

Board Members Present: Marieke Dwarshuis (MD) – Chair
 Robin Strang (RS)
 Lynn Bradley (LB)
 Ellie Craig (EC)
 Kirsten Howie (KH)
 Neil Mackay (NM)
 Bill Maxwell (BM)

OSCR attendance: Quentin Fisher (QF) – Interim Chief Executive
 Judith Hayhow (JH) – Head of Corporate
 Alex Wright (AW) – Head of Regulation and Improvement
 Finance, Governance and Business Manager
 Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases & Quality Assurance
 Senior Manager Digital and Comms
 HR & Learning Coordinator
 Senior Manager Policy and Sector Improvement

Item	Area	Action
1	<p>Chair’s introduction, welcome and apologies</p> <p>MD welcomed everyone to the meeting including new Board member Ellie Craig who was attending her first Board meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were noted from the Senior Legal Advisor</p>	
2	<p>Declaration of interests</p> <p>EC declared that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She is Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Scottish Youth Parliament and a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament • She is a UK Board member of the National Lottery Community Fund and • She is employed as Youth Worker, East Renfrewshire Carers Centre. <p>MD noted that these interests had been discussed with SMT in advance of the meeting. The Terms of Reference for the National Lottery Community Fund as well as the OSCR Board's Scheme of Delegation, Standing Orders and the Casework Committee Terms of Reference have been reviewed. EC’s roles do not involve</p>	

	<p>decision making in respect of individual charities or applications for charitable status. Accordingly, no active conflict of interest was identified at this stage. MD noted that, should any specific matter arise relating to these organisations, appropriate mitigations would be put in place, including withdrawal from discussion and restricted access to papers, in line with OSCR’s established procedures. It was agreed that this would be kept under review.</p> <p>The other Board members reconfirmed their current interests which are recorded on their Register of Interests. They had no new declarations of interest.</p> <p>The Senior Manager Digital and Comms also confirmed a conflict of interest with the Scottish Youth Parliament.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meeting and Action Log</p> <p>The Board approved the minutes as an accurate record of the 19 February 2026 meeting.</p> <p>The action log was reviewed.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Chair update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The note of the March Strategy Day meeting will be circulated. <p>Action – circulate note of March Strategy Day once approved by MD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QF will remain in post as Interim Chief Executive until at least October 2026. • EC’s induction day was held on 22 April. • Early discussions have been held regarding the forward schedule of Board and Casework Committee meetings, including reducing the number of Strategy Days and aligning a reduced number of Casework Committee meetings with Board meetings. The Board agreed that a return to a set day for Board meetings from 2027 would work well and agreed on Wednesday. • OSCR received its first item of correspondence relating to charities operating on a single sex basis, following a recent Supreme Court ruling. MD noted that this issue had previously been identified as one that could generate significant volume and complexity for the organisation and emphasised the 	<p>Executive Assistant</p>

	<p>importance of monitoring this closely. MD indicated that this matter was likely to feature in forthcoming discussions on risk appetite.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD advised that she had previously decided not to seek reappointment at the end of her current term, which concludes in October 2026. She reported that preparations for the recruitment of her successor have begun. 	
5	<p>CEO Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casework volumes and capacity remains one of OSCR’s most significant challenges. QF said that the headline data in the performance paper did not fully capture the work underway to mitigate pressures, including changes to processes and prioritisation, with further adjustments planned. He highlighted that the forthcoming risk appetite discussion would be critical to supporting this work. • There is work ongoing around automation and digitalisation. Some changes had already been implemented with further developments planned. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The removal of the option for submission of paper accounts would now be implemented on 12th May 2026. ○ A bid is being prepared for submission to SG’s Invest to Save programme, focused on automation and digitalisation in relation to status and consent cases. The deadline is Friday 1 May. • Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of “sex” in the Equality Act is expected to be published after the election. OSCR are aware of the impact this guidance could have and are preparing for increased correspondence on this matter. <p>Members sought assurance about preparations for this.</p> <p>Action – Investigate if data can be extracted on the number of charities that might be affected by the guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on the Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of “sex” in the Equality Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCVO and Volunteer Scotland are working together to develop shared resources for charities in response to the hostile environment facing parts of the sector. OSCR has agreed to support this, but will not be taking a leading role. • QF updated on meetings he attended including 	<p>Finance, Governance and Business Manager</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland ○ The Fundraising Regulator ○ UK charity regulators regarding SORP reporting tiers. Work on the Charity SORP to be postponed in light of consultation by the Department for Business and Trade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Corporate Strategy, Digital Strategy, People Strategy, and Business Plan will be published on an appropriate date after the election period. ● The Charity Trustee Database launch was successful. ● There has been strong progress in the Revitalising Trusts project, with over £10 million reactivated across the four years of the programme. Foundation Scotland is leading the media announcements of this work, however OSCR will be featured in this and we will share media content on our own channels. <p>MD suggested that the Board may find it helpful for future Chief Executive updates to be provided in written form in advance of meetings, to support scrutiny and discussion.</p> <p>Action – CEO update to be added as a paper included in the Board pack of papers.</p>	QF
6	<p>Performance Update (including Financial Report)</p> <p>JH and the Finance, Governance and Business Manager introduced this item noting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Of the 16 ambitions for the year, six have been achieved, nine have not been achieved and data is awaited from SG for one. ● The projected year-end outturn shows an underspend, with the exact figure being determined as part of the year end accounts preparation. ● The external audit is scheduled to commence on 11 May. <p>There were no questions from the Board around the financial information presented.</p> <p>The Board considered the wider performance update.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update of the current position of MoUs would be provided at the next Board meeting</p> <p>Action – Provide a list of current MoUs and detail progress made.</p>	Senior Manager Policy and

