



Agency Board Meeting 27 April 2021

Board Report Number: SEPA 11/21

Management Development Programme

Summary:	<p>The purpose of this paper is to provide the Board with an update on SEPA's Management Development Programme (MDP). Since the cyber-attack there has been a refocus of the programme to concentrate on the following three areas:</p> <p>Supporting managers in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Looking after themselves; 2. Looking after staff; and 3. Delivering SEPA's work programme.
Risks:	<p>If we do not take forward the MDP we lose the momentum that was built up prior to the cyber-attack and the opportunity to develop our managers and also help address areas highlighted in the staff survey. By not refocusing the programme in light of the cyber-attack we would risk not getting the buy in, support and the effectiveness of the programme. With respect to the current proposal there is a risk that we lose an opportunity by postponing the previously agreed 360° feedback exercise. However, we think this last risk can be managed.</p>
Resource and Staffing Implications:	<p>Support from consultants, MDP Board, learning and development and executive leadership is in place so no extra resources are needed.</p>
Equalities:	<p>Two areas where equalities is important.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring that the programme is planned and delivered with equalities in mind. 2. Ensuring that the programme emphasises the importance of equalities issues for managers and supports them with respect to their responsibilities in this area.
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	<p>In the short term at least, the work undertaken by the programme will be delivered remotely with minimal carbon impact. Strategically, helping managers to support the delivery of SEPA's visions and</p>

outcomes will have a significant positive impact on the environment and carbon.

Purpose and audience of the report:

The report is presented to the Board for noting and for comment.

Report Author:

John Kenny, Chief Officer, Circular Economy

Appendices:

Not applicable

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Prior to the cyber-attack SEPA had initiated a Management Development Programme (MDP) with an initial focus on network sessions and a 360° feedback exercise for all managers, including AMT. Updates on the programme were provided to the Board Change Committee with a member of the Committee attending one of the MDP Board meetings.

2. Background

- 2.1 On the back of the staff survey and as part of considerations of this year's Annual Operating Plan (AOP) it was agreed that the development of a SEPA MDP would be a priority for the agency.

Summary of work carried out prior to the cyber-attack:

- Ran 2 staff ideas group to help inform the programme and the description of what a *Brilliant SEPA Manager* would look like;
- Agreement of the description of what a *Brilliant SEPA Manager* would look like;
- Agreed a 360 feedback exercise for all SEPA Managers along with target dates for delivery;
- Appointed a consultant to help with the 360 exercise and wider programme support;
- Rolled out the description of a *Brilliant SEPA Manager* and the plan for the 360 exercise to around 70 managers in December (with a further event planned in January which was cancelled due to the cyber-attack);
- Ran 6 network sessions in early November. Topic was a TED Talk called The Crisis of Leadership - A New Way forward. There were around 70 managers across those sessions;
- Ran another 6 sessions on early December. The topic was around quality conversations. There were around 60 managers across those sessions; and
- Both these were attended by a wide mix of managers from across portfolios and grades.

3. The Issues

- 3.1 The work on the programme was paused, following on from the cyber-attack. COVID followed by cyber-attack has left SEPA staff operating in a hugely challenging environment. This is particularly challenging for managers given the critical role they play in:

- Supporting staff through this period;
- Ensuring the organisation continues to function; and
- Building a 21st-century Environmental Protection Agency.

Therefore, developing and supporting our managers has become even more critical.

- 3.2 When the Programme Board regrouped, with input from the Chief Executive, it was agreed that it was critical to take forward the work of the programme but that we should refocus in light of the cyber-attack. The main reasons for this were the impact

of the attack on SEPA staff and managers as well as systems. At a very basic level it would not have been possible to continue with the 360° feedback exercise as agreed given the limited means of communications across the agency. Those involved in inputting to the refocus include the MDP Board, the Chief Executive, Trade Union, external consultants and consultation with around 30 SEPA Managers.

3.3 It has been agreed that from now until the end of June 2021, we focus on supporting managers in 3 areas:

1. Looking after themselves;
2. Looking after staff; and
3. Delivering SEPA's work programme

3.4 It has been agreed that going forward, we offer Managers the choice of support from a "menu of options" including updates on agreed topics, networking sessions, group coaching sessions and one-to-one coaching sessions. The initial offer will be:

3.4.1 A bespoke session for Managers on the project looking at the flexible allocation of resources; and

3.4.2 Group coaching session, bringing together Managers from different parts of the business, on how we can support Managers in "looking after themselves" – particularly how do they create head space in times of pressure. It was a very conscious decision to start in this area as it has been one of the key themes to emerge from the consultation with Managers (and others). On the one hand a number of Managers are telling us they don't have the time or head space to think about themselves, take leave etc., on the other hand what has been offered here through the MDP is part of daily leadership and not a "nice to have". We are keen to develop the culture where taking the time to look after yourself and create your "head space" is not just important for self-care (which is, in and of itself, a worthy goal), it is critical to being a brilliant manager. Creating "head space" whatever that means for each manager is what the group sessions and the 1-1 coaching will offer, with tools and techniques for both how to create "head space" and how to use that "head space".

3.5 This will be followed up in the short to medium term of offers of other bespoke sessions, other group coaching sessions and the offer of one-to-one coaching sessions. Early thinking about further areas include:

- Managing through uncertainty;
- Supporting others;
- Managing difficult conversations/meetings;
- Delivering your role;
- Seeing and seizing opportunities

Note – coaching sessions will be undertaken by professional coaches (provided by the consultants).

3.6 The 360 reviews will still be conducted, just deferred as we consider them critical to the success of the MDP.

4. Recommendations

4.1 The Board is asked to note the refocusing of the MDP and offer any thoughts and comments on this.

Author(s) and Date

John Kenny, 21 April 2021