

Meeting of the Revenue Scotland Board – Board Strategy Session – 14 February 2024

13:30 till 16:00, 14 February 2024

Present:

Martin McEwen (Acting Chair)
Aidan O’Carroll (via MS Teams)
Simon Cunningham
Jean Lindsay (via MS Teams)
Robert MacIntosh
Ken Macintosh
Idong Usoro

In attendance:

Elaine Lorimer, Chief Executive, Revenue Scotland
Gordon Buchan, Risk and Assurance Manager
Neil Ferguson, Head of Corporate Functions, Revenue Scotland
Mairi Gibson, Head of Legal Services, Revenue Scotland
Callum MacInnes, Head of Governance, Revenue Scotland
Michael Paterson, Head of Tax, Revenue Scotland
Naomi Pal Head of Strategy and Communications

1. Meeting Opening

1.1 Martin McEwen opened the Board strategy session, which he was chairing on behalf of Aidan O’Carroll who was attending remotely, and welcomed attendees.

2. Session 1: Delivering the Corporate Plan 2024-2027

2.1 The Chief Executive informed Board members that, with the Corporate Plan having been signed off, SLT was now focused on delivery. She introduced the session, which was seeking to look beyond the plan itself and consider the wider context within which it would be delivered. The starting point for the discussion was the PESTLE analysis circulated ahead of the meeting.

2.2 Board Members discussed the political environment and considered the need to engage with parliamentarians across the spectrum in order to raise awareness of Revenue Scotland and what it can offer. It was noted that when doing so, a clear purpose and agreed messages would be required.

2.3 They further considered whether further taxes or UK tax changes might arise over the Corporate Plan period and what the impacts of that might be for Revenue Scotland. Members also reflected on what role Revenue Scotland could or should play in respect to any new local taxes introduced. This might include sharing the organisation’s expertise and

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experience in respect of the collection of self-assessed taxes.

2.4 Board Members noted the importance of the stakeholder engagement strategy, the need to be bolder in this space and to focus efforts on a small number of key stakeholders. It was noted that Local Government would be one of these key stakeholders during the Corporate Plan period. Discussion also considered the benefits of partnering with other organisations, for example the IFS or Universities, to help support this strategy.

2.5 Board Members also considered the environmental aspects of the PESTLE analysis. In particular, there was a view that more could be done to understand and communicate the impact the organisation had as a result of its collection and management of environmental taxes.

2.6 The measures of success and KPIs was also discussed and it was noted that the cost of collection metric, whilst the standard used by the OECD, was not an ideal measure for the organisation. Consideration was given to whether costs could be set out on a 'per tax' basis and whether more could be done to understand the economics of the organisation.

2.7 Board Members suggested that, in taking this work forwards, each element of the PESTLE could be assessed in terms of where the organisation is now, where it wants to be and identify a small number of strategic moves that would best take forward the ambitions in the corporate plan.

3. Session 2: Looking Beyond the Corporate Plan

3.1 The Chief Executive introduced the session, inviting the Board to consider what the next five or ten year horizon would look like for Revenue Scotland.

3.2 Board Members outlined their aspirations for the organisation to become a provider of excellence with a good reputation, that would be trusted to take on additional responsibilities.

3.3 They also discussed whether the organisation might have a role in collecting and managing taxes on behalf of others, for example HMRC or local authorities. Consideration was also given to the impacts of the programme of Public Sector Reform, the impacts of Artificial Intelligence, public sector wide IT initiatives/digitisation of public services and plans to move to a Single Scottish Estate.

3.4 Board Members reflected on the systems that the organisation might need to respond to the issues identified. It was noted that expectations of IT systems would grow over time with demands for a more personalised and seamless experience across all aspects of government. Consideration was given to how the organisation might best respond to this, either by creating a tax system that others could link in to, or creating a system that could easily be integrated into systems owned and operated by other parts of government.

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4. Conclusions

4.1 The Chief Executive thanked Board Members for their contributions, explaining that the outputs from the discussion would be used as part of the process of developing the business plans that would support the delivery of the Corporate Plan. It would also be used to inform the review of the Corporate Risk Register.

4.2 The Chair thanked everyone for their participation in the discussion and staff for all their work in relation to the production of the Corporate Plan and preparation for the strategy session.

**End of Meeting
14 February 2024**