	<p>RS and AW introduced this item noting that the volume of incoming casework remained high, with particular pressure arising from concerns and applications for charitable status.</p> <p>Members were advised that due to a change in recording procedures, data presented for February and March is not presented accurately, this will be corrected in future reports.</p> <p>AW and the Senior Manager, Higher Risk Cases & Quality Assurance reported that sustained workload pressures were continuing to impact performance against key targets. They noted that a range of mitigations were already in place, including reprioritisation of work and the continued development of automation and digital support, including the potential use of AI to assist casework processes.</p> <p>The risk associated with delays in risk assessing concerns was discussed. At present, concerns were again being risk assessed within the internal target of 15 working days, though it was acknowledged that this position remained vulnerable to sudden spikes in volume.</p> <p>RS updated that progress has been made in closing a number of long running and complex cases however several new and novel cases had recently been brought to the Committee for consideration and some continued to require significant staff resource.</p> <p>Members asked questions around the cases that are referred to the Committee and it was confirmed the criteria for this are included in the Casework Committee’s Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Members discussed the approach to triage and initial assessment of concerns, noting the practical challenges posed by the volume and complexity of material submitted, including extensive documentation.</p> <p>Members acknowledged the continued pressure on casework teams, while recognising the significant efforts being made to manage risks and maintain timely assessment of concerns.</p> <p>The Board asked that future Casework Committee updates included the number of cases discussed by the Committee at their meeting.</p>	
9	Full Risk Register and Assurance Map Update (from ARAC)	

	<p>LB and the Finance, Governance and Business Manager introduced this item. This paper was presented to support forward planning, particularly in advance of the upcoming Strategy Day.</p> <p>The discussion of the Risk Register included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there are some inconsistencies in terminology across assurance documents. • The need to ensure the recording of the risks around workload and pressures faced by OSCR reflect the current likelihood and impact. • Risks that were currently recorded as high or very high likelihood may require revision. • Whether the cyber risk should be higher although it was noted that this is mitigated with third party arrangements. • The need for clarity on whether mitigations were reducing likelihood, impact, or both. • Risk 5 is proposed for removal and this would be discussed in the full review. <p>Members suggested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the overall structure of the risk register remained appropriate and proportionate, • there was scope to improve consistency and calibration of scoring, • a review should be undertaken by the ELT prior to the Strategy Day. <p>Action – ELT to review the Risk Register and risk scoring for discussion at Board Strategy Day.</p> <p>LB said the Assurance Map is an iterative document designed to demonstrate sources of assurance across the organisation.</p> <p>Members noted that the Assurance Map should be updated, following the Board meeting, to reflect the approval of the Digital Strategy</p> <p>Action – update the Assurance Map reflecting the approval of the Digital Strategy.</p>	<p>ELT</p> <p>Senior Manager Digital and Comms / Finance, Governance and Business Manager</p>
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10	<p>Business Plan 2026–27 – Approval</p> <p>JH introduced this item noting that the Plan had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting and members have submitted comments for consideration.</p> <p>Members discussed the comments and made recommendations on wording changes referencing regulatory priorities, the articulation of benefits, and the clarity of measures and indicators within the Plan.</p> <p>Subject to agreed minor amendments to wording the Board approved the Business Plan for 2026–27.</p> <p>JH confirmed that, following the elections, the Business Plan would be published alongside other key strategic documents.</p>	
11	<p>Budget 2026–27 – Approval</p> <p>The Finance, Governance and Business Manager introduced this item saying that the paper set out the proposed budget for the year ahead, including minor updates since the draft budget was last presented to the Board.</p> <p>The Board approved the Budget for 2026–27.</p>	
12	<p>People Strategy 2026–2029</p> <p>The HR & Learning Coordinator introduced this item by saying that the strategy is an evolution of OSCR’s previous People Strategy and interim People Plan, and had been informed by staff feedback, including the Civil Service People Survey. The Strategy also sought to strengthen organisational resilience, respond constructively to change, and support staff wellbeing in the context of sustained operational pressure.</p> <p>Members discussed the strategy. They noted the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing organisational support with individual responsibility, including encouraging staff to take ownership of their learning, development and resilience. The HR & Learning Coordinator updated that there is to be training around staff confidence in contributing ideas and challenging constructively. • Ensuring that the Strategy did not feel overly top down, and that staff could clearly identify their own role in delivering its aims. 	

