

Strategic Investment Board

Chief Executive's Report – December 2013

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

DESERTCREAT COLLEGE

Ministers have announced that DFP has approved the Desertcreat Business Case and that in consequence the Preferred Bidder has been appointed.

The associated press release stated:

“The Justice and Health Ministers have said that approval of the business case for the Northern Ireland Community Safety College at Desertcreat allows discussions to begin with the preferred bidder.

Following an EU wide procurement process the FGP consortium will be appointed preferred bidder. FGP comprises the Spanish company FCC Construction and local company Gilbert Ash. Under the direction of the Northern Ireland Community Safety College Programme Board, the project team will now spend the next number of months working through the preferred bidder stage with FGP consortium, to agree a final overall cost and construction programme.

The Full Business Case will then be finalised and the decision to proceed to programme sign off and contract signature will be subject to Executive approval, with the contractor due to begin construction in Spring 2014.”

STRATEGIC WASTE PROGRAMME

WASTE STRATEGY

We agreed to work with the Department on drawing up terms of reference for a new and comprehensive assessment of the regions waste disposal requirement.

COLIN TOWN CENTRE

There have been a series of meetings between Brenda, DSD, the Colin Neighbourhood Partnership (CNP) and local politicians to discuss the composition of the delivery team. Brenda has also briefed the DSD Minister, who is considering seeking our support for similar work elsewhere.

SUPPORT TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MAZE/LONG KESH DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

REGIONAL STADIUMS PROGRAMME

The various legal challenges that were raised against the IFA and GAA procurements have been resolved. However two issues remain outstanding:

- (a) Local opposition to the design of the Casement Park stadium, which looks likely to lead to a judicial review; and
- (b) A lack of progress by IFA in addressing the Minister's concerns regarding its corporate governance arrangements.

MEETING WITH PETER MAY, DCAL

I met Peter May, acting Permanent Secretary at DCAL. We discussed the work SIB is currently carrying out in support of the Department and areas where it may seek assistance in the future.

SOCIAL HOUSING REFORM

The Housing Reform team is now in place and has begun work. DSD ran a successful stakeholder briefing day at which the team was introduced.

CULTURE COMPANY

The final major events of the year, the Lumière festival of light and the announcement of the winner of the Turner prize were both extremely successful.

The DCAL Minister has announced her plans for the delivery of a lasting legacy for the City of Culture. This will include funding for projects and the establishment of a new 'Cultural Company', distinct from the council, which will build capacity and capability in the city.

The Downey Tribunal is scheduled to finish its hearings on 6th December. A judgement is expected to take a further twelve weeks to hand down.

RESEARCH & OTHER STUDIES

REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

additional options for delivery mechanisms should have been considered.

INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

Edgar Morgenroth and Neil Gibson have provided Mark with very constructive feedback on the Infrastructure Audit. Professor Gibson wrote:

"I wanted to drop a note to say what an excellent piece of work I thought it was. I have learnt a lot. Many of the areas I am not an expert on so it was very informative to me. A few things already jump out – clearly areas in which we can get more efficient as benchmarked running costs make us look very uncompetitive and secondly there is merit in getting more people to understand the choices, possibly even the public, to see what NI as a society really thinks matters across the various elements of expenditure.

Anyway I will continue reading and hopefully have something more useful to say but I wanted to convey that I often look at reports and think 'I could have written better' (including some of the consultancy reports referred to in the Exec summary!) but in this case I would not have been able to come close to the amount of material you have reviewed and collated. Not sure if praise from me is much comfort but I wanted to acknowledge your efforts."

TOPICAL QUESTIONS

Mitchel McLaughlin asked dFM about Shackleton Barracks and for an update on the soft marketing exercise. dFM stated that all was going well. Local groups and businesses were consulted; feedback and expressions of interest were coming into OFMDFM and BTW Sheils. In a supplementary question Mr McLaughlin asked whether it is still viable for DARD to move to Shackleton alongside private sector operators. dFM's response was positive, yes it was possible for both to work on the same site.

ASSEMBLY ALL-PARTY WORKING GROUP ON CONSTRUCTION

I attended a meeting of the Assembly All-Party Working Group on Construction at the invitation of its Chair, Patsy McGlone, MLA. The meeting was briefed by the Justice, Health and DRD Ministers, with additional input from DE officials. I was asked about projects that have a cross-departmental element and for my views on how the business case process could be accelerated.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

QUERY FROM OFMDFM COMMITTEE

The OFMDFM Committee wrote to me asking for information on salaries and SIB's use of consultancy. My draft reply is with Ministers for clearance.

FINANCE – JANUARY

Expenditure continues broadly on target. However, some spending has slipped because of delays in appointing staff, (see below). Taking account of changes proposed in January monitoring we expect to spend in line with the revised budget.

FINANCE – JANUARY MONITORING

OFMDFM expects to have revenue pressures for the remainder of the year. Having reviewed our likely expenditure I have agreed that SIB can release funding not required because of the delay in filling certain posts. The size of the easement is being agreed with OFMDFM.

STAFF AWAY DAY

I have received a great deal of positive feedback on the Staff Away Day in Derry~Londonderry. In addition to briefings and a team communication exercise, we visited four SIB projects in the city, were welcomed by the City Mayor and attended a reception in the Guildhall for the Lumière festival.

FINANCE TEAM

Following an open recruitment competition, offers have been made to the successful candidates for the posts of Accountant and Finance Assistant.

HR MANAGER

The competition to find a new HR Manager has not identified a suitable candidate. I have asked Wesley Emmett to review again the job description, salary and required qualifications for the post before we re-advertise.

DATA CONNECTION

The issue of the slow data connection to Carleton House remains unresolved. The latest report from ITAssist is that Eircomm have been unable to gain a wayleave from the landlord that would enable the necessary work to be completed. ITAssist itself will now take up the issue with the landlord.

INTERNAL AUDIT

I met with the Internal Auditor and discussed her draft findings on the reviews of (a) Information Security and Business Continuity Planning; (b) Corporate Governance, Fraud and Risk Assessment; (c) Income and Financial Management and (d) Follow Up Report on previous work. Although there are a number of minor points, the audits did not identify any significant issues.

