

Strategic Investment Board

Interim Chief Executive's Report – February 2011

As the advisors have provided programme and project reports this month, this paper will cover only issues that are not reported elsewhere.

ISNI 3

Representatives of the Welsh Assembly visited SIB to see the ISNI Delivery Tracking System. They were impressed and have decided to purchase the same system.

Projects & Programmes

Asset Management Unit (formerly CART)

The Executive approved OFMDFM's submission (which we helped draft) proposing the formal establishment of the Asset Management Unit. Protocol does not allow for the release of the paper that went to the Executive.

Now that the unit has a mandate it can begin to recruit the Head of Unit and two Asset Advisors. The draft budget for next year includes provision for this. The Board will note the Executive has asked Mr Ed Vernon to continue his involvement with the AMU. With the Chairman's agreement, I propose inviting Mr Vernon to attend the next Board meeting to discuss his role and the work of the unit.

In view of the need to maintain continuity and momentum I have decided to extend by six months the contracts of the two secondees currently working in the unit. This represents a technical breach of the secondment guidelines which limit such arrangements to a maximum of two years. However, I judge that the balance of public advantage rests with continuing the work of the unit until new appointments are made. The rationale for this assessment is:

- It would take some two months to procure consultants by way of an open competition to replace the secondees. As the secondments end in two weeks time, that would leave a six week gap during which no work would be done.
- Even if consultants were appointed for three months, they would get no handover and would only just be reaching the point where they would be useful when they would be replaced.

- The six month extension will allow for an unrushed recruitment process and a reasonable period of handover.

I have consulted OFMDFM on this approach and it is content.

Kerry Farnsworth's part-time employment as temporary head of the unit will end in February as she begins to work full-time for the MLK Development Corporation. I will assume her responsibilities until a permanent appointment is made.

Maze/Long Kesh

The submission to the SEUPB for a grant to the Conflict Resolution Centre of €20m was submitted on time on the 17th January.

A Gateway Review team will carry out a Gate 0 Strategic Review of the MLK programme this week. These reviews have been very useful in the past in identifying key issues that require resolution before the programme can move forward.

Lisanelly

Hazel Jones and I met John McGrath to discuss the issues raised by the Board at its meeting in December. He reiterated the Minister's and the Department's strong support for the project and requested that this be communicated to the Board.

Education

DE has renewed its request for a Strategic Adviser to be seconded into the Department to assist its strategic planning. I met the Deputy Secretary and discussed this requirement in more detail. The position, which will be time-limited, should be advertised shortly.

TQSP

Although work on TQSP was adversely affected by the bad weather in January, which restricted deliveries to the site, the project is now back on schedule.

A new Chief Executive has been appointed to Titanic Foundation Ltd. This should mean that Bryan Gregory's involvement as Project Director will wind down over the coming six months.

Waste Programme

The implications of the abolition of the Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund (SWIF) are beginning to be worked through by the three waste management groups.

SIB's draft budget will provide support to the ongoing work of the Waste PDSU but cannot make up the shortfall in funding for the three WMGs.

Rapid Transit

At a meeting of the project board, DRD confirmed that it intends to continue work on planning the Rapid Transit Project even though there is not sufficient funding profiled for the next four years to enable it to be implemented. The work will proceed on the assumption that funds will be provided post-2014.

London~Derry City of Culture

I sat on a panel that appointed Martin Bradley to be Chairman of the Derry City of Culture Company. The panel will meet again shortly to select non-Executive directors.

Governance, Finance & Administration

Staffing

Martin Spollen will be taking up a Fulbright Scholarship at Ohio State University during the summer. Patrick McMeekin and Joanne Gallagher will cover his responsibilities during his absence.