

## Fife Sports and Leisure Trust

Minute of the Virtual Meeting of the Board of Directors  
held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 3.30pm via Microsoft Teams

Present: R Campbell (Chair)  
J Hamilton (JH)  
E Wallace (EW)  
P Gulline (PG)  
A Suttie (AS)  
L Erskine (LE)  
D Lothian (DL)  
B Thomson (BT)  
D Watt (DW)

In Attendance: E Walker (CEO) Chief Executive Officer  
W Watson (WW) Chief Operating Officer  
V Wyse (VW) Head of Finance & Business Development  
L Turnbull (LT) Human Resources Manager  
S Urquhart (SU) Sport & Physical Activity Manager  
C Bowman (CB) Personal Assistant (Minutes)

### ACTION

#### 931. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from K Caldwell and C McDonald.

#### 932. Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were declared.

#### 933. Minute of the Meeting Held on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020

The Minute was approved and the Chair was authorised to sign it.

#### 934. Matters Arising

**916.** The Chair/CEO to contact Carolyn McDonald to grant her a six-month leave of absence from Board meetings.

This has been confirmed with Carolyn and she remains committed to the Board.

**922.** CEO to provide the Board with regular financial updates and recommendations to the Board.

Ongoing.

CEO to provide the Board with Efficiency Plan to close the funding gap for 2021/22 for approval by Directors once the

outline proposals for the Fife Council Reform Agenda are known.

Complete.

- 923.** CEO to provide Directors with a full update on Pan-Fife Aquatics model and Potential Merger which will both be discussed at the S&O Committee meeting on 03/12/20.

The model will form part of scenario plans for the future.

- 925.** SU to inform centre staff to allow flexibility for lane swimming.

Complete.

- 927.** Directors to provide feedback to CEO re any clashes with proposed programme of Board and Committee meetings.

No negative feedback received.

- 928.** WW to give Chair sight of the Internal Audit Plan before it goes to G&C Committee for approval.

Draft report has been submitted to the Chair and this will be presented to the G&C Committee on 09/02/21.

- 928.** CEO to provide Directors with update on sport and leisure reform.

Covered within CEO's update.

- 928.** CEO to give Directors sight of the Reform Agenda before it goes to Policy & Co-Ordination Meeting at the end of January.

Complete.

### **935. Chairman's Report**

The Chair reported that since the last Board meeting he has had several virtual meetings with the CEO to discuss Trust business. He will discuss the proposed Internal Audit plan with the CEO at their next meeting on 04/02/21.

### **936. CEO's Update (including Committee Business)**

The CEO provided Directors with an update on the impact of the second lockdown on 26/12/20.

It is likely that Scotland will remain in lockdown at least until the middle of February and the Trust is experienced and well-prepared to move

from one tier level to the next once restrictions are eased. The health and well-being of staff is essential and the Trust continues to communicate with staff to provide support.

### **Services and Operations Committee Update**

The majority of business discussed at the meeting on 03/12/20 will be covered later in the agenda. Items also discussed were the implementation of a discount scheme and the development of a virtual offering. Both have been delayed due to the impact of the pandemic. The timing is not right for the discount scheme, however there is an opportunity to monetise the online classes, which were previously offered free online, and this is currently being researched.

### **Fife Council Update**

The Council reviewed the Trust's annual report for 2019/20 at its Communities & Housing Committee on 21/01/21 and acknowledged that the Trust had a very good year in terms of performance and the year end position. The Committee focused on the Trust's positive response during the pandemic and what it is doing to recover. The Trust continues dialogue with FC re the financial position and has assurance that FC will under-write the deficit position for 2020/21 as well as provide top-up funding before the end of the financial year. A letter confirming this will be issued by FC. A meeting will be arranged at the beginning of March with senior FC officers and Elected members to discuss the financial situation further and the CEO will provide the Board with updates.

**CEO**

### **Sport & Leisure Reform**

The CEO and SU, together with FC, are heavily involved in the report which has been delayed slightly and will be considered by FC post-April 2021.

A Pan-Fife Aquatics Programme, which was discussed at the S&O Committee, presents a good opportunity for the Trust and work continues to progress this.

The LIMS project is on target to commence on 06/04/21, however this may be impacted by the pandemic.

A working group has been established to prepare a pre-merger plan on the potential merger. A framework is currently being prepared and will be submitted to both Boards.

The 60-Day Sprint, aimed at re-starting the health programmes across Fife by working collaboratively with FC and Fife NHS, is making good headway. This involves a huge commitment from all

involved and will result in the delivery of an excellent health and wellbeing programme.

