

# Agency Board meeting

## 25 February 2025

# Board Governance – Agency Board and Committee forward planner

### Purpose

Following approval of the 2025-2026 schedule of Board and Committee meetings by the Agency Board on 24 September 2024, this paper presents the finalised planner to be approved by the Board. This forward plan includes proposals for information/seminar sessions, visits, and agenda items for Board consideration to March 2026.

### Recommendations

The Board is asked to **discuss** and **approve** the planner to March 2026.

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**1. Introduction**

* 1. The Board approved on 24 September 2024 the dates and planner for the remainder of 2024-2025 and the proposed Board and Committee meeting schedule of dates for 2025-2026 with amendments requested to look at more in-person options. The following pattern of meetings was also agreed:
* **Quarterly** formal **Agency Board meetings** (in-person and online)
* One Board **Strategy Day** (in-person)
* One Board **Development Day** (in-person)
* Two **Board visit** days
* Quarterly **Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee** and **People & Resources Committee** meetings with deep dives, and annual workshops
* Fully utilising the **Board Champions initiative**, reflecting the role of Board members in adding value and engaging at strategic level to work with SEPA’s Executive team and colleagues on priority areas of work.
  1. This paper presents in Section 2 information on the different types of meetings. The detailed planner is provided in Section 3 to be approved by the Board with proposals on information sessions, site visits and strategic items for tabling at Agency Board meetings throughout the year.
  2. The planner takes into consideration the need for Board sessions to be structured to reflect the priorities/key deliverables in SEPA’s Corporate and Annual Operating Plans, and the content of the Board action note. It also considers how to make the best use of Board time using MS Teams and in person interactive sessions, and the need for public Agency Board meetings. In-person meetings will be held at SEPA offices to avoid unnecessary costs of venue hire. The Board support team is currently exploring which SEPA offices can accommodate the numbers for the Board meetings, and will continue to look at the most efficient options and locations for in-person meetings to save on travel expenses, journey times, and carbon footprint, as requested by the Board at its meeting in September 2024. Recognition is also given to Board members contracted time commitment of 24-30 days per year.

**2. Overview**

* 1. **Agency Board meetings**

Agency Board meetings are predominantly held in public, and the papers and minutes are published on the SEPA website, as described in the [Standing Orders](https://beta.sepa.scot/about-sepa/who-we-are/our-board/standing-orders/). Following the public meeting there may be a private session for the Board to discuss official confidential or sensitive items or draft documents, e.g. which need approval prior to publication. The agendas will clearly state when they are published which items will be taken in public or private and why.

**Annex 1** presents a detailed list of items expected to be tabled at Agency Board meetings to March 2026. (Note that this annex will not be made available in the public paper published on the website after the Board meeting as it is a working draft).

As detailed in the Standing Orders, special meetings of the Agency Board may also take place where there is business that is urgent and cannot wait to the next meeting of the Agency Board. If it is not practicable to convene a special meeting, the Chair may under exceptional circumstances deal with the matter(s) by correspondence.

The Board will also meet in-person for **Strategy and Development days**; see **Annex 2** for items so far proposed for these days in 2025. (The annex is not available in the public paper published on the website).

* 1. **Standing Committees**

Separate forward planning exercises are being undertaken for the agendas for the 2025-2026 Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC) and People and Resources Committee (PRC) meetings; these are being discussed at committee meetings, but an overview is presented in **Annexes 3 and 4**. These annexes will not be published on the website in the public Board paper as they are working drafts.

* 1. **Information sessions**

As discussed at the 24 September 2024 Board meeting, 1-hour information sessions, predominantly on MS Teams, are tabled for the Board for deeper dives into various topics to help with strategic discussions and raise awareness of SEPA’s work, further enhancing how information is shared. Information sessions have so far taken place on Satellites on 29 October 2024 and Information Governance on 21 January 2025.

2025-2026 dates and topics for these are included in Section 3 for approval; these are based on requests from the Board for particular issues to be covered in more detail and/or to complete actions from Board or Committee meetings. These sessions also form part of the ongoing board development journey linking to board effectiveness and training.

Sessions will be recorded and made available to refer to if members are not able to attend on the day.

