



Agency Board Meeting 24 July 2012

Board Report Number: SEPA 23/12

Chairman's Report

Summary:	This paper highlights points of interest from the Chairman's diary since the last Board meeting on 29 May 2012
Risks:	N/A
Financial Implications:	N/A
Staffing Implications:	N/A
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	N/A
Purpose of the report:	For information
Report Author:	David Sigsworth, Chairman
Appendices:	N/A

Chairman's Report

1. Internal SEPA issues

1.1 Risk Management Workshop

In line with the Board's responsibilities to oversee the key risks facing the organisation we took part in a workshop on 26 June. In concert with SEPA's internal auditors, KPMG, we reviewed a risk matrix and provided our own view of potential future risk for the organisation. In particular we ensured that the asset risk register reflects accurately the 2012-2013 Annual Operating Plan and the new three year Corporate Plan and we assessed the adequacy and effectiveness of management arrangements to mitigate risks identified.

2. External Engagement

2.1 Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs Climate Change and Environment Committee

SEPA was invited by the Committee to meet to allow new MSPs opportunity to ask questions and learn more about SEPA's activities. I attended the meeting together with our CEO James Curran and provided an update on SEPA's current priorities and future opportunities. It was a very useful exchange and we look forward to continuing a very positive relationship with the members of the Committee.

2.2 SOLACE

On 31 May I attended the SOLACE conference in place of our CEO James Curran. The SOLACE Scotland Annual Conference is an event for professionals working within local government and the public sector in Scotland. It is attended by Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, Senior Professionals from the Scottish Government and the private sector. It was an excellent networking opportunity and I am following up various contacts including Derek MacKay MSP, Planning Minister; David Dorward, CEO, Dundee City Council; Louise Macdonald, CEO, Young Scot. The conference was framed around five strategic sessions examining different aspects of a successful Scotland - the economy, community infrastructure, community safety, improved health and wellbeing, and supporting children and young people. For each session, a keynote speaker outlined the challenges and opportunities related to the theme, and posed some questions for councils to consider. A chief executive then played the role of respondent, summarising from their own experience how these issues are being addressed currently, and what new approaches might be adopted going forward. The conference has helped develop my own ideas for wider collaboration between SEPA and local government.

2.3 Scottish Council Development and Industry

On 20 June I attended the SCDI Strategic Influencer's dinner where the principal guest was The Rt Hon Edward Davey MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. The Secretary of State's address focussed on green energy and the investment opportunities for Scotland and during the question time following the dinner I took the opportunity to probe him regarding electricity market reform (EMR) and some aspects of fuel poverty policy

2.4 Kynesis

Together with our CEO James Curran on 4 June I met Paul Foley Director of Kynesis consulting. Paul and I had met a few years ago when he had contributed to the organisational design for Marine Scotland. On that occasion we had been talking about SEPA's thoughts on outcome based work and since then Paul has been heavily involved in outcome-based working and collaboration. Paul asked to meet to

discuss this subject and during the meeting we also spoke about the Cities agenda. Following that discussion Paul asked if SEPA would like to be involved in an event organised by the community planning partnership which Kynesis is facilitating. The event intends to develop a vision for Aberdeen city as the driver for its single outcome agreement

2.5 Audit Scotland

On 19 June I met Robert Black from Audit Scotland who is soon to retire from his post as Auditor General for Scotland. I have appreciated greatly the support and advice Robert has given to me over the years of my Chairmanship of SEPA and I took the opportunity to wish him well for the future. His successor is to be Caroline Gardner and I have now written to her asking to meet as soon as possible.

2.6 Ofgem

As previously mentioned I am a member of the Sustainable Development Advisory Board and I attended the meeting in London on 21 June. We discussed options for a “vulnerable customer strategy” following a paper Ofgem published back in March on “Energy affordability”. We also discussed the potential impacts of “EU target model for electricity market integration” in Great Britain.

2.7 Royal Highland Show

The Royal Highland Show was held from 21–24 June 2011 at the Highland Show Ground in Edinburgh. SEPA attended the event as part of the shared SEARS marquee, the theme of which was ‘Valuing Scotland’s Environment’. There was no specific SEPA stand at this year’s show; rather the tent was split into separate zones including woodlands; mountains, heaths and bogs; seas and coasts; farm and croft land; loch, rivers and wetlands. On 22 June, James Curran and I visited the Show and attended the Scottish Government Reception hosted by Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead at Royal Highland Show and met a number of key stakeholders from land and agriculture.

2.8 Keppie Architects

On 27 June I met with representatives of Keppie Architects, together with Mark Connelly, SEPA’s Project Manager, for a briefing on progress with the Angus Smith building. I had the opportunity to discuss the facilities that the Board will have at its disposal in the new facility. I have asked for the Board to receive a high level briefing at the earliest opportunity on the building that will hopefully take place in the autumn, followed by a visit to see the developing facility early in the New Year.

3. Future meetings

On 23 July I will participate in an Agency Management Team meeting when we will be joined by Bob McIntosh, SEPA’s sponsor director at the Scottish Government.

4. Action

- 4.1** The Board is asked to **NOTE** this report. Updates will be provided at the meeting.

David Sigsworth, Chairman

2 July 2012