### **Asymptomatic Testing Venues**

The Trust is working along with FC to provide assistance during the pandemic. Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre is currently being used for food distribution. A mobile testing unit similar to that already set up at Michael Woods Sports and Leisure Centre is currently being considered for Levenmouth Swimming Pool and Sports Centre. To date, 30 FSLT staff on furlough have volunteered their services. The Chair commented that this was very pleasing.

### **Workforce change planning for post April (reduced hours model)**

Due to the Trust's deficit position, FC has agreed to allow the Trust to retain the reduced opening hours model which was introduced in November 2020. In the long term the hours may be increased if the demand is there. The reduced opening hours will have an impact on the workforce and the EMT is currently working on a solution to this and the final proposal will be presented to the Board and FC in February.

**CEO**

In an earlier conversation with the CEO, the Chair was pleased to learn of ongoing communication with staff in terms of their health and wellbeing whilst working from home. The CEO added that a lot of work has been completed to fulfil the Trust's legal responsibilities. Strict guidance and assessment templates have been issued to staff and a further return to work survey will be conducted. The CEO will provide Directors with copies of staff communications. Some staff are on flexible furlough to allow them respite days. JH enquired how this impacted on the flexible furlough claim. The CEO responded that a manual staff tracker is in place to address this. VW added that the Trust has 14 days to submit the claim to HMRC and payment is received within 6 working days.

**CEO**

Directors noted the report.

### **937. FSLT Financial Position Briefing Note**

VW updated Directors on the current financial situation and level of deficit anticipated by the end of the financial year, which continues to reduce since previously reported in the main due to the increased claim from the CJRS during lockdown, offset by loss of generated income originally anticipated for the period. Staffing costs, supplies and services were also reduced due to lockdown. The position is likely to improve further based on refinement of the CJRS claim and the level of casual furlough payments and also the increasing likelihood of closure for the rest of the financial year. There should be no impact of the Reserves level.

At this time the cash flow projections are projecting a deficit the first week in March and increasing by the end of the financial year. The Trust continues to review areas for mitigating the cash flow impact, eg, awaiting an update from HMRC on how to spread the payment of VAT (currently due to be paid on 31<sup>st</sup> March) monthly over 2021/22. Salaries are also due to be paid on 1<sup>st</sup> April which will impact on the cash flow, however FC is willing to negotiate a further top up if necessary to cover.

Fife Council has agreed to provide additional funding to support the management deficit for the year (excluding the additional accounting for pensions).

VW is currently investigating the possibility of claiming against the insurer for business interruption during Covid and will seek clarification from the Trust's legal advisors on the positions. VW will update the Board on any progress.

**VW**

Directors noted the Briefing provided.

*BT left the meeting at this point*

### **938. FSLT COVID Route Map Report**

VW presented the report. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November it was announced that Fife would be in level 2 of the 5-level system. On 13<sup>th</sup> of December Fife was placed into level 3 (all adult classes ceased) and on the 26<sup>th</sup> December 2020 placed into level 4 (all centres closed).

In preparation of the announcement all facilities followed the procedures and guidance to be moved to lockdown status after the festive closure.

During the lockdown period, duty managers and the technical team will carry out all building checks to ensure that the facilities are ready to re-open when it is appropriate to do so.

The furlough job retention scheme was extended to the end of April 2021. FSLT has taken advantage of the scheme to furlough the majority of its staff on a full or flexible furlough basis, some of which may move in and out of flexible furlough as required.

Communication plans are in place for staff, customers and stakeholders. Emphasis for staff is on their health and wellbeing and communication is sent every four weeks.

An update was provided on the instances of COVID cases affecting the Trust.

A working group has been setup to review the Scottish Government's updates, with operational plans in place to move up and down the tiers as quickly and smoothly as possible.

Directors noted the report and remitted the CEO to provide further progress updates on FSLT's route map back to pre-COVID activities.

**CEO**

### **939. Operational Performance Review**

SU provided Directors with a review of the performance of leisure centres in the first 15 weeks of re-opening on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

#### **Overview of the General Attendances**

Average attendances prior to Covid were 49,000 across all venues per week and this figure has been set as a benchmark against which to compare numbers.

The highest number of attendances was achieved in Tier 2, week 8 (2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020) with 26,500 (53%) recorded. Fife was placed into Tier 3 in week 9 and despite this the numbers remained consistent. On average, over the 15 weeks, attendance levels were approximately 50% with 13 centres operating (excluding the Beacon Leisure Centre) and there were over 300,000 visits during the 15-week period.