* 1. **Other Board engagement**

Two **site visits** for the full Board are included in this paper, additional visits may be considered to coincide with Strategy or Development days as appropriate, e.g. as for the visit to flood defences and Aberdeen laboratories in January 2025. Additional visits for small groups of Board members, including via **Board Champion groups**, will also be arranged outwith this calendar with the appropriate Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) lead, such as that arranged to Torness nuclear power station in November 2024. Examples for 2025-2026 include the PRC members invited to attend a visit to a former VIBES awards winner, reflecting the committee’s enhanced remit on sustainability. Board Champions for flooding are invited to attend the Flooding Board Group annually and external events such as the Scottish Flood Forecasting Service Symposium to enable members to act as advocates in their Champion role. Routine meetings of Board Champion groups are held throughout the year in line with each group’s Terms of Reference with updates reported at all Agency Board meetings via the Chair’s report.

Additional **training** and occasions for **stakeholder engagement** will continue to be circulated to members as they arise throughout the year, including via planned engagement led by the Chair and Chief Executive managed by the Head of Strategy and Communications. An annual training session with Standards Commission Scotland is included in the planner in Section 3.

Board members are also encouraged to look at informal chances to be together, e.g. in the margins of in-person meetings and site visits, to help build relations.

**3. Proposed calendar of meetings for 2025-2026**

3.1 Items for Board consideration planned to the end of 2025-26 financial year are presented here for approval. Please note that they may be subject to change to consider new priority work areas over the course of the year.

**February 2025 (post 25 February Board meeting)**

* **26 February** - VIBES Celebration Event Scottish Parliament

**March 2025**

* **4 March:** Board Strategy Day- focus on a forward look including SEPA’s long term transformation vision, flooding services review and Board Values (in-person)
* **4 March:** PRC Members site visit
* **24 March:** Training from Standards Commission Scotland on Advice Notes (MS Teams)
* **25 March (am):** ARAC meeting (MS Teams)
* **25 March (pm):** Information session on Fixed and Variable Monetary Penalties and other enforcement tools/undertakings and interventions to tackle environmental crime (MS Teams)

**April 2025**

* **15 April:** PRC meeting and workshop (in-person)
* **29 April (am):** Information session on Water Management and Resilience (to include water scarcity and diffuse pollution) (in-person)
* **29 April (pm):** Agency Board meeting (in-person)

**May 2025**

* **6 May:** Information sessionon Aquaculture /Sea lice regulatory framework (including funding) (MS Teams)
* **8 May**: Board visit to whisky distillery showcasing SEPA’s regulatory role
* **20 May:** ARAC meeting and workshop (in-person)

**June 2025**

* **10 June:** PRC meeting (MS Teams)
* **24 June:** Agency Board meeting (MS Teams)

**July 2025:**

* **8 July:** Information session on Circular Economy regulation (MS Teams)

**August 2025:**

* **12 August**: Transformation session (in-person)

**September 2025**

* **2 September:** ARAC meeting (MS Teams)
* **16 September:** PRC meeting (MS Teams)
* **23 September:** Information session on Customer journey mapping and case study of regulatory customer experience (MS Teams)
* **30 September:** Agency Board meeting (in-person)

**October 2025**

* **28 October:** Board Development Day – to include Board Effectiveness and Self-assessment review (in-person)

**November 2025**

* **4 November**: Special ARAC meeting on Annual Report and Accounts (MS Teams) [new date]
* **18 November:** Information session on Environmental Performance Assessment Scheme (EPAS) and/or Integrated Authorisation Framework general update (MS Teams)
* **25 November:** Board visit to Scottish Water treatment site
* **25 November:** Special Board meeting to approve the 2024-2025 Annual Report and Accounts (in-person) [new date]

**December 2025**

* **9 December:** ARAC meeting (MS Teams)

**January 2026**

* **27 January:** PRC meeting (MS Teams) (moved from 13 January in previous planner agreed by the Board in September 2024)

**February 2026**:

* **24 February:** Agency Board meeting (MS Teams) (moved from 27 January in previous planner agreed by the Board in September 2024)

**March 2026**

* **3 March:** Board Strategy Day (in-person)
* **24 March:** ARAC meeting (MS Teams)

**1 April 2026** SEPA’s 30th anniversary

**4. Recommendations**

* The Board is asked to **discuss** and **approve** the planner for the remainder of 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.