided an update on item 27 of the previous minutes and advised the Board that CS would not be required to report on emissions targets until November 2023. However an emissions statement would be drafted and brought to the next Board meeting.
 - b. Sam Ghibaldan (SG) provided an update on item 26 of the previous minutes to advise that a revised draft handbook had been received from MacRoberts. It was agreed to circulate this draft version to the Board for comment.

Introductions

4. Introductions were made around the table.

Strategic Plan/Work Plan

Purpose, Context and Scene Setting

5. SG introduced the session on the Strategic Plan and Work plan, making the following points:
 - a. The annual Work Plan is required to go out for consultation prior to its final publication in April 2023. The Strategic Plan will be further developed as the work plan is finalised.
 - b. The Consumer Welfare Report (CWR) was due for publication in 2026, and to allow learning and outcomes from the CWR to inform the Strategic Plan it was proposed that the Strategic Plan cover a four year period to 2027.
 - c. The Board had provided written feedback on the draft Strategic Plan prior to the meeting, and SG agreed to review the tone, style, language of the report prior to publication. The inclusion of graphics and the collation of the consumer context within an appendix would also be considered.
 - d. One area highlighted for further consideration had been on outcomes, and how to measure and report against these. The National Performance Framework would be used to define and clarify our output and impact.
6. In discussion the following points were made:
 - a. It was necessary to look ahead and consider where the organisation will be at the end of the Strategic Plan timeframe. Once a four year strategy is established the work plan will then set out how we will deliver that.

- b. The Strategic Plan needs to be accessible to all stakeholders, and to consider what positive difference Consumer Scotland can make for consumers.
 - c. The Strategic Plan and Work Plan must link together. The Work Plan is not currently referenced in the draft Strategic Plan.
 - d. That synchronisation of the annual Work Plan and 4 year Strategic Plan should be provided, possibly using a timeline graphic, to explain the rationale and highlight that the CWR will set out our achievements after 3 years, and will then inform the development of the second Strategic Plan.
 - e. The need to identify our desired outcomes, how these will be evaluated, and identify in advance the evidence and effectiveness measures to be used to measure our success.
7. SG tabled the revised organisational missions, vision and values document, which had been modified in consultation with CS staff, noting:
- a. The document demonstrated the relationship between our statutory role and the Strategic Plan, setting out the five key functions of our statutory role and how these linked to the purpose of Consumer Scotland.
 - b. The vision and mission were developed into the three areas of impact:
 - Consumers in the public mind – to help to frame discussions around consumers
 - Markets and services shaped by consumers – to work with business to support consumers to voice their needs and raise issues
 - Enabled consumers – to support consumers to drive change through their actions.
 - c. The work areas would support the development of the structure of the Work Plan.
8. In discussion the following points were made:
- a. That CS should challenge assumptions, motivate organisations, markets and services to work for consumers, and advocate to extend good practice. CS should support market design and solutions which worked for all consumers, including those facing challenging circumstances.
 - b. That the measurement of impact need to be more defined, using SMART objectives to capture what good practice looks like.
 - c. The cross cutting themes should be framed to remain relevant over the 4 year time period of the Strategic Plan. Our vision to commit to learning and development should be both internal and externally focused.

- d. That the measurement of outcome and impact was likely to be affected by several challenging external events. The aim was to make progress along the journey to improving the status of consumers.

National Performance Framework and Sustainable Development Goals

9. DW introduced the National Performance Framework which has 11 outcomes, and associated national indicators mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Breakout sessions were held with attendees to discuss four questions:

Q1. How should Consumer Scotland interact with the National Performance Framework in the planning, execution and measurement of our work?

Q2. What can Consumer Scotland learn from the NPF in the development of our own strategic approach?

Q3. Looking at the indicator set, which 5/6 feel the most strongly relevant to the interests of consumers?

Q4. Which outcome areas feel most under-developed in terms of properly capturing a clear set of consumer interests?

Each group then fed back on their discussions, many highlighting that the Consumer Duty should be included in the NPF. The current NPF is under review and a planned update is scheduled for September 2023. It was agreed that CS should feed into the review, and present the case to include a consumer focus within the indicators.

10. DW undertook to draft a document for presentation at the next Board meeting which would identify the NPF outcomes and indicators most relevant to consumers, and demonstrate how these could be amended to include the consumer's perspective.

Work Plan

11. DW presented the paper on the Work Programme Process to the Board. A long list of potential projects was included in Appendix 1 and the prioritisation framework was provided in Appendix 2. The aim was to align the portfolio of projects to Consumer Scotland's strategic goals and objectives. DW stressed the importance of having a balance of projects covering the full remit of CS, and therefore the

prioritisation scoring would be considered along with other factors to maintain a balanced overview of all projects being undertaken.

12. In discussion the following points were made:

- a. That resource capacity must be a consideration. The external landscape should also be monitored to ensure there are no gaps left where stakeholders are not proactive. Consider the level of impact CS can have when deciding on projects to undertake.
- b. Consideration would have to be given to how we measure benefit or detriment when deciding on prioritisation. How would the Board oversee the prioritisation process?
- c. Whether CS would share externally our prioritisation framework which could provide transparency in our decision making when selecting project to undertake.
- d. That CS could publish information on the wider range of projects considered to demonstrate our response to feedback received and our prioritisation process to ensure projects selected align to our mission and purpose.

13. SG advised that CS would consult with key stakeholders to inform our draft Work Plan and the selection of projects.

Wrap Up/ Next Steps

14. The Chair closed the first session by thanking all those who attended.

15. The Chair highlighted the key agreed actions to bring a second iteration of the Statutory role, missions, vision and values document to the next meeting, and advised that the Board meeting would focus on the draft Work Plan.

The Senior Management Team left the meeting.

Board appointments discussion

16. The Board discussed the appointment of a fifth Board member. The Chair undertook to write to Kersti Berge, the appropriate Scottish Government Director, with the conclusions of that discussion.

Consumer Scotland Advisory Committees

17. The Board approved the draft terms of reference for the Energy Consumers Committee of Consumer Scotland.
18. In accordance with the Standing Orders requiring each committee of Consumer Scotland to have two Board members as members, the Board agreed:
 - a. That David Wilson and James Walker should be members of the Energy Consumers Committee.
 - b. That Angela Morgan and Nick Martin should be members of the Consumers in Vulnerable Circumstances Committee when that is established in 2023-24.

AOB

19. There being no other business the meeting closed.