#### **Main activities on offer**

- 8 swimming pools open to the public for swimming throughout Fife recording 31% occupancy in Week 1 through to 57% in week 15.
- 11 gym facilities open to the public, with social distancing measures in place. The occupancy rate remained consistent over the 15 weeks averaging 32% occupancy per hour.
- In week 9 there were over 100 fitness classes per week with occupancy rate of almost 52%. However, due to movement into Tier 3 classes were ceased.

#### **Engagement process with customers**

- Customer Satisfaction Score - 87%, which highlights that customer satisfaction is excellent.
- Customer Effort Score - Through the period of the first 15 weeks customers are finding it easy to do business with FSLT.
- Net Promoter Score – Average score is 75%

- 99% customers satisfied on arrival at the centre with social distancing and health and safety measures in place.
- 98% customers approved of the social distancing and health and safety measures in place while taking part in their chosen activity.
- 98% customers found staff helpful and well-informed about how the social distancing and health and safety measures were implemented.

### **Leisure Active membership base and engagement with new customers**

- Leisure Active has been directly impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. As of 4th of January 2021 this is a loss of 46% of member compared with members numbers at March 2020. However, a number of members have paused their membership and it is hoped to retain them on re-opening.

### **Learn to Swim Scheme**

- The LTS programme returned on 12th October at 8 venues. Due to the on-going closure of the Beacon Leisure Centre, the programme was re-located to Kirkcaldy Leisure Centre on 16th November 2020 and over 300 families chose to relocate to either Kirkcaldy Leisure Centre or surrounding venues.
- As at 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020 the customers enrolled in the programme is only 7.59% less than in March 2020.

PG remarked on the positive figures during such a short period and the Trust's preparations for re-starting business. He also commented on the low number of Covid-related issues which emphasised that the Trust is well-prepared to open safely.

JH added that a large gym chain in London has closed down and this could be opportunity for FSLT to grab the market share. He suggested a marketing campaign highlighting the support which the Trust provided to customers during lockdown and the health benefits of returning to exercise.

The CEO advised Directors that a large number of press releases have gone out to heighten FSLT's profile and highlight what the Trust is giving back to the community. Advertising campaigns will be launched once the Trust is able to re-open.

SU advised that the Trust is also offering free online and social media advertising space to local businesses for a small donation to the Health and Wellbeing programme. This will help build leads for the future and sponsorships once re-opened.

Directors noted the report.

#### **940. Health Programme Performance Review**

The CEO introduced the report and advised Directors that FSLT is one of the very few Trusts in Scotland to re-start its health-related programmes and this has been done hand in hand with Fife Council. This has been important for building relationships and working closely with the Council to achieve a common goal.

SU presented the report.

#### **60-day Sprint**

The 60-day Sprint was a collaboration between FSLT, Fife Council, Health and Social Care and Public Health with the aim to get all health programmes up and running across Fife.

The Sprint had three main outcomes:

- Participation – the aim was to collaboratively to see how many people partners could get active during the 60-day sprint. 25% was added to this figure to make the final target 325.
- Insights – what partners learned during the Sprint that would make a difference to the process of getting people in Fife active. 20 insights were to be recorded in 60 days.
- Collaboration – measure the collaboration levels between partners

At the end of the Sprint, the participation level reached 471. Twenty insights were gathered. Collaborative working ensured this success and also brought new opportunities. SU praised the collaboration between the partners, particularly Fife Council with whom the work has gone from strength to strength.

#### **Delivery and Performance Under Tier 2 Restrictions**

- Pre-return, 349 customers were contacted by telephone. With 240 customers wanting to return to face to face classes
- The programme restarted 1 with 2 classes in the week beginning 26th October 2020. 150 participants returned. A further 11 classes were planned to start week commencing 16th November 2020. However, due to the Fife entering level 3 restrictions from 13th November, the programme within centres was placed on hold.

### **Delivery and Performance Under Tier 3 restrictions position**

All participants who returned under tier 2 and the majority of those who were planned to start once tier 3 restrictions were imposed, were contacted by their instructor and offered options as to how they could be supported by their instructor to remain active.

The options offered to customers were:

- Zoom and Facebook class which were live interactive classes where all participants can see each other and the instructor.
- Pre-recorded Facebook and WhatsApp videos which the instructor sends to each participant.
- Telephone calls were made to keep connected with customers who were not able/did not want to use technology but wanted to keep in touch.
- Written exercises were emailed to those who requested these and who had an email address

### **Future programme developments based on Napier University Research and Health Team Experience of Programme Delivery**

