

Strategic Investment Board

Chief Executive's Report – October 2013

SIB's Project Managers have provided their quarterly reports this month, so this paper comments on only the most significant issues.

PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

DESERTCREAT COLLEGE

The Executive is reported to have approved the appointment of a Preferred Bidder for the NI Community Safety College at Desertcreat. A public announcement will be made once DFP formally approves the addendum to the Business case..

I will brief the Board at its meeting on the changes that will shortly be made to the SIB team working on the project.

STRATEGIC WASTE PROGRAMME

HEAT PROGRAMME

I met the dFM's Special Advisers and briefed them in detail on the multiple risks associated with this project.

COLIN TOWN CENTRE

I met Jenny Piper (G3, DSD) to discuss the resourcing of the programme. I also took the views of the dFM's advisers. DSD have agreed to consider sympathetically a proposal for co-funding SIB's staff costs on this project. Wesley Emmett is now preparing a paper setting out how this could work. .

At a meeting of the Programme Board, the other departments involved in the project (DE, DHSSPS, DRD and DCAL) set out ambitious plans to drive forward their projects. It is therefore important that SIB appoints a coordinating programme manager who can ensure these plans are cohesive and aligned. We have identified, through open competition, such an individual and will shortly present a paper to the Remuneration Committee proposing his appointment.

SUPPORT TO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

LISANELLY

Hazel Jones and I have (finally) agreed with DE the composition of the initial programme delivery team for Lisanelly. This will require the recruitment of two senior staff; a procurement and construction manager and a Educational and Stakeholder Engagement Manager. Their costs will be met by DE. The Project Management Office (PMO) will be staffed by civil servants.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCE

The meeting of the Budget Review Group on 2nd October took a paper on the Revenue Funded Investment Programme. (This is included in the Board papers.) Leo McKenna will report on new developments in this area at the Board meeting.

PbCRC

REGIONAL STADIUMS PROGRAMME

Officials and the IFA seem closer to finding a resolution to the corporate governance issue. The project team expects that a positive announcement will be made shortly, but this depends on the IFA taking further steps to address the Department's concerns.

The Department has halted face-to-face discussions with residents concerned by the proposed redevelopment of Casement Park after the former indicated that, in the absence of an offer of compensation, they would be taking legal action to stop the project.

SOCIAL HOUSING REFORM

The Housing Reform team has been appointed and has held initial meetings with Departmental officials in advance of formally starting their employment.

CULTURE COMPANY

Derry City Council's decision to wind up the Culture Company with effect from 31st March 2014 has caused considerable disquiet to the staff affected, some of whom were expecting to work on until between June and September. The Council's decision, which was taken for financial reasons, will now be the subject of formal consultation.

UNITED COMMUNITIES

Wesley Emmett is working with Denis McMahon (G3, OFMDFM) to establish terms of reference for SIB's ongoing support to the United Communities Programme.

RESEARCH & OTHER STUDIES

REVIEW OF COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT

Ministers at the BRG discussed issues affecting the delivery of major infrastructure projects and were briefed by HOCS on the emerging conclusions of Paul Priestly's review. I will brief the Board at its meetings on the issues arising from this discussion.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Lagan Canal Trust

I met the Chair and Chief Executive of the Lagan Canal Trust and was given a presentation on the £100m project to reopen the waterways between Lough Neagh and Belfast. The Trust would like to obtain assistance from SIB in the production of a project plan.

Medicines Adherence Project

The Permanent Secretary at DHSSPS has written asking for SIB to support the Department in a SBRI procurement that will address the problem of Medicine non-adherence. The request arises out of SIB's work on another SBRI project to address the problem of poultry litter disposal. I have asked Alan McVicker to review the request and will brief the Board on SIB's proposed response in due course.

Museum of Free Derry

It seems likely that the DETI Minister will approve funding for the Museum of Free Derry. The trustees of the museum have asked OFMDFM Ministers to approve SIB providing project management support to the project. If such approval is forthcoming Martin Turner will be seconded to the project on a part-time basis.

World Police and Fire Games – Legacy Projects

DCAL have asked for Jonny Davis's contract to be extended until the end of the financial year in order to work on the games' legacy.

Social Investment Fund –Capital Works

The Business Cases for a number of projects within the Social Investment Fund programme have been approved. Several of these involve capital works and OFMDFM have asked SIB to consider seconding a Programme Manager into the Department to oversee their delivery.

Transformation Director – LPS

Land and Property Services (LPS) intend to establish a Business Transformation programme and has asked the AMU to identify and second a Transformation Director to lead this work.

Legal Support to DFP Pensions Administration Programme

DFP is shortly to embark on a multi-million pound IT project to deliver a new pensions administration system. The Department has asked SIB to manage the legal elements of the contract negotiations.

GOVERNANCE, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

TOPICAL QUESTIONS

The new arrangements in the Assembly under which MLAs can ask 'topical questions' of the First and deputy First Ministers without prior notice mean that SIB is now required to provide detailed briefing to Ministers twice a month on current issues that may members may raise. We are in the process of creating a database of constituency issues and possible questions. This is intended to reduce the administrative overhead of preparing such briefings.

MOVE TO CARLTON HOUSE

An unexpected issue has arisen since the move to Carleton House. Although SIB was assured that the data connection here had the same capacity as that for Clare House, it appears that in fact it has only 10% of the bandwidth we had before. The main impact of this is felt by Finance Section where the operation of the 'Opera' accounts system is extremely slow. One significant problem this causes is to prevent data back-ups being taken over the network. We are examining other mechanisms to take such back-ups and IT Assist is working to increase the data pipe's capacity. Unfortunately, it could take as long as three months to install a new circuit.

SIB REVIEW

OFMDFM has informed SIB that it will carry out a formal review of the company in FY2014-15. The last review was completed in 2009, but was never published.