The Promise Scotland
SUPPORTING CHANGE FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & CARE EXPERIENCED ADULTS

Meeting TWENTY-ONE

of the

Directors of The Promise Scotland (SC693269)

on Thursday 4 June 2026 from 10:00-11:30
in the McDiarmid Room, COSLA, Edinburgh

Approved Minutes

Attendees – Directors:

Fiona Duncan (FD)	Chair
David Garbutt (DG)	Director
Fraser McKinlay (FMK)	Director and Chief Executive
Jim Savege (JS)	Director
Jane O'Donnell (JOD)	Director
Philip Rycroft (PR)	Director
Victoria Underwood (VU)	Director

Apologies:

Anna Matthews (AM)	Director

In attendance – The Promise Scotland:

Claire Burns (CB)	Head of Improvement
Morag Burnett (MB)	Head of Strategy & Governance (minutes)

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and purpose of meeting

Fiona Duncan (FD) welcomed the Board to the meeting and noted apologies from Anna Matthews. It was agreed that, in addition to the standing agenda items, the purpose of the meeting was to focus on the annual strategy session taking place in the afternoon.

2. Minutes and action log

The minutes of Meeting TWENTY (3 March 2026) were approved as accurate. The Chair took Directors through the action log. Actions were noted as on the agenda for Meeting TWENTY-ONE, on track, or to be addressed.

The minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee (21 April 2026) were approved as accurate.

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest relevant to the business of the meeting were received.

4. Quarter Four reporting & management accounts

FMK presented the Quarter Four report and gave a verbal update on the period January to March 2026. The Children (Care, Care Experience and Services Planning) (Scotland) Bill formed a considerable portion of the work during the period, culminating in the unanimous passing of the Bill on 19 March and received Royal Assent on 15 May 2026.

Directors discussed how to accurately frame delivery of the work programme in the forthcoming annual grant report. Directors requested that the status of programme delivery and the status of programme outcomes are clearly differentiated to make clear what the organisation delivered and what sits outwith its remit.

Directors sought clarification on the financial position of the organisation and were assured by FMK that the company has sufficient winding-up costs.

5. Impact Reporting

The Chair advised that the purpose of this agenda item and associated paper was to stimulate the discussion on how to report on The Promise Scotland's impact in the next Strategic Work Programme. MB and FMK introduced the paper. Directors discussed the two complementary approaches: "plan on a page" and "system change evaluation", whilst bearing in mind the Audit and Risk Committee's assessment that the organisation drives and contributes to change whilst 'delivering' change itself sits outwith its remit.

Directors felt the "plan on a page" was sufficient to provide assurance and encouraged the team to explore automating of KPIs to free up time. With the "system change evaluation" approach of interest to Directors due to:

- its ability to surface systemic issues and barriers
- the possibility of linking it to the Story of Progress to inform wider accountability – such as system / country (as opposed to solely The Promise Scotland)
- the light it could shine on keeping the promise as public service reform in action

Directors asked that when approaching impact reporting for the next Strategic Work Programme, there is clarity and confidence about The Promise Scotland's role and responsibility – what it can directly influence or deliver, and what it can not. Whilst acknowledging the organisation may well be held to account for changes (or lack of) beyond its remit.

FMK reminded Directors that human learning systems, an approach explored with the Centre for Public Impact and Manchester Metropolitan University, advocates measuring learning itself as an outcome and committed to reporting back on the value of this. Directors reflected on the potential benefits of partnering with academic institutions and with harnessing the international interest being shown in Scotland's progress to keeping the promise.

Directors agreed a combined approach would provide improve impact reporting.

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6. Chief Executive's Report

FMK provided an update on work undertaken since the last meeting and drew Directors' attention to the work done in the run-up to the May Parliamentary elections, as well as the office move. FD and FMK provided an update on recent meetings with Government and responded to Director questions and comments.

7. Strategic Risk Register

FMK updated Directors on the changes to the Risk Register and responded to questions and comments. Directors discussed the escalation of Risk FIN01 to the highest level and agreed to leave the risk score at 25 whilst tasking the team to continue to look at mitigations. Directors asked the team to consider mitigations for Risk ED03 that might bring the score down. Risk ED04 was discussed in the light of the recent elections. Directors suggested mitigations and agreed to monitor the score going forwards.

8. Forward plan

Directors noted the forward plan and schedule of their 2026 meetings. Directors requested that the glide path become a standing agenda item twice a year from 2027.

9. AOB:

No further business was raised.

Governance Principles
Independence – Assurance - Proportionate – Transparent

N.B. All papers are copied to the Scottish Government, as per the Members' Agreement.