- In 2017 FSLT was contacted by Napier University and asked to be involved with research of men's' participation in a physical activity referral scheme. From 2017 detailed data on participant uptake and attendance was captured and allowed FSLT to monitor uptake and engagement levels of the programme
- Evidence from Napier research demonstrates the positive impact the health programme has on peoples' lives; improvements to functional fitness; confidence; balance and strength. Research also indicates that mental health benefits were found but often unexpected by participants.
- The Napier research, along with uptake and engagement data gathered by FSLT, highlights that going forward, changes to the programme should be made in order to improve service provision and to meet the needs of people in Fife
  - Personalised contact with every individual
  - Provide different programme choices for different people
  - Uptake of the programme should be monitored more closely and participants who do not attend should be contacted within a few days of missing their initial class

The Trust is committed to the programme going forward and will take on board areas to be improved. This is a fantastic piece of research which will be valued by the NHS and document the value of the services which FSLT provides. It opens up opportunities for collaboration as well as funding. The report also includes interviews with staff which will provide an insight from the staff perspective.

CEO

The CEO will circulate Napier's final report to Directors once it has been peer-reviewed, hopefully at the end of January.

Directors noted the report.

#### **941. Beacon Leisure Centre**

WW advised Directors that Fife Council and FSLT have already undertaken work to improve the water quality. The next stage is to consider the consultant's recommendations. Fife Council require to identify funding from the Capital Plan to invest in the facility. The recommendations from the consultant's report will require to be considered, prioritised and scheduled into a short, medium- and long-term capital works programme.

Social distancing is problematic at the centre due to the design of the building, therefore, even though there may be a solution to the pool and ventilation issue, this still remains a problem.

The initial time-scale to re-open the Beacon Leisure Centre was 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, however, due to the current COVID restrictions this time-scale will not be met. FSLT and Fife Council have made good progress to date, however there is significant investment required and a procurement process to be undertaken to appoint a suitable contractor.

Directors noted the report and remitted to the CEO to bring further updates back to the Board.

CEO

#### **942. Facilities Update – Capital Works**

WW provided Directors with an update.

##### **Carnegie Leisure Centre**

Work commenced on the training pool at Carnegie Leisure Centre in July 2020. Due to COVID the Completion date has been delayed until June 2021 for handover to FSLT.

##### **Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre**

Cowdenbeath sports hall was flooded in August 2020 with concerns over its condition causing parts to be closed off progressively and

then closed all together in December 2020. Fife Council has agreed that a full replacement would be the most economical option with replacement works to start will be April/May 2021.

### **Bowhill Swimming Pool**

The synthetic pitch was damaged by a flood in August 2020 and due to the severity of the damage the existing carpet cannot be repaired. Fife Council has confirmed that the project has been entered in COMIS and the tender process will be 12 -16 weeks then an additional 8 weeks for the work to be completed.

Directors noted the report and remitted to the CEO to bring further updates back to the Board.

**CEO**

*DW Left the meeting at this point.*

### **943. HR Performance Management Review Policy**

LT provided an update with the rationale for the policy, taking Directors through the key components of the policy and the mechanism in place to support the employee and the manager.

Directors discussed the policy in detail asking questions about the timescales within the policy particularly the six-week review period and LT advised that in some cases this would be different depending on the complexity of the job.LT also advised this applies to all areas of the business at all levels within the organisation.

The CEO advised that the policy will be considered at the Services and Operations Committee and updates will be provided to the Committee on a regular basis on how the policy is performing.

**CEO**

Directors considered and approved the Improving Performance Policy and Procedure, remitting the HR Manager to develop appropriate training for managers and communicate the policy and procedure to staff.

**LT**

*LE left the meeting at this point.*

### **944. Services and Operations Committee Remit Review**

The Services and Operations Committee aims to support the operation of the business. However, with the changing demands on the trust and challenges of the recovery from Covid, a review of the committee remit is required to ensure that the scope of responsibilities are tailored to better resource the business demands at this time. There is also a necessity to ensure that all governance areas within the trust are covered and spread evenly over established committees.

The Services and Operation Committee remit has been reviewed in line with the future work priorities facing the trust. The remit of the committee now reflects responsibilities to include HR, Health and Safety and Quality Assurance to support immediate recovery priorities for the trust. This remit will ensure further develop transparency on governance arrangements and decision making within the trust. A proposed remit is outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

The Committee will be re-named the Services Improvement Committee.

Directors approved the remit as outlined in the report and approved the change of name of the Services and Operations Committee to the Service Improvement Committee.

**945. AOB**

The Chair emphasised the continued need to receive regular updates and thanked the CEO and her team for their input to the reports and information provided.

**CEO**

The Chair also commended the staff involved in production of the online Burns Night celebrations and asked the CEO to thank staff on behalf of the Board.

**946. Date of Next Board Meeting**

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2021 commencing at 3.30pm via MS Teams.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair*

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_