	<p>There was a discussion around surveys and the possibility of additional pulse surveys. The HR & Learning Coordinator confirmed there will be annual updates to the Board.</p> <p>The HR & Learning Coordinator said that feedback would be reflected on and minor wording adjustments would be made. Subject to this, the Board approved the People Strategy 2026–2029.</p>	
<p>13</p>	<p>Digital Strategy 2026–2029</p> <p>The Senior Manager Digital and Comms introduced this item saying that the Strategy sets out OSCR’s digital direction over the next three years.</p> <p>Members noted the shift in emphasis from earlier phases of digital development, which had focused primarily on process flow management and automation of administrative tasks, towards greater support for regulatory assessment, analysis and decision making.</p> <p>A discussion followed around the potential role of automation, scorecarding and AI in supporting regulatory work. It was confirmed that human oversight and professional judgement would still be required, with quality assurance mechanisms in place to ensure reliability and consistency of outcomes. Work on automation would be incremental and would primarily be in administrative or post-decision stages, supported by sampling and quality assurance where necessary.</p> <p>It was noted that the Digital Strategy was intentionally high level and strategic, rather than an operational plan. Detailed delivery actions and prioritisation would be progressed through internal roadmaps and operational planning. Members discussed the benefits of an annual review of the strategy. The annual report on the digital strategy each November will continue.</p> <p>The Board approved the Digital Strategy 2026–2029 subject to minor refinements to language particularly to strengthen emphasis on data, assurance and the transition from process automation to regulatory capability.</p>	

	<p>The Senior Manager Digital and Comms said that the Strategy would be published following the election and alongside other key strategic documents.</p>	
14	<p>Review of Board papers and agreement of Action Log</p> <p>MD invited members to provide feedback on the quality, structure and effectiveness of the Board papers.</p> <p>Members said that papers were generally well presented, accessible, comprehensive and supported discussion well.</p> <p>Members welcomed clarity and openness but requested that there was a clearer articulation of ‘asks’ from the Board.</p> <p>MD then reviewed the action log noting no further changes to those discussed within the meeting.</p>	
15	<p>New Performance Report 2026–27</p> <p>MD introduced this item saying that the new report was intended to respond to Board feedback about the need for clearer, more contextualised reporting.</p> <p>Members discussed the value of the contextual information in illustrating the scale and nature of operational pressure faced by the organisation and providing background context for interpreting performance outcomes. It was noted that this information was already used internally and by the Casework Committee and that bringing it to the Board improved transparency. Members discussed if this was appropriate for the full Board and opted to receive the report as background information to support understanding around capacity on a trial basis.</p> <p>Members discussed the proposed new performance measures and indicators. They welcomed the clearer linkage between strategy, business planning and performance reporting. It was recognised that a blend of quantitative measures and narrative reporting was both appropriate and necessary.</p> <p>Members agreed that, while outcomes could not always be reduced to simple targets, performance reporting should still enable the Board to understand whether activity was being delivered in a timely and proportionate manner, when and whether performance should give rise to concern and what management action was being taken in response.</p>	

	<p>It was agreed that further refinement would take place.</p> <p>Action – First iteration of New Performance Report 2026–27 to be brought to the June Board meeting.</p>	<p>JH/Finance, Governance and Business Manager</p>
<p>16</p>	<p>Dates of next meeting and close</p> <p>The schedule of meetings for the remainder of the year was discussed.</p> <p>The Board agreed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 September 2026 will be a Board meeting, and • 8 October 2026 will be a Board Strategy Day • 26 November 2026 will be a Board meeting <p>The Chair further advised that the forward schedule for 2027 would be brought for consideration at the September meeting as per the Board Schedule of Business.</p>	