Taken from Scottish Government paper, ‘Succession Planning for Public Body Boards: Guidance’

The full document can be found here: https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-succession-planning-public-body-boards/pages/1/

Key Issues
The following issues will usually be central to the consideration of the Board's approach to succession planning:

- Scottish Ministers are ultimately responsible for making most Board appointments, but there is much that public bodies can do themselves to ensure that when Chair or Board positions do arise, they are prepared to maximise the opportunities associated with these.

- Succession planning is led by the Board, has the support of the SG sponsor and harnesses the knowledge and expertise of the Chief Executive and other executive officers.

- Succession planning should be conducted with the dual purpose of ensuring that the members of the Board have the requisite skills, experience, knowledge and other relevant attributes for the Board to perform effectively, and ensuring there is diversity in relation to members' protected characteristics.

- Board succession should be considered in light of the body's long-term strategy - which sets out what the body will do, how and when they will do it, and the approach to monitoring progress - recognising existing strengths and acknowledging the skills, experience and knowledge that are needed in the future (e.g. digital skills).

- Boards should think creatively about the sorts of skills and attributes they need, and the balance of these, in order to be as effective as possible.

- Once the Board has identified the skills and attributes it needs in order to be effective, and any gaps in terms of its membership, the Board will wish to design engagement, outreach and development activity to attract people from target groups to its work so that they are in the best possible position to maximise the opportunities at appointment rounds.

- It can be helpful to mainstream succession planning into the body's communications and outreach activity, taking every opportunity to build awareness and understanding of the Board's work and make connections with potential members.

- Succession planning should consider how to nurture a talent pool which allows those with no previous Board experience to develop the skills required to become a Board member, for example through shadowing or mentoring.

- It can be beneficial to engage with some target groups on an ongoing basis, in order to develop awareness and understanding. Existing Board members from such target groups can act as role models and help make connections.

- Evaluating the effectiveness of individual members and how that in turn has an impact on the effectiveness of the Board should be an ongoing activity, and inform succession planning.

- The approaching end of every appointment term is a real decision point; re-appointment is never automatic. Members may only be re-appointed by Ministers for second and subsequent terms in the same role if: they possess the skills and knowledge the Board requires going forward when their term comes to an end; and at formal appraisal their performance has been assessed as effective.

- As well as considering planning for succession through open competitions, there is a need to think about succession planning within public bodies for Board leadership roles such as chairs for sub-committees, and how to build capacity among existing Board members to take these on.

Additional considerations

Boards may also wish to consider the following:

- In order to promote synergies between Board succession and a body's long-term strategy, it may be appropriate for the Board's succession plan to be appended to the body's corporate plan and for the plan to cover the duration of the corporate plan (usually three or five years). In all circumstances, succession plans should be reviewed on a regular basis.

- Boards may wish to consider establishing a dedicated Succession Planning Committee to evaluate the existing skills of Board members and those that will be needed in future. It is important that any committee operates in a fair and transparent manner and that it has the delivery of an effective, diverse Board as its central purpose so as not to reinforce the status quo. Some bodies may prefer to adopt other ways of delivering the